

# 49 STEPS TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

A Report of the Human Rights & Security Initiative,  
Center for Strategic and International Studies,  
and the Robert Bosch Stiftung



**Author**  
Sarah E. Mendelson

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Cover photo: © UNICEF workshop/Yaser Osterkhanov/2006. Yaser Osterkhanov's photograph was part of a November 2006 UNICEF photography exhibit, "Chechnya through the Eyes of Children." Osterkhanov, a 12-year-old orphan, commented, "In my photos I tried to tell the adults that we, the children of Chechnya, need protection and care."

Center for Strategic and International Studies  
1800 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Tel: (202) 887-0200  
Fax: (202) 775-3199  
Web: [www.csis.org](http://www.csis.org)

Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH  
Heidehofstr. 31  
70184 Stuttgart, Germany  
Tel: 49-711-46084-140  
Fax: 49-711-46084-158  
Web: [www.bosch-stiftung.de](http://www.bosch-stiftung.de)

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## Acknowledgments

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We wish to thank the 83 participants who came to Berlin between May 2005 and October 2006, and especially the core 16 who made repeated trips. Their willingness to spend weekends away from their families to discuss in a frank and constructive manner the difficult issues of what can be done to help local populations in the North Caucasus was inspiring.

We thank the many organizations and governments that helped cover the travel costs of their staffs and the Glaser Progress Foundation and the Open Society Institute for their support.

These meetings simply could not have taken place without the hard work and dedication (and patience) of many staff members of both the Bosch Stiftung and CSIS. In particular, we wish to thank Claudia Fisches, Ira Golenkova, Nancy Lord, Alina Tourkova, and Jessica Scholes.

## Executive Summary

Increased donor attention to the varied regions within the North Caucasus is an urgent security and human rights imperative. To date, the Russian government has greatly complicated, and often restricted, the ability of donors to engage in this region. At the same time, the international community has been plagued by ambivalence in responding to needs on the ground.

This policy brief condenses dozens of specific, practical recommendations generated over several days of meetings convened in Berlin at the Robert Bosch Stiftung in May 2005, March 2006, and October 2006 with senior representatives from international organizations, governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The Chatham House rule applied, so we do not list participants or attribute any specific recommendation to anyone present.

The breadth of the recommendations is considerable and includes:

- Greater donor coordination;
- Increased support for civil society groups—in particular human rights NGOs and independent media—on the ground;
- A focus on next generation projects;
- Increased accountability of international organizations engaging in the region;
- Outreach to the Russian government;
- Increased investment in the North Caucasus by private business;
- A multidisciplinary approach to advancing the rule of law in the region.

As we near the third anniversary of Beslan and the first anniversary of the murder of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, we offer these recommendations as an appeal to both the Russian government and the international community as a whole to recommit resources to help ensure security and respect for human rights for those who live in the North Caucasus—particularly with an eye on the next generation.

## Background

For well over a decade, the North Caucasus has been the site and source of rising levels of violence, instability, and terrorism. After a cease-fire ended the first Chechen war in late 1996, terrorist bombings and incursions in Dagestan provoked the Russian government to send federal troops back into Chechnya in October 1999. The ensuing military conflict produced massive military and civilian casualties, streams of refugees, shocking brutality against civilians, and a surge in terrorist actions in the south and elsewhere in Russia. The most dramatic events included the seizure of a Moscow theater by terrorists in October 2002, the downing of two airplanes and a metro bombing in downtown Moscow in August 2004, the vicious raid on a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, in September 2004, and an October 2005 assault on police and security forces by local youths and terrorists in Nalchik, the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria. Though seldom reported in the Western press, less spectacular explosions, targeting civilians and officials, have occurred on an almost daily basis for several years now in southern Russia. Apart from such overt acts of violence, longer-term tensions among the many different ethnic groups that reside in the region, reportedly rampant police brutality, and sustained poverty have led some observers to portray the area as a powder keg for extremism and Islamic radicalization.

This perilous situation has led many policymakers and the wider donor community inside and outside Russia to conclude that little can be done to help increase security and stability in the region. The international response has often been deeply conflicted, ambivalent, and ineffectual. Within the same international organization, one finds those who want to berate, sanction, and isolate the Russian government, while others try relentlessly to keep channels open, even when the payoff is minute.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike other conflicts around the world in which expertise, political will, and vast sums of money have been deployed to address, diminish, or contain violence, we have seen dramatically less activity surrounding Chechnya and other parts of the North Caucasus. In collaboration with numerous experts and activists—inside and outside government, in the United States, Europe, and Russia—we have sought to challenge that inactivity, by building international policy networks and conducting research with the goal of developing a series of recommendations.

Together we convened a series of meetings devoted to discussion about how to help improve the conditions of those living in the North Caucasus. In May 2005, we began this process with Fiona Hill of the Brookings Institution and organized a unique, high-level meeting with 40 practitioners from organizations such as the World Bank, the European Union, the Council of Europe, and various agencies within the United Nations to generate ideas and potential next steps for

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah E. Mendelson, “Anatomy of Ambivalence: The International Community and Human Rights Abuse in the North Caucasus,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 53, no. 6 (November/December 2006): 3–15.

the international community on the issue of the North Caucasus. That first meeting, held at the Bosch Stiftung in Berlin, set the model and generated dozens of recommendations for the international community, including the need for the subsequent meetings and additional research, some of which CSIS has organized and undertaken.

In March 2006, CSIS and the Bosch Stiftung convened a second meeting, patterned after the first, but this time devoted to improving the impact of human rights monitoring in the region. We did this by exploring how to improve the impact of traditional approaches to monitoring, such as reports, as well as innovative approaches, such as the use of video—introduced to us by WITNESS, an NGO that has pioneered using film to document human rights abuses.<sup>2</sup> We also invited consumers of the reports—current and former senior officials from various governments and international organizations—to get a better understanding of the context in which they receive the reports and what would be more helpful to them in terms of presentation. That meeting generated a set of recommendations for the NGO community, as well as for donors and member states in international organizations, such as the Council of Europe.

In October 2006, CSIS and the Bosch Stiftung convened a third meeting during which we shared the results of a benchmark survey from the North Caucasus. Conducted by the Levada Analytic Center and written and analyzed by CSIS, the survey included 1,200 men, ages 16 to 39, in Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia.<sup>3</sup> The survey explored several issues widely regarded as “push factors” in radicalizing individuals: socioeconomic conditions, the failure of political institutions, abuse by authorities, corruption, ethnic or national marginalization, and attitudes toward Islam. The survey also explored attitudes toward different sorts of foreign assistance. We heard from various donors about their ongoing work in the region and discussed what more needed to be done.<sup>4</sup> Again, the meeting generated a series of recommendation on how to improve conditions on the ground.

This policy memo presents an abridged version of the dozens of recommendations generated from the three meetings. None of the meetings

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<sup>2</sup> This presentation resulted in the eventual collaboration between WITNESS and the Russian organization Memorial on the production of the film *The Crying Sun: The Impact of War in the Mountains of Chechnya*. To view the movie, see [http://www.witness.org/index.php?option=com\\_rightsalert&Itemid=178&task=view&alert\\_id=56](http://www.witness.org/index.php?option=com_rightsalert&Itemid=178&task=view&alert_id=56).

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the Berlin meetings, CSIS hosted two workshops in May and July 2006 in Washington, D.C., that brought together experts on terrorism, development, and the region to discuss numerous factors affecting radicalization and the role that assistance can play in either reducing or accelerating it. The survey and the Washington meetings were generously funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). See Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson, “Cauldron of Terrorism or Bowl of Kasha? What Survey Data Say about the North Caucasus,” CSIS, July 2006, [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/csis\\_north\\_caucasus\\_report1.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/csis_north_caucasus_report1.pdf); Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson, “Security through Sociology: The North Caucasus and the Global Counterinsurgency Paradigm,” unpublished manuscript, July 2007.

<sup>4</sup> In part as a result of this meeting and other USAID efforts, USAID posted in spring 2007 a request for applications for the North Caucasus Youth Exchanges and Development Program. For details, see <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppId=14043>.

generated a consensus document, and no doubt, some of these recommendations will be disliked by any range of people and organizations, inside and outside of governments. Moreover, there are many steps needed beyond those listed that might well be adopted. We offer these recommendations fully aware of their limitations, as well as the difficulties of generating the political will to support them. We do so, however, with the belief that, if comprehensively implemented, they would contribute to security and stability in the region.

Sarah E. Mendelson

*Director*

*CSIS Human Rights & Security Initiative*

Carsten Lenk

*Program Officer*

*Robert Bosch Stiftung*

# 49 Steps to Improve Human Rights and Security in the North Caucasus

## **Chechnya: Brainstorming Meeting, May 2005**

Participants' suggestions have been grouped into three general themes:

1. Multiple policy dialogues on Chechnya and the North Caucasus;
2. Efforts to coordinate current and future donor assistance to Chechnya and the North Caucasus; and
3. Leverage points for work with governments.

### **Multiple Policy Dialogues**

#### *1. Encourage and Assist the Convening of a Series of Conferences on Chechnya and the North Caucasus*

These international conferences would pick up where the May 2005 Berlin meeting left off and tackle the range of individual issues raised there, including: how to prioritize and operationalize the provision of different forms of humanitarian and “recovery” or development assistance; how to create conditions in which assistance is no longer needed; how progress should be monitored and measured; how to balance the humanitarian and security (e.g., counterterrorism) aspects of the Chechen conflict; how to support the activities of NGOs in the North Caucasus more effectively; where to target assistance in the North Caucasus (only to the regions immediately around Chechnya or across all of Russia’s Southern Federal District); whether and how to include the South Caucasus in thinking about the problems of the North Caucasus. Responsibility for these meetings would be assumed by different organizations, but each meeting would include a core group of the Berlin meeting participants for continuity.

#### *2. Support the Creation of an International Working Group on the North Caucasus*

This group—which would pull together the small number of international experts conducting research on the North Caucasus—would serve as a resource for

donors, policymakers, and members of the international community. It would meet on a regular basis with a core membership to discuss the security and human rights situation, as well as donor and government strategies for the North Caucasus. The group would explore different themes and where appropriate would draw in Russian government officials and other outside observers for discussion on key issues. Subjects might include (but not be limited to) the development of methods for providing a meaningful assessment of local conditions in the region and for tracking the local populations' attitudes and needs; the modalities and conditions for engaging in security-sector reform; and appropriate mechanisms to increase coordination among donors. As an additional suggestion, the group might contemplate creating and managing a comprehensive database for information on conditions in Chechnya and the North Caucasus, which could also draw on information from the Russian authorities and be made available to Russian researchers.

### *3. Convene a Meeting with Members of the International Conflict Resolution Community*

Either as part of the Working Group initiative above, or separately, international experts on the North Caucasus would meet with members of the international conflict resolution community to consider lessons learned and targets of opportunity for Chechnya from a variety of international conflicts and applicable situations.

### *4. Launch a Diplomatic or Elder Statesmen Initiative*

Following the model used in Northern Ireland, and the special representatives assigned by the Council of the European Union and the British government for the South Caucasus, an experienced European diplomat or politician could be assigned to focus on the North Caucasus to raise the profile of the region in European capitals. This individual would coordinate with the multiple European organizations involved in both the management of relations with Russia and in providing assistance to the North Caucasus. The mandate would also include identifying lessons learned from other conflicts.

### *5. Reframe the Discussion on Chechnya to Focus on the Security Implications of Abuse and Impunity*

This effort would involve increasing the knowledge and understanding within the Russian Federation and the Euro-Atlantic community of the security implications of human rights abuse and impunity (the failure to hold those carrying out abuses accountable for their crimes)—particularly the links between abuse and support for insurgents and terrorists among the Chechen population. This campaign would also advance what is commonly referred to as the “human security” approach with the Russian and other governments and the donor community, underscoring the fact that human rights issues should be seen as an integral component of all security, humanitarian, socioeconomic, and political problems in the region.

### *6. Convene a Meeting on Scenario Building*

An expert meeting would focus on exploring alternative models of governance for Chechnya that would draw on a multiple party framework and build on the local context.

### *7. Create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

Drawing on the experience of South Africa and other conflict situations, the international community might support the development of a truth and reconciliation commission or a similar set of activities related to transitional justice that could contribute to broader intra-Chechen and Russo-Chechen dialogues about the conflict.

## **Coordinating Assistance Efforts**

### *8. Convene a Donors Conference*

This conference would bring together representatives from European governments and international organizations to coordinate efforts, as well as the overall range and total amount of assistance. Some sessions at this meeting would include the participation of nongovernmental experts from the Working Group on the North Caucasus (mentioned above) to help assess how different kinds of humanitarian and developmental assistance might be directed most effectively in the North Caucasus. The conference would also consider conditionalities that might be attached to facilitate donor operations.

### *9. Increase Donor Allocations for Human Rights and the Rule of Law*

This effort would involve a campaign to increase the funding allocated by individual governments and international organizations for the region. Beyond seeking the provision of additional funds, there would be an associated reassessment of the strategies and mechanisms for delivering assistance in the North Caucasus. Particular attention should be devoted to human rights and media, as well as efforts to reach and respond to the needs of local populations.

### *10. Develop Next Generation Programs*

Donors should give special priority to supporting the “next generation” in the North Caucasus, and especially in Chechnya, where youth have suffered greatly from the war. Donor programs would include, but not be limited to, creating opportunities for young people in the North Caucasus to meet with their peers from across the entire region rather than just within their own locality, as well as with young people from elsewhere in Russia and from other countries. Programs would aim at creating networks of young people that would focus on common concerns and establishing a political dialogue about the future, as well as addressing issues of reconciliation.

### *11. Develop Education Programs*

Donors could, additionally, address the needs of youth in the North Caucasus by setting up scholarships for study abroad, as well as by providing substantive

assistance packages for universities and schools in Chechnya and other afflicted regions (possibly through twinning programs with universities and schools elsewhere in Russia, in Europe, or North America). Programs would include increasing access to the Internet, the dissemination of scholarly texts, the provision of syllabi and related instructional materials, and the development of libraries, as well as moral support and advice for faculty and students through mentoring arrangements with partner institutions.

#### *12. Develop Health Programs*

Donors should address the multiple and specific health crises that afflict the North Caucasus with a particular focus on the impact of the war on the people of Chechnya, such as developing programs to help victims of mines, torture, and rape and to clean up environmental hazards.

#### *13. Support Capacity Building within the Human Rights and NGO Community*

European governments and international organizations should increase support for local and nationally based human rights organizations in the North Caucasus and Russia, with a particular focus on capacity building among the next generation of activists (as a parallel to the next generation efforts outlined above in the North Caucasus). Donors should specifically focus on the development of strategic planning and communications skills among next generation activists and organizations and also be prepared to offer long-term support. The proposed Working Group on the North Caucasus could help to develop networks and appropriate capacity so that donors would have access to reliable sources of information about independent NGOs (as opposed to government proxy NGOs) before distributing funds.

#### *14. Improve the Impact of Monitoring*

Donors and nongovernmental organizations should develop specific strategies to increase the impact of daily and monthly human rights monitoring. Of particular importance, the United Nations and NGOs could develop some joint structures to document and disseminate field observations that can be used as a guide for further action. Other related activities might include capacity building for local forensic experts in the North Caucasus.

#### *15. Establish an International Organization Presence inside Chechnya*

The United Nations and European Union should act on existing proposals and invitations from the Russian government to establish an official presence inside Chechnya. A UN assistance office, for example, would be able to expand relations with NGOs, offer a permanent umbrella of support to them locally, as well as monitor conditions on the ground directly.

#### *16. Develop and Distribute Information on Rights of Return*

The United Nations should work directly with local NGOs in the North Caucasus to develop new information tools for displaced populations both inside and

outside Chechnya to assist them in relocating and in rebuilding their homes and lives.

### **Leverage Points**

#### *17. Create a Compendium of International Legal Compliance*

A highly respected, independent nongovernmental organization (with particular focus on human rights and humanitarian law) should be supported to create a compendium of Russian compliance with, or violations of, its international legal obligations with respect to Chechnya. This could then be referred to by states and international organizations in their meetings with the Russian Federation.

#### *18. Discuss the Increased Terrorist Threat with the U.S. Government*

In engaging U.S. policymakers on the issue of Chechnya, European policymakers should detail how the Russian government's strategies and tactics in the North Caucasus may have increased the terrorist threat rather than contained it. Where possible, European approaches should be coordinated with American efforts. The terrorist threat issue should become a regular item in U.S.-EU discussions of Russia policy.

#### *19. Elaborate on the Increased Terrorist Threat from the North Caucasus with EU Members*

European member states should make concrete the EU policy on the "common spaces on counterterrorism" with the North Caucasus as a target of interest and concern. This issue should be pursued in more detail in ongoing European dialogues with Russia. The EU should also engage with NATO and other European security organizations on the concept and issues of human security.

### **Improving the Impact of Human Rights Monitoring: A Workshop with Producers and Consumers of Reports from the North Caucasus, March 2006**

Participants' suggestions are grouped in three general categories:

1. Practical suggestions for NGOs and donors to improve the impact of human rights monitoring;
2. Additional projects to be undertaken by both donors and NGOs; and
3. Specific themes and events that could be advanced by NGOs and governments.

### **New Tactics and Strategies for Reports and Outreach**

#### *1. Include Executive Summaries*

While reports should be detailed and, therefore, in some cases, of considerable length to document abuses, all reports should be accompanied by either a one-

paragraph summary or, for longer reports, a maximum two-page executive summary. Summaries should include the main findings, a brief description of context, overall numbers and trend lines of violence, as well as specific recommendations or action requests from the NGOs to governments or international organizations.

## *2. Include Citations*

Reports are most helpful when they include footnotes or citations to reports or interviews. The reports should contain enough information that anyone reading the report can track down a public statement or report cited. Where necessary, reports can cite anonymous interviews (though interviews with named witnesses tend to carry greater weight). Where possible, reports should include appendices with copies of correspondence with official bodies.

## *3. Coordinate Research and Advocacy*

NGOs are likely to leverage their influence and impact by coordinating research and messages and sharing information such as distribution lists. Joint reports are welcomed by consumers and are generally viewed as having greater authority and credibility.

## *4. Deliver the Message in Person*

As much as possible, NGOs should schedule time to see specific representatives of governments and international organizations following the release of a report. Inside foreign ministries or the U.S. State Department, NGOs should seek meetings with officials in regional bureaus (e.g., the Russia desk) in addition to those covering human rights.

## *5. Improve the Timing and Targeting of Advocacy Efforts*

NGOs should deliver recommendations to governments and international organizations, when possible, four to six months before the convening of large international meetings. NGOs should create and share “advocacy calendars” that list international meetings. To help shape the advocacy message, NGOs should consider the ideal headline coming out of the summit and the conversations and debates they would most want raised at the meeting by the leaders. NGOs should write their recommendations/requests specifically to elicit that headline or conversation. NGOs are encouraged to coordinate on message and reports; again, it is often the case that a joint report with a coherent message will have greater impact than multiple ones.

## *6. Support Capacity Building within the NGO Community*

A follow-on meeting to the March 2006 Berlin meeting should take place with “strategic communications” consultants working closely with NGOs to improve further the impact of their reports and advocacy. Specifically, the consultants would help develop messages, reach the desired audiences and improve the packaging and dissemination of reports. Such a meeting should include as many producers of reports as possible. Each participating organization would submit

one or more publications for consideration prior to the meeting and would work with the experts to improve presentation. Such a meeting should also explore alternative media and outreach strategies including the use of photographs, streaming video, and audio files. NGOs may also consider new ways of presenting information about disappearances, including drawing lessons learned from other areas of the world where large numbers of civilians were disappeared, such as in Chile and Argentina.

### *7. Support Additional Research*

Additional analysis and reports covering the specific security implications of human rights abuse would be helpful in making the case to the policymaking community that they should pay greater attention to this region and this issue. Such research could be undertaken solely by NGOs, by think tanks, or in collaboration. Topics might include a systematic inquiry into human rights abuse and links to extremism or socioeconomic conditions and extremism. Reports detailing the abuses by insurgents are also welcome although data limitations appear considerable. A greater effort to contextualize abuses and violence may give the reader a better sense of whether violence and instability in the region has increased or decreased and what patterns of violence exist. Such trend lines help policymakers quickly assess situations.

### *8. Generate Actionable Recommendations*

Where possible, NGOs should suggest very specific recommendations that derive from their research. NGOs may need some additional meetings with think tanks inside and outside Russia to help focus the policy message or with government consumers of their reports similar to the March 2006 meeting to increase familiarity with the types of recommendations that are seen by policymakers as “actionable.” NGOs might consider specific and relatively modest requests that they believe have some chance of being adopted by the Russian government; such requests are more likely to find their way onto the agenda and into presidential or ministerial talking points in the United States and Europe. Where possible, NGOs should present similar action requests to both the U.S. government and European governments and inform all parties that similar requests are being made; the chances of one government raising an issue increase if those responsible for an issue know that other governments are raising the same question.

## **Beyond Reports**

### *9. Develop Education Programs for the Caucasus Region*

Donors should set up scholarships for young people from the region for study in Europe and North America as well as provide assistance packages for universities and schools in Chechnya and neighboring regions (possibly through twinning programs with universities and schools elsewhere in Russia, in Europe, or North America). Programs might facilitate access to the Internet, the dissemination of scholarly texts, the provision of syllabi and related instructional materials, and the

development of libraries, as well as mentoring arrangements for faculty and students with partner institutions.

#### *10. Develop Human Rights Curricula for Russian Universities and Schools*

Donors should support the creation of research centers and training of professors in international human rights and humanitarian law and, more generally, on a range of human rights topics. Donors should fund the translation of already existing texts and syllabi, as well as their dissemination throughout the Russian educational system.

### **Campaign Themes and Events**

#### *11. Increase Accountability within the Council of Europe (COE)*

NGOs should use government statements as a metric of compliance with conventions and laws. NGOs might consider this approach particularly during the Russian Federation's chairmanship of the COE Committee of Ministers. NGOs should request that member states and particularly the Committee of Ministers actively promote Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) resolutions and recommendations (and those contained in the "Bindig Report" of June 2005). NGOs might analyze the results of the 2003 Committee of Ministers request to the Russian authorities to abide by and implement existing Russian legal mechanisms in bringing to justice those responsible for human rights abuses. NGOs should request that member states discuss the need for improved cooperation from the Russian authorities with the COE human rights monitoring bodies. All member states should call on the Russian authorities to immediately cease reprisals against Russian applicants and their representatives to the European Court of Human Rights. NGOs might develop follow-up advocacy strategies in the event that such appeals fail and reprisals do not cease. All member states should call on the Russian authorities to fully and effectively implement the judgments of the European Court for Russian applicants, including those from the Chechen Republic.

#### *12. Release Reports and Call for Greater Transparency*

NGOs should publicize their campaign for the release of reports that have been written assessing the Russian government's compliance with human rights and humanitarian law, for example, at the COE or through the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT). States should request greater transparency and the publication of all CPT reports and findings in the context of the Committee of Ministers monitoring on freedom of expression and information in Russia.

#### *13. Create a Compendium of International Legal Compliance*

An NGO or a consortium of NGOs should be supported to create a compendium of Russian compliance with, or violations of, its international legal obligations with respect to Chechnya and the North Caucasus. This compendium or database could then be referred to by states and international organizations in their meetings with the Russian Federation.

#### *14. Match DNA with the Missing and the Disappeared*

The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) is an organization that grew out of the Group of Seven meeting in 1996 and links DNA to those who have gone missing as a result of armed conflict. NGOs and member states should request during Group of Eight meetings and EU-Russia meetings that the ICMP expand its mission and establish an office in the North Caucasus to help with excavation of mass graves, identify and match remains, and create a DNA laboratory. (As of July 2007, EU funds have been allocated to build a forensic lab in Grozny.) The Russian government should promptly assist in such work and provide a full list of civilians killed and those disappeared.

### **Social Conditions and Instability in the North Caucasus, October 2006**

Participants' suggestions are grouped in two general categories:

1. Activities designed to increase donor coordination; and
2. Specific areas and programs that might be supported by the donor community.

#### **Toward Greater Coordination**

##### *1. Increase Donor Coordination*

A North Caucasus Donor Group should form and meet regularly in order to coordinate plans and programs for a long-term strategy, as well as enable donors to be flexible and proactive in responding to local needs and changing dynamics on the ground. This Donor Group would involve public and private donors, meeting once a quarter and, in the interim, correspond by listserv or, as needed, conference calls. The Donor Group should make a strong commitment to support human rights work, as well as humanitarian organizations, and should continue to meet regularly with NGOs. Such a group would have a rotating chair to be agreed on by the members.

##### *2. Assess Work to Date*

Public and private donors, NGOs, and experts could all benefit from the creation of a database of projects undertaken in the region, similar to the one organized by UNAIDS concerning HIV efforts in Russia. Donors might consider funding a separate, independent evaluation of the work supported on the ground in recent years to maximize the impact of remaining resources. Such an evaluation might seek to accurately document existing resources and track how much money has gone to support NGOs and human rights issues versus health or education in the North Caucasus. Another topic might be to explore donor relations with the Russian government in an effort to understand better why Russian authorities appear not to trust donors. It might also investigate, through existing data, public attitudes toward foreign assistance. Similarly, an assessment and catalogue of donor–Russian Federation agreements would be helpful in order to explore what

agreements have been successful. Donors and NGOs together should create an inventory of what sorts of projects are supported and with what results. Finally, an evaluation might attempt to distinguish programs and projects that the Russian government is especially interested in supporting (such as those concerning provision of water and food) and those that the federal authorities are unlikely to support (such as NGO capacity building).

### *3. Increase Consultations with the Russian Government: Step I*

In an effort to increase coordination among donors and engage Russian government officials, donors should request that donor meetings with senior representatives of the Russian government take place once a quarter. The World Bank or an agency within the UN system might take the lead on this effort. Increased coordination among the United Nations, World Bank, and European states might also occur in the lead-up to EU meetings with the Russian Federation.

### *4. Increase Consultations with the Russian Government: Step II*

Participants in the Bosch Stiftung meetings in Berlin welcome opportunities to engage senior representatives of the Russian government on issues related to the North Caucasus and on practical steps to increase investment in the region. Any potential Russian government delegation should ideally include federal and local authorities. Russian NGOs should also be included in such a meeting, at a location to be determined.

### *5. Attract Business to the North Caucasus*

Numerous studies show that poverty rates in this region are much higher than elsewhere in Russia. Social conditions are poor and needs are not being met. Donors should work together to develop a strategy to get businesses engaged in the region and assess the range of barriers to entry. A first possible step would be to engage Microsoft's corporate social responsibility program, Unlimited Potential.

### *6. Engage in an Appeals Process Concerning the Rule of Law*

The donor community should approach supporting human rights and rule of law issues in a similar way to humanitarian needs—clearly articulating what programs and resources are needed to protect individuals. To facilitate this appeals process, private and public donors as well as NGOs should begin to meet regularly to discuss and increase their support for the rule of law in the region. (See details below on what a holistic approach might involve.)

### *7. Develop a Victims' Protection Regime*

Countries should move from the current ad hoc witness protection system to an institutionalized one. European states should work with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to develop such a witness protection regime. Countries that provide asylum to refugees from Chechnya and other parts of the North Caucasus should be vigilant in having an inspection regime or monitoring

mechanisms in place before agreeing to return refugees. Donors should work with local NGOs to help track those returned to Chechnya.

## **Programmatic Areas**

### *8. Develop Multidisciplinary Rule of Law Programs*

Donors should develop comprehensive programs that adequately support the NGO sector and also train judges and, where practical, ombudsmen. For the NGO sector, salaries must be adequate, translation services provided, and public and private donors together with the NGOs should develop a program of protection for human rights defenders, including access to medical help and shelter. Strategic litigation efforts should continue to be supported. Programs with judges must center on strategies for resisting manipulation. Investigative journalism and independent media should be seen as a crucial segment of rule of law programs. Efforts to increase awareness and education of international and European laws should be a priority in schools, universities, and among the authorities.

### *9. Increase Support for NGOs*

Donors should increase financial and technical support for local and nationally based human rights organizations in the North Caucasus and Russia. Donors should make sure that living wages are paid to defenders. Beyond basic needs, donors should work with NGOs to build capacity among the next generation of activists with a particular focus on strategic planning and communications skills. Donors should be prepared to offer long-term support. A first step would be a meeting with communications consultants to help build capacity. Specifically, consultants would help to develop messages, to facilitate audience targeting, to package the publications, and to disseminate the reports. Such a meeting would also likely explore alternative media and outreach strategies including use of photographs, streaming video, and audio files.

### *10. Train Investigative Journalists and Support Alternative Media Sources*

To honor Anna Politkovskaya and the other journalists who have given their lives investigating stories in Russia, donors should increase support for investigative journalism in Russia—a critical component to combating corruption and creating a rule of law society where rights are respected. Public and private donors should work with journalism schools in Russia, in Europe, and the United States to set up a series of fellowships in Politkovskaya's name. These Politkovskaya scholars would meet twice during the one-year course of study. Donors must also ensure that journalists have a place to work when they return to Russia and support the creation of alternative media sources, such as Web-based media structures and possibly an association of independent electronic media.

### *11. Support Independent Sources of Information*

To address the lack of sources of information, donors should increase support for independent sources of information on developments in the North Caucasus, such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) and Caucasian Knot

(*Kavkazkii Uzel*), which already exist; and, where possible, also promote the creation of new associations and networks of independent media organizations.

### *12. Support Working Group Meetings on the North Caucasus*

The three meetings convened since 2005 at the Robert Bosch Stiftung in Berlin have brought together experts from various governments and international organizations, next generation Russian human rights researchers, and other experts conducting research on the North Caucasus. These meetings have proven a unique and useful way for interested parties to engage substantively with members of the nongovernmental community and vice versa. Topics for additional meetings focused on the North Caucasus might include: lessons learned and targets of opportunity from a variety of international conflicts, including but not limited to the Balkans and Northern Ireland. Areas of discussion would include economic interventions such as micro-lending and housing reconstruction, as well as rule of law and transitional justice issues, such as repairing community relations with the security authorities and the role of media in reducing conflict.

### *13. Support Islamic Education Programs*

Donors should support the networking of youth and teachers from the North Caucasus exposing them to examples of moderate Muslim educational curricula in countries around the world.

### *14. Support Youth Exchanges*

Donors can help lessen the isolation that youth in the North Caucasus region experience by creating and supporting a number of exchange programs in various parts of Europe and the United States. Donors should leverage existing programs to include, whenever possible, a North Caucasus component. Donors could, additionally, address the needs of youth in conflict zones by setting up scholarships for study abroad, as well as by providing substantive assistance packages for universities and schools in Chechnya and other afflicted regions (possibly through twinning programs with universities and schools elsewhere in Russia, in Europe, or North America). Programs would include increasing access to the Internet, the dissemination of scholarly texts, the provision of syllabi and related instructional materials, and the development of libraries, as well as moral support and advice for faculty and students through mentoring arrangements with partner institutions. The program might create opportunities for young people in the North (and South) Caucasus to meet with their peers from across the entire region rather than just within their own locality, as well as with young people from elsewhere in Russia and from other countries.

### *15. Develop Youth Programs Based on Targeted Needs Assessment*

Donors should support well-researched needs assessments to develop specific programs that youth in the North Caucasus would find most appealing and that counter isolation. These might include, but not be limited to, sports teams, debate clubs, and student newspapers. Projects should also be developed that foster leadership skills. Research should be conducted that identifies the specific needs

and experiences of girls and young women in the region. The needs assessments should be based on a combination of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and surveys using modern scientific sampling methods.

*16. Address the Security Implications of Abuse and Impunity and Relevance for the Euro-Atlantic Region*

Donors, policymakers, and NGOs alike need a more precise understanding of the conditions under which individuals are driven to violent social mobilization in these regions. Such an effort would also involve increasing the understanding within the Russian Federation and the Euro-Atlantic community of the security implications of human rights abuse and impunity, particularly when related to counterterrorism efforts.

## About the Author

**Sarah E. Mendelson** became the director of the CSIS Human Rights and Security Initiative in January 2007. She is also a senior fellow with the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program. The new Human Rights and Security Initiative has two separate areas of focus: increasing compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law at the same time that countries in the Euro-Atlantic region protect their citizens from terrorist attacks; and increasing implementation of anti-trafficking policies adopted in 2004 by the U.S. Department of Defense, NATO, and the United Nations. Her current research in Russia includes collaborative work on public opinion surveys of Russian attitudes on democracy, human rights, Chechnya, and the military, as well as a new project addressing gender-based harassment in the workplace and educational institutions. Before joining CSIS in 2001, Dr. Mendelson taught international politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. From 1997 to 2000, she directed a collaborative study, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, evaluating the impact of Western democracy assistance to Eastern Europe and Eurasia. From 1995 to 1998, she was an assistant professor at the State University of New York at Albany, and from 1997 to 1998, she was a resident associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In 1994 and 1995, she served on the staff of the National Democratic Institute's Moscow office, where she worked with Russian political activists. She has been a fellow at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation and Princeton University's Center of International Studies. Dr. Mendelson serves on the advisory committee of Human Rights Watch and the editorial board of *International Security*, and she is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She has testified before Congress and appeared numerous times on NPR, the BBC, and CNN. She has been published in the *Washington Post*, the *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), *Foreign Affairs*, and *Survival*, in addition to numerous scholarly journals. She is the author of *Changing Course: Ideas, Politics and the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Princeton, 1998); coeditor of *The Power and Limits of NGOs: Transnational Networks and Post-Communist Societies* (Columbia, 2002); and author of *Barracks and Brothels: Peacekeepers and Human Trafficking in the Balkans* (CSIS, 2005). Dr. Mendelson received her B.A. in history from Yale University in 1984 and her Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University in 1993. She also earned a certificate from the Harriman Institute.



