

At least 21 dead in terrorist attacks in Makhachkala and Derbent, Russia

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On the evening of June 23, terrorist attacks were carried out in the Russian cities of Makhachkala and Derbent, located in the impoverished North Caucasus republic of Dagestan on the shores of the Caspian Sea. The population of Dagestan is ethnically diverse but predominantly Muslim.

The attackers targeted two Orthodox churches, two synagogues, one of which was set on fire, and a traffic patrol post (one of the units of the traffic police). The attack took place on Orthodox Holy Trinity Day, one of the main holidays of Orthodox Christians.

According to the latest figures, at least 21 people were killed and 26 others injured. Among those killed were 16 policemen and five civilians, including one Orthodox priest. Five suspected terrorists were killed on the spot.

All media reports indicated that the attacks were well organized and the attackers themselves used foreign-made weapons in the attack, including at least one assault rifle.

Notably, among the attackers were the sons and two nephews of Magomed Omarov, a local official from the ruling United Russia party in Dagestan. Before the terrorist attack, Omarov was the head of one of the districts of the Republic of Dagestan and the secretary of the local branch of United Russia. He has now been arrested. He has already been prosecuted for hooliganism, but it is likely that he will also face a case under the article on aiding and abetting terrorism.

One of the nephews of Omarov who perpetrated the attack was, until 2021, the head of the district branch of the parliamentary party “Just Russia.”

As of this writing, no organization has claimed responsibility for the attacks. The Kremlin has only just begun investigating the attack, and has not yet formally charged any state intelligence service or terrorist organization. However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on June 25 that the missile attack on the beach in Sevastopol, which killed four people, and the terrorist attacks in Dagestan were likely synchronized.

Everything indicates that the imperialist powers were involved in the attack which serves their war aims and

strategy in several respects. It comes on the eve of the NATO summit in Washington, D.C., on July 9-11, and as NATO is preparing a direct entry into the war against Russia in Ukraine. At the end of May, the NATO countries approved strikes with weapons supplied by them far into Russian territory. This directly jeopardizes the civilian population in Russia, especially of the Kursk, Belgorod, Voronezh and Rostov regions.

The United States and other NATO members have repeatedly claimed that they will not cross certain “red lines” in order not to turn the conflict in Ukraine into a full-fledged world war, but then each time NATO member states have crossed these very “red lines” that they had drawn themselves. Even in an article before Biden’s decision to authorize U.S. weapons strikes on Russian territory, the *New York Times* claimed that Biden was unlikely to take such a step, but Biden did just that.

Given all these facts, it is logical to assume that the attack of militants in Dagestan was in the interests of the United States to destabilize the situation in Russia and in particular in the republics of the North Caucasus in order to weaken the Putin regime’s position in the war with Ukraine and disperse its forces on the internal front.

Already, the NATO powers have de facto opened up a second front in the war, within Russia itself. In March, a major terrorist at the popular Moscow City Crocus Concert hall took the lives of at least 145 people. As the WSWs and the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists have documented, the attack had the fingerprints of US imperialism and its proxy, the Ukrainian regime, all over it. The WSWs explained the goals pursued by US imperialism with such attacks as follows:

The aim is three-fold: First, to embolden opposition to the Putin regime within the oligarchy and state apparatus; second, to provoke a military response by the Kremlin that can serve as the pretext for a further escalation of the war by NATO; and third, to foster

ethnic and religious tensions within Russia that would destabilize the regime and facilitate the carve-up of the entire region by the imperialist powers.

All these three goals are also met by the terrorist attacks in Dagestan. In targeting Orthodox Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, the attackers clearly sought to inflame religious and ethnic tensions. Nor is the location of the attacks a coincidence. Dagestan is one of the most diverse but also most impoverished regions in Russia and has been afflicted by the impact of the decades-long war waged by the Kremlin against separatists in neighboring Chechnya.

In October 2023, Makhachkala airport was the site of anti-Semitic riots that broke out after the arrival of a flight from Tel Aviv. At the time, a statement by the YGBL, condemning the riot, noted:

Indeed, one cannot rule out that Western special services were involved in inciting the riots, seeking to undermine stability in Russia itself. The instigation of ethnic and nationalist conflicts and tensions, especially among the country's large Muslim population, has long been part of the imperialist strategy to carve up Russia. The *Financial Times* reported that a channel previously associated with Ilya Ponomarev, a leading figure in the pro-NATO opposition in the Russian oligarchy who has coordinated incursions of Russian territory by Ukrainian neo-fascist militias, had helped incite the riot.

Through such incitement and terrorist attacks, the imperialist powers and their proxies in the oligarchy are seeking to take advantage of and intensify the discord in the Russian elite. The ultimate aim is to weaken and eventually topple Putin's regime, putting a puppet regime in its place.

The fact that local officials with ties to the ruling United Russia party as well as one of the main "loyal" opposition parties, Just Russia, were directly and indirectly involved in the attack, testifies not only to the reactionary character of the ruling class. It also shows that there are violent conflicts within the ranks of the Russian oligarchy. If at the local level there are such extremists and conflicts among officials, what does the situation look like at the highest echelons of power?

The Putin regime has emerged out of the Stalinist destruction of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism as a Bonapartist regime. In order to protect the interests of the oligarchy, it is maneuvering between

different factions within the ruling class, between the working class and the oligarchy, and between the national interests of the oligarchy and the interests of imperialism. But both the relentless escalation of the war by imperialism and the growing social tensions within Russia itself increasingly undermine the basis for such maneuvers. In recent weeks, Putin initiated a far-reaching purge of the army, putting much of its leadership under the control of economists loyal to him, as well as the secret FSB special service.

The Putin regime, besieged from all sides, is sitting on a ticking time bomb. The strikes on Sevastopol beach and the terrorist attacks will further exacerbate contradictions among the various factions of the ruling class and among the elites of the national republics. The openly NATO-backed opposition is emboldened by the ever more direct intervention of NATO in the war, and its systematic efforts to destabilize the Putin regime and will, in its turn, intensify the longstanding preparations for a regime change. The ultra-nationalist faction, on the other hand, will become more insistent in demanding that Putin take decisive measures in the war in Ukraine, including and up to the deployment of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, separatist tendencies within republics such as Dagestan and Chechnya will intensify as well.

For the working class, the terrorist attacks in Dagestan and the strikes on Sevastopol beach are a serious warning. Without the independent intervention of the proletariat, Russia will either be dragged into a nuclear war or dismembered by the NATO imperialists into pliant puppet and dictatorial regimes. Workers in all countries must condemn the terrorist attacks and oppose the fomenting of nationalist and religious tensions, a central component of the development of a third world war that threatens humanity with extermination. What is urgently required is the building of a socialist anti-war movement that fights for the independent mobilization of the working class against imperialist war and capitalism.



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