

# SCHOOL HORROR: HUNDREDS DIE IN RUSSIA

## Introduction

### Focus

This *News in Review* story focuses on the hostage crisis at a school in southern Russia and its bloody outcome within the broader context of the ongoing struggle between the Russian military and separatist Chechen rebel groups.

### Quote

"My poor child, let him go. Take me instead. — Cry of a Russian mother, outside Middle School Number 1 (*Toronto Star*, September 2, 2004)

 Sections marked with this symbol indicate content suitable for younger viewers.

On September 1, 2004, a band of heavily armed Chechen rebels stormed Middle School Number 1 in Beslan, a town in the Northern Ossetia region of southern Russia. Hundreds of students, parents, and teachers, celebrating the beginning of a new school year, were seized and taken hostage. For the next 53 hours, the hostages endured an agonizing ordeal, denied even food and water, as their captors engaged in sporadic negotiations with Russian officials. The hostage-takers were demanding nothing less than the withdrawal of Russian forces occupying Chechnya in return for the safe release of their captives. Meanwhile, the attention of both the Russian and international media was fixated on the school. An atmosphere of tension and anxiety was palpable for reporters and distraught relatives on the scene, hoping against hope for a peaceful resolution to the standoff and the safe release of the hostages.

Then suddenly, on September 4, amid great confusion and the sound of gunshots being fired and bombs detonated, Russian Special Forces stormed the school. Local Beslan residents arrived with guns to take part in a frantic and unco-ordinated rescue effort to free as many people as possible while fighting off the Chechen rebels holed up inside. In the ensuing bloodbath, over 300 hostages were killed, many of them children. A number of the hostage-takers also died in the battle, although some were believed to have made their escape in the chaos and confusion of that terrible day. A sombre Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, appeared on national television to declare two days

of national mourning over the tragedy and commit himself to waging an all-out war on what he called Chechen "terrorism."

In the aftermath of the terrible carnage at Middle School Number 1, ordinary Russians were stunned and appalled as they took to the streets of Moscow and other major cities in massive, silent demonstrations. They were undoubtedly outraged at the tactics of the Chechen fighters who had been willing to use innocent children as targets in their struggle for independence. But they were also suspicious and resentful over Putin's handling of the Chechen crisis, and with his government's continuing failure to protect Russian citizens from the ever-worsening conflict. The Beslan outrage was only the latest in a string of violent and dramatic attacks that Chechen rebel fighters had staged inside Russia. These included the seizing of a Moscow theatre in 2002, the downing of two Russian commercial aircraft and a deadly subway bombing in Moscow in late August 2004. Many were starting to question Putin's hardline strategy of refusing to negotiate with Chechen rebels and viewing the conflict as one front in the global war against terrorism.

For his part, Putin showed no signs of rethinking his approach to managing the Chechen crisis. A few days after the bloody end to the school hostage crisis, he met with a visiting delegation of Western academics and reporters who asked why he had not initiated talks with more moderate groups within the Chechen independence movement. He responded angrily, asking them if they would be willing to invite Al Qaeda

**Did you know . . .**

Many of the Chechen suicide bombers are women known as “Black Widows”? They are women who have lost loved ones, often children, in the wars with Russia and take their revenge through suicide bombing.

leader Osama bin Laden to EU headquarters in Brussels or the White House in Washington, D.C., in order to resolve the conflict begun on September 11, 2001. The people of Beslan buried their dead and continued to search frantically for those who were still unaccounted for days after the massacre. The Rus-

sian people prepared anxiously for yet more Chechen attacks. With no sign of any willingness on the part of their government to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and Chechen fighters emboldened by their latest strikes, it appeared likely that their worst fears might be realized in the months to come.

**To Consider**

1. What was the main demand of the Chechen rebels who took hundreds of people hostage in the school in Beslan, in southern Russia? Why was it unlikely that their demand would be met?

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2. What was Russian President Vladimir Putin’s response to the crisis in Beslan? How did ordinary Russians react to these terrible events?

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3. Why do some observers worry that there will be more violent incidents such as the Beslan hostage crisis in the future as a result of the conflict between Russian forces and Chechen rebels?

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4. Describe your personal reaction to the inclusion of children and schools as a war target.

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## *Video Review*

View the video module carefully and answer the questions. Make sure that you ask for help with any questions that you did not understand or were unable to complete.

### Quote

"If a child utters even a sound, we'll kill another one."  
— Chechen terrorist during hostage crisis (*Toronto Star*, September 4, 2004)

1. What happened on the opening day of school in Beslan?

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2. How many hostages were seized? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many civilians are assumed to have perished in Chechnya during the recent wars? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How did the Chechen war come to Moscow in 2002?

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5. What is your reaction to the scenes of the child captives in the school?

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6. In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, with whom were the people of Beslan angry?

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7. How many perished in the attack? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What happened to Georgy Farniyev?

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9. Who is Shamil Basayev?

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10. How has the battle with Chechnya affected the power of Vladimir Putin?

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11. Why might Russians consider the massacre at Beslan their 9/11?

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## *Chechnya Timeline*

Here is a timeline of some key events in the history of Chechnya and its ongoing struggle for independence from Russian rule.

**1858** After decades of resistance, the remote, mountainous region of Chechnya falls under Russian rule after the defeat of the charismatic rebel leader Imam Shamil, who had fought to establish an Islamic regime.

**1922** Following the Russian Revolution, Vladimir I. Lenin's Bolshevik (Communist) government grants local self-government to the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as part of its policy of recognizing the rights of non-Russian ethnic minorities in the newly created Soviet Union.

**1941** The Soviet Union is attacked by Nazi Germany. German armies sweep across Russia, seizing vast territories and overwhelming millions of people.

**1944** Suspicious that the Chechens are collaborating with the Nazi occupiers, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin dissolves the autonomous republic and orders the entire population deported to Siberia and Central Asia. Many thousands of Chechens die during the arduous journey.

**1957** In an effort to make amends for Stalin's crimes, Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev restores the Chechen-Ingush state within the Soviet Union and permits survivors of the wartime deportation to return to their land.

**1991** After the fall of the Soviet Union, Chechnya's local Communist boss, Doku Zavgayev, is toppled, and Dzhokhar Dudayev, a popular former air force officer, becomes president and proclaims Chechnya's independence.

**1992** Chechnya adopts a constitution declaring its independence from Russia and establishing a non-religious state with an elected president and parliament.

**1994** Russian president Boris Yeltsin orders troops into Chechnya to crush the independence movement. In the resulting two-year conflict, the First Russo-Chechen War, over 100 000 people are killed and the Chechen capital, Grozny, is destroyed.

**1995** Chechen rebels carry their struggle for freedom into Russia itself, seizing thousands of hostages in a hospital in southern Russia. Over 100 people are killed as Russian security forces storm the building to end the standoff.

**1996** Chechen leader Dudayev is killed in a Russian missile attack, and is succeeded by Zemilkhan Yandarbiyev. After Chechen forces launch a successful attack on Grozny, Russian security chief Alexander Lebed and Chechen rebel army leader Aslan Maskhadov sign the Khasavyurt Agreement. It calls on Russia to withdraw its forces from Chechnya and grants it limited self-government.

**1997** Maskhadov is elected president of Chechnya and signs a formal peace accord with Yeltsin.

**1998** Chechen rebels opposed to Maskhadov conduct a series of kidnappings and attacks on Russian forces. Under Russian pressure, Maskhadov declares a state of emergency in Chechnya in order to deal with rising lawlessness and disorder.

**Definition**

*Shari'a* law is a form of Islamic law based on the Qur'an and the example set by the prophet Muhammad.

**Further Research**

To learn more about alleged Russian human-rights abuses, visit the Web site of Amnesty International at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org). A good source of independent local reporting is the Institute for War and Peace Reporting at [www.iwpr.net](http://www.iwpr.net).

**1999** Pro-Islamic factions within the Chechen independence movement call for Maskhadov to step down and be replaced by Salman Raduyev, a warlord who wants to establish an Islamic state under the rule of Muslim Shari'a law. Russian troops clash with Chechen fighters in the neighbouring republic of Dagestan, where the latter are trying to create an Islamic state. A series of bombs level apartment buildings in Moscow, killing over 300 people. Chechen rebels are blamed for the attacks. Russia's new president, the hardline former KGB boss Vladimir Putin, sends troops into Chechnya again to crush what he calls "terrorism." A pro-Russian state council is imposed on Chechnya, replacing Maskhadov's government. As Russian troops advance on Grozny, hundreds of thousands of Chechen refugees flee to safety in neighbouring republics. The Second Russo-Chechen War has begun, and leads to hundreds of thousands more deaths.

**2000** As Grozny is destroyed once again, Putin declares that Chechnya will be directly ruled from Russia and appoints Chechen religious leader Akhmat Kadyrov as head of the local administration.

**2001** When mass graves full of mutilated bodies are discovered in Chechnya, an international outcry grows over Russian human-rights abuses, including torture and illegal detention of civilians. Chechen rebels launch a major assault on the town of Gudermes and shoot down a Russian helicopter carrying senior military officers. After the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., on September 11, Putin links the Chechen rebels to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda. He declares his struggle against them to

be part of the international "war on terrorism." For this he receives strong support from U.S. President George W. Bush. Chechen rebel commander Salman Rudayev is captured and sentenced to life imprisonment and dies in a Russian jail in 2002.

**2002** Georgia accuses Russia of carrying out air raids inside its territory, which Russia claims are necessary to flush out Chechen rebels operating inside Georgia. The United Nations suspends all humanitarian aid operations in Chechnya after rebels kidnap an aid worker. In October, Chechen fighters seize over 800 hostages inside a Moscow theatre during a performance. Most of the rebels and over 120 hostages die when Russian security forces storm the theatre in a botched effort to end the standoff. A Chechen suicide bomber attacks Russian military headquarters in Grozny, killing 80.

**2003** Chechens vote in a Russian-organized election to approve a new constitution declaring Chechnya to be part of Russia. International human-rights groups strongly condemn the vote as fraudulent. Over 50 people are killed in a Chechen suicide bombing of a government building. Pro-Russian Chechen leader Kadyrov narrowly escapes an assassination attempt and is elected president in October. Russian forces kill a dozen Chechen fighters who crossed into Dagestan to take hostages.

**2004** Former Chechen president Yandarbiyev is killed by a bomb in the Arab state of Qatar, where he had been living in exile. A Qatari court finds two Russian intelligence agents guilty of his assassination. A bomb blast in a Grozny stadium in May kills Chechen president Kadyrov and others who are taking part

**Did you know . . .**

Three of the last four Chechen presidents have been assassinated and the fourth is in hiding?

in ceremonies celebrating the end of the Second World War. Dozens of people are killed in Ingushetia in attacks involving Chechen rebels. Putin blames Chechen rebel leader Maskhadov for the violence. Maskhadov denies responsibility for attacks against civilians, but states that he will continue to fight against the Russian occupation. Chechnya's pro-Russian former interior minister, Alu Alkhadov, replaces Kadyrov as president in a hastily organized election. Female Chechen rebels hijack two Russian aircraft and crash them in southern Russia, killing themselves, the passengers, and the crews, while bombs detonated near the Moscow subway cause further deaths.

On September 1, Chechen fighters launch their deadliest assault yet against

Russian civilians, seizing as hostages hundreds of students, teachers, and parents in a school in Beslan, in neighbouring Northern Ossetia. Russian forces storm the building, resulting in the deaths of hundreds, many of them children. Putin claims that Al Qaeda terrorists are fighting alongside the Chechen rebels. Maskhadov condemns the school attack, an action he claims was carried out by "madmen." But he warns of further Chechen strikes on Russian civilians, in revenge for Chechens killed by Russian forces in the conflict, unless Putin initiates negotiations with him. This Putin flatly refuses to do. Radical Chechen rebel leader Shamil Basayev claims that his group, the Riyadus Salikhin Martyrs' Brigade, was responsible for the Beslan attack and the hijacking of the airplanes.

**Inquiry**

1. Using the timeline, identify the main periods of conflict between Russia and Chechnya and the times during which there has been relative peace between them.

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2. Why do you think the violence between Russia and Chechnya escalated during the last few years?

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3. Why does Russian President Putin insist that his campaign against the Chechen rebels is part of the international "war on terrorism" that U.S. President Bush declared following the September 11, 2001, attacks on his country? Do you think his claim is valid? Why? Why not?

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4. In your view, how likely is it that peace will return to Chechnya? Explain.

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## *Tragedy: The Canadian Connection*

### Did you know . . .

The Chechen leader Shamil Basayev later bragged that it cost only 8 000 euros to launch the school hostage crisis and \$4 000 US to down two Russian planes? (*The Globe and Mail*, September 18, 2004)

### 1. Albina Batagova's Search for Her Lost Daughter

Albina Batagova left the city of Beslan, in the troubled Russian region of North Ossetia, in 2000 and now lives with her new husband Ruslan Bekmumamedov in Toronto. But when she emigrated from her homeland, she left behind two children from a previous marriage: her son Khetag and her daughter Alana. On September 1, 2004, Batagova, now expecting her third child, was horrified to learn that Khetag and Alana were among the over 1 000 people Chechen rebels were holding hostage after they stormed Beslan's Middle School Number 1 on the first day of classes. During the tense and nerve-wracking standoff that ensued, Batagova anxiously watched television coverage of the unfolding tragedy non-stop, hoping to catch a glimpse of her two children.

After the school hostage siege came to its bloody, chaotic end, Batagova and her husband caught the first available flight to Russia and reached Beslan desperate for news of Khetag and Alana. To her immense relief, Khetag had escaped from the school unharmed as Russian security forces stormed the building. But along with hundreds of other victims, Alana's whereabouts were unknown days after the shooting had stopped. Batagova and Bekmumamedov made the grim rounds of local hospitals and morgues, but to no avail. Finally, at the end of September, they realized that the search for their lost daughter was futile, at least for the present. According to the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry, the government agency responsible for accounting for the victims of the hos-

tage crisis, 76 bodies remain unidentified. But a small non-governmental volunteer group, including teachers at the school and family members of the hostages, claim that the real figure of those missing is closer to 300. They have established a Web site ([www.beslan.ru](http://www.beslan.ru)), and are appealing for international assistance in their efforts to find the missing children, including Alana. So far, the group has raised over \$150 000 in donations.

Meanwhile, Batagova has returned to Toronto along with her husband and son. She wants her new baby to be born in this country and never to have to experience the horror that her two other children endured in the school in Beslan. Although Khetag was physically unharmed, he has been severely traumatized by the ordeal, does not speak, and is unlikely to go back to school soon. As for Alana, Batagova refuses to give up hope. As she says, "She's my daughter. I have to keep looking for her" (*Toronto Star*, September 30, 2004).

### 2. Helping the Orphans of Chechnya

For 10 years, Hadijat Gatayeva has been struggling to help children who have been orphaned by the ongoing conflict in Chechnya. She has rescued them from bombed-out buildings in Grozny and treated them for malnutrition, infectious diseases, and massive trauma resulting from their having witnessed Russian forces shooting their parents in front of them. Four years ago, a Toronto psychiatric social worker, Robin Hughes, read an article about Gatayeva's humanitarian efforts in

Chechnya and was determined to help in whatever way she could. Since then, she and her partner Dianne Mercer have sent \$14 000 to Gatayeva to provide food, clothing, shelter, and medical care for the Chechen orphans under her care. "I'm afraid they will grow up without hope," she notes. To me, those are my kids sitting there. I know we can't do anything to stop wars, but we can do something for people who need help" (*Toronto Star*, September 25, 2004).

Hughes and Mercer maintain shaky contact with Gatayeva by e-mail, but the worsening situation in Chechnya is making both communication and the sending of more aid increasingly difficult. Gatayeva has had to relocate her orphanage from Ingushetia to Dagestan, both areas bordering Chechnya that are themselves being drawn into the ever-widening conflict in the region. The trickle of assistance these two Canadians are sending into Chechnya represents one of the very few lifelines still available for those suffering the effects of over 10 years of war. Most international humanitarian agencies have withdrawn their personnel and are reluctant to commit significant ship-

ments of aid to the area, fearing the attacks of armed gangs under the control of warlords such as Shamil Basayev, whose group has claimed responsibility for the Beslan school hostage-taking incident in early September 2004.

In addition to her orphanage in Dagestan, Gatayeva operates another shelter for homeless Chechen children in the Baltic state of Lithuania, far from the Central Asian conflict zone. But rising costs and anti-Chechen prejudice among the local population are adding problems to her efforts there as well. In addition, she is becoming increasingly pessimistic that any real peace will come to Chechnya in the immediate future. After the bloody culmination of the Beslan school hostage drama, Russian President Vladimir Putin has vowed that he will wage an all-out war to crush the Chechen resistance. In Gatayeva's view, this will only mean more orphaned children, destruction, and loss of life. For their part, Hughes and Mercer are appealing to Canadians to help the orphans of Chechnya by sending contributions to them by e-mail at [chechenchildren@yahoo.ca](mailto:chechenchildren@yahoo.ca).

## Activities

1. Read the passages above and discuss them with your classmates. Note especially what you think are the main similarities and/or differences between them. In what ways do you think they capture or portray two different faces of the conflict between Russia and Chechnya? How effectively do you think they do this?
2. As a class, discuss what you think people living far from a conflict zone like Chechnya can do to help the people who are suffering as a result of it. Log on to the Web site given in the first part of the article, and/or consider finding out more about helping the individuals discussed in either or both parts of the reading.

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## *Behind the Headlines*

### **Did you know . . .**

The Russian government has levied a reward of \$10-million US each for information leading to the capture of Shamil Basayev and Aslan Maskhadov?

An international event as horrific and disturbing as the hostage-taking incident in Beslan rivets the attention of the world's media and individuals. But moving beyond the shocking images of the tragedy and the emotions they generate, it is necessary to step back and gain some perspective on such events, including the factors that have contributed to causing them, and their likely implications and consequences. Here are some background issues that impact on the current conflict between Russia and Chechnya, and that have helped to shape and influence violent events like the Beslan hostage crisis.

### **1. The Chechen Struggle and the "War on Terrorism"**

Ever since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Russian President Vladimir Putin has not hesitated to link his country's military campaign against Chechen separatist rebel fighters with the "international war on terrorism" that his friend and ally U.S. President George W. Bush declared against Al Qaeda and Islamic fundamentalism. Russian intelligence has repeatedly claimed that Al Qaeda volunteers have taken part in Chechen strikes against civilians in Russia, including the seizure of the school in Beslan. In addition, the Chechen struggle for freedom against Russian forces occupying their land has been negatively characterized as yet another front in the Islamic fundamentalist attack on "the West" and its values of democracy, secularism, and tolerance.

There is no doubt that some Chechen rebel groups draw inspiration from extremist Islamic fundamentalism of

the Wahabbite variety that finds its main base of support in Saudi Arabia. The faction under the control of Shamil Basayev has stated that its goal is the eventual creation of an Islamic state in Chechnya and possibly in the neighbouring states of Ingushetia and Dagestan. But for most of its history, the Chechen independence movement has been remarkably secular, and free of religious fanaticism. Aslan Maskhadov, the main Chechen rebel leader and former president of the republic, has repeatedly condemned acts of terrorism against civilians and has distanced himself completely from groups such as Al Qaeda. The overwhelming majority of the rebels who have taken part in recent attacks inside Russia have come from either Chechnya itself or from one of the neighbouring states, such as Ingushetia or Dagestan.

Chechen society, while heavily influenced by Islamic religious and cultural values, is also markedly secular, largely as a result of decades of non-religious Soviet rule. Putin's efforts to discredit Chechen separatism with the "terrorist" label have met with some success, especially following the Beslan tragedy. However, many informed observers continue to draw important distinctions between the random terrorist actions of groups such as Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, and the ongoing struggle of the Chechen people to drive the Russian occupiers out of their homeland.

### **2. Chechnya and the "Domino Effect" in Central Asia**

To Russia's leaders, the Chechen

struggle for independence poses a serious threat to the stability and territorial integrity of their country. The rebellious Chechens are just one of a large number of non-Russian minority groups inhabiting the nation. In fact, more than half of Russia's vast land mass is home to non-Russian people, many of whom have their own autonomous regions or ethnic republics. The breakup of the old Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in the creation of 14 newly independent states, along with Russia itself. However, Chechnya did not gain its freedom at that time since it did not have full republic status within the Soviet Union. Ever since former president Boris Yeltsin first sent troops to crush the Chechen independence movement in 1994, Russia's leaders have been determined to prevent its rebellious example from spreading to neighbouring states in the region.

The Russo-Chechen conflict has inflamed inter-ethnic tensions in the troubled North Caucasus region and southern Russia generally. In this area there are a vast number of different ethno-cultural groups, often speaking mutually incomprehensible languages. In Dagestan, the largest and poorest republic in the region, for example, there are at least 30 different ethnic groups, many of whom harbour great hostility toward each other. According to Aleksei Malashenko, an expert in ethnicity at the Carnegie Mellon Center in New York, "we are perhaps on the eve of a great war in the North Caucasus. Not just Chechnya, but Ossetia and Ingushetia. And there are religious and ethnic tensions elsewhere as well. We may get a big explosion, not just in the North Caucasus, but throughout southern Russia" (*New York Times*, Sept. 19, 2004).

Along with long-running ethno-

cultural and national conflicts in the region, religion may also help to fan the flames of violence. Many of the groups in the North Caucasus area practise the Islamic religion, and some have been influenced by fundamentalist strains like the Wahhabite faction that provides the religious ideology behind Al Qaeda. There are fears that the escalating war between Russia and Chechen independence groups may spill over into neighbouring states, touching off a full-scale ethnic and religious war in the region, with untold consequences and the possible involvement of outside actors such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey.

### **3. The Return of Authoritarian Rule in Russia**

With the downfall of communism and the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, there were great expectations that Russia had turned a page on its authoritarian past and entered a new period of freedom and democratic rule. But recent events, including Putin's response to the ongoing conflict in Chechnya, have raised serious concerns about a return to the heavy-handed and autocratic methods of both czars and commissars. For example, Russian state television's coverage of events in Chechnya in general, and the Beslan school hostage taking incident in particular, is extremely limited and heavily controlled. International media outlets attempting to report on the Russian occupation of Chechnya have faced serious difficulties in broadcasting their stories, especially if they portray the actions of Russian security forces in a negative light.

In addition, Putin has publicly speculated recently that the demise of the Soviet Union was not necessarily a good thing for Russia, especially since

under the old communist regime ethnic discontent was kept under tight control. He doubts that Russia can ever become a full-fledged Western-style democracy while it continues to face serious threats to its political stability and territorial integrity, such as the one the Chechen rebels pose. He has backed up his ideas with action, recently scrapping the system that permitted the democratic election of local authorities in favour of a top-down method of appointments from Moscow to provincial and municipal governments.

Putin's marked lack of enthusiasm for democratic reform stems in part from his personal experience with the KGB, the dreaded security agency that operated as an arm of state control during the Soviet era. But his fears that greater freedom may lead to anarchy and a loss

of central control find deep roots in Russia's past. For most of the country's history, its peoples have been ruled by autocratic regimes that have never hesitated to use force to quell any form of opposition, whether political or ethnic in nature. The dramatic changes that have occurred in Russia since 1991 have given hope to some that democracy and a free-market economy may create the conditions for political stability, individual freedom, and prosperity. But many view the post-communist era negatively. They see it as a period marked by growing unrest and ethnic violence, widespread corruption in government and the economy, and increasing poverty and desperation for the large part of the population that has been left behind in Russia's move from state control to free-wheeling capitalism.

## Digging Deeper

1. Form groups with your classmates to discuss the information in this section. As a group, consider how any one of the three background factors presented above has impacted on the conflict between Russia and Chechnya, leading to specific events such as the Beslan school hostage-taking incident. Evaluate the usefulness of this information in helping you to develop a deeper understanding of this current event.
2. As a class, discuss the issues arising from this background information in the form of questions to help focus your inquiry. The questions could be posed in this form: Do you accept Russian President Putin's claim that his campaign against the rebels in Chechnya is part of the international "war on terrorism" and should thus receive the wholehearted support of the international community? Should Russia permit non-Russian minority groups such as the Chechens and others to break away and form their own independent states? What would the consequences of such a move be, for both Russia and the North Caucasus region as a whole? Is Russia moving back to its authoritarian past as a result of Putin's recent policy decisions? How should the United States, the European Community, and the world respond to events in Russia?
3. How can people in other countries help bring an end to the terrible conflict in Chechnya? Must we simply watch in horror or are there pro-active alternatives?

