

# Vladikavkaz Mourns Bombing Victims; 21 Others Killed

September 12, 2010



Relatives mourning Yaselin Mamedova, 54, and Elnur Ashinov, 18 months, both killed in the Vladikavkaz bombing. **Sergey Ponomarev**

**VLADIKAVKAZ** — Clashes between police and suspected militants left 21 more people dead in the North Caucasus, even as stunned Vladikavkaz residents laid flowers in a square where a suicide car bombing last week killed 17 people and wounded more than 140.

The bombing on Thursday near the central market of Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia, was the most serious attack in Russia since the March metro bombings in Moscow that killed 40 people.

The Vladikavkaz market was cordoned off Friday and investigators combed the site for clues about the bombing, which was so powerful that glass in nearby buildings shattered.

Flags flew at half-mast throughout the city. The area was cleaned of blood and shreds of clothing, but twisted wrecks of several cars still littered the street.

An injured victim died in the hospital early Friday, bringing the death toll to 17, not including the suspected attacker. A North Ossetia health official said 107 of the wounded were in local hospitals, and 11 severely injured victims had been flown to Moscow, Itar-Tass reported.

President Dmitry Medvedev pledged to track down the perpetrators, saying, "The terrorists involved in such actions will be destroyed."

The UN Security Council also "condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack that occurred in Vladikavkaz," calling it a "heinous act of terrorism."

A statement read by the council's current president, Turkey's UN Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan, reaffirmed that "any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation."

A few blocks from the blast site on Friday, weeping relatives and neighbors mourned two bombing victims: 54-year-old Yaselin Mamedova and 18-month-old Elnur Ashinov. Their bodies were prepared for burial later in the day in line with Muslim practice.

Funerals were also held Saturday for some victims.

About 200 people rallied in front of the regional government's headquarters Saturday, demanding that authorities offer better protection for the population.

Raising fears of a new terror attack, a car exploded in a courtyard of an apartment building in Vladikavkaz on Saturday, hurting no one. Authorities said the blast was not a terror attack and apparently was linked to criminal disputes.

There has been no public claim of responsibility for Thursday's attack, but suspicion fell on Islamist militants who launch frequent small attacks in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia.

Those three provinces have a Muslim majority, but North Ossetia is predominantly Orthodox Christian with a sizable Muslim minority.

In the latest violence, Dagestan's Interior Ministry said police killed four suspected militants holed up in a house in the village of Makhargi on Friday. Three police officers were killed during the hours of battle.

Police also killed a suspected militant during a raid on a house in the town of Derbent, near the border with Azerbaijan, said Magomed Tagirov, a spokesman for the regional Interior Ministry.

Two Dagestani policemen and a prison warden were also shot to death in separate attacks, ministry officials said Friday.

Another policeman was killed outside an auto repair shop in Ingushetia's main city, Nazran.

On Sunday, a top anti-terrorism official, Gapal Gadzhiyev, was killed in Makhachkala when a killer pulled up in his car with no license plates next to Gadzhiyev's Toyota near the Dagestani Interior Ministry building. Also Sunday, eight suspected militants were killed after being surrounded in a local house.

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