

# The Passing Of A Chechen

Contributed by Yvonne Ridley  
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News has just arrived on my desk that Abdallah Shamil Abu Idris, the Military Amir of the Mujahideen of Caucasus, has become a Shaheed. He's probably better known to most readers of this column as the fearless Chechen commander Shamil Basaev, loved and adored by many although the likes of Vladimir Putin have always regarded him as an enemy of Russia.

Precise details of his death are still sketchy although the report before me comes from the Military Council of the State Defense Council Majlisul Shura of CRI Abu Umar and it states very tersely that he died as a result of an "accidental spontaneous explosion of a cargo vehicle with explosives on July 10, 2006, in Ekazhevo village, Ingushetia".

Three other fighters also died by the side of the famous Chechen rebel leader. May Allah (swt) grant all of them what they deserve. Admittedly, it is probably not the way any of them expected to go - most jihadists probably have a far more romantic notion of how they will spring off this mortal coil and let's face it a touch of 'friendly fire' would not be the choice of any fighter.

However, for me personally, the arrival of this sad news provided one of those awful coincidences which make you shudder and reminds you of your own mortality ... you see moments earlier I had been leafing through a manuscript of his unpublished work called a Book of a Mujahiddeen. The paragraph I was reading said: "A Mujahid is looking closely into a child's eyes, for they are the ones that get to see the world without sorrows. When a Mujahid wants to know whether someone beside him is trustworthy, he tries to see it with the eyes of a child."

Basaev led an admirable fight to bring independence to Chechnya and resorted to targetting Russian civilians in the latter years of his struggle to try and bring the plight of the Chechen people to the wider world. He will probably be best remembered for masterminding the siege of the Moscow Theater and then the taking hostage of the children at a school in Beslan which sent shudders of revulsion around the world when both plans went tragically wrong.

On both occasions there were scores and scores of civilians deaths and injuries, but the overwhelming numbers of civilian killed actually died because of the actions of Russian troops who bungled rescue raids on both operations. No one could share the pain and loss of the Beslan parents more than Chechen mothers ... let's not forget that 42,000 Chechen children have been slaughtered in the last decade by Russian bombs and shells.

As yet, I've no further details about his death but the report says any boasts from the Kremlin that he died as a result of a Special Forces operations are simply not true. "There was not any special operation that took place. Shamil and other our brothers became Shaheeds (insha Allah) of Allah's own will (swt). The Supreme one has his own plan and decision. And about the special operation, Mujahideen will show how it should be carried out ...", - the representative of Military Council of of State Defense Council Majlisul Shura of CRI stated.

As you can imagine Putin's military spin doctors are claiming to have wiped out a dozen fighters, including Basaev, in a special operation while one of the Ingush puppet militia blamed his death on the careless use of explosives. Friendly fire? An own goal or a Russian military initiative? The lines are becoming blurred already and I guess by this time next week their will be scores of different stories going around about how the Chechen leader expired ... or has he? Yes the conspiracy theories have just begun.

What I do know for a fact is that Putin will have cracked a smile and supporters of the mujahiddeen will believe he has become a martyr. I also know that this grotesque war on the noble Chechens will continue and the blatant misuse of the War on Terror will continue unabated as a Kremlin device to terrorise the people of Chechnya.

His death will not stop the flow of innocent blood, and if anything times are going to get much, much worse for Chechens both home and abroad. In particular, I fear for the safety of my friend Ahmed Zakayev who was given political asylum in Britain despite the best efforts of Putin to label him as Russian's own Usama bin Ladin.

The lies which poured forth from the Kremlin fooled no one and so the British courts ruled in his favour allowing him to remain in the UK as a Chechen leader in exile for the time being. But just how safe he will be is anyone's guess. He is busy trying to highlight the plight of his people at seminars, rallies and meetings. Zakayev is admired across Europe and is very much seen as a moderate which actually makes him more of a target since Putin wants to demonize every single Chechen and their leaders. You see Putin has stepped up his war on the Chechen people ... wherever they may be. Legislators in Russia have just unanimously endorsed a Kremlin request that President Vladimir Putin be allowed to send special forces to hunt down terrorists anywhere in the world. Well George W Bush has given the CIA similar freedoms in secret nods and winks, so why shouldn't the Russian leader get in on the act?

Putin is quite open in his objectives though. He has been biding his time for some months now and the murder, last month, of five Russian diplomats in Iraq provided the right opportunity. He has now ordered that those responsible be hunted down and "eliminated", and the Russian security services have offered \$10 million for information leading to their capture. Watch out for a Russian version of Guantanamo Bay opening up soon in the frozen wastes of Siberia.

Senators in the Federation Council upper house of the Russian parliament rapidly approved the bill on July 7 and all Putin has to do is now sign it into law.

Looking increasingly like the Witch Finder General, Putin blamed international terrorists for the killing and said the permission would remain in force until "the elimination of the threat of terrorist acts being carried out abroad against the Russian Federation or Russian citizens."

The Mujahedin Shura Council, an al-Qaida linked group, claimed responsibility for their abduction 3 June and subsequent execution of the diplomats. The group had demanded that the Kremlin pull its troops out of Chechnya in exchange for freeing the diplomats. Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov says that special forces are on standby to catch the "scum" that killed the diplomats, and officials say the step is entirely in line with international practice. "This is not the use of the death penalty - it is a reaction to aggression using the means the country thinks it should use to protect its own interests and the interests of its citizens," Putin said.

International response has been quite muted so far, but this is a new depth which has been plumbed in the never-ending War on Terror.

Just how does Putin define a "terrorist"? The madman has just given his forces permission to go across the globe taking out, eliminating, assassinating and vapourising anyone who the Russian leader does not like. Extrajudicial executions of suspected terrorists and radicals abroad could become commonplace. There should be international outrage instead of mild disinterest. It is well known that Putin despises Ahmed Zakayev. So can we expect a Kremlin-backed hit squad to come to London and start shooting ... hmm, I thought that was the job of the trigger happy cops from the capital's Metropolitan Police Force! They've already managed to kill a Brazilian man after mistaking him for a Muslim terrorist, and one young Muslim man was gunned down in his own home during a bungled raid by the plods from the Met.

You see this is what happens when you crush and ignore peoples' human rights. I am afraid the behavior of the Bush Administration has opened stable doors across some of the most brutal and despotic regimes in the world ... and the horses are bolting. The extra judicial killing actually began in 2004, when two Russian agents were jailed in Qatar for wiping out Chechen leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev with a car bomb on Kremlin orders. For some bizarre reason the weak-kneed, lily-livered Qataris sent the two agents back to Russia and I can assure you the two assassins are not locked up in any sort of gulag where they should be left to rot for what they did.

Why, oh why, do most Gulfies have the backbones of amoeba? I mean what can Russia do to the Qataris? I know that the need for visas were set aside when I lived in the tiny state which sticks out of the gut of Saudi Arabia. As a result we had every sort of mafia, pimp, drug-dealer and prostitute plying their trade across Doha within weeks. The Qataris should have stood firm and refused to hand over the convicted killers. I mean they have given up a huge slice of Qatar to the US Southern Command, so the Russians are hardly likely to launch an attack.

Now we have international gun law with Putin ordering his agents to seek and destroy the killers of the Russian diplomats in Iraq. Putin made the statements during a meeting in Moscow with Saudi Arabia's Prince Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud. Russia would be grateful to all its friends for any information on the criminals who killed our citizens in Iraq, Putin told the Saudi prince. "Sod off!" should have been the reply from the prince, but no, not a peep. What is it with the folk who live on the Arabian Peninsula? Has everyone gone completely insane, barking mad or what?

Dubya has managed to turn the globe into some sort of stage set where gun law rules. The trouble is it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell the heroes from the villains. The same Russian hit squad which took out Aslan Maskhadov, Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev and the Saudi Samir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem aka Khattab, is now probably on some hunt and kill mission as I write.

And exactly who will be helping the hit squads? Because trying to find members of and supporters and backers of the Mujahedin Shura Council will be like hunting for a needle in a haystack? Ivan Safranchuk, head of the Moscow office of the Russian-based Center for Defense Information, admits Russian agents will have to rely on the assistance of US-led coalition forces, the Iraqi government, and Saudi secret services. Hmm, and I bet those craven little butt kissers from Jordan and Egypt's intelligence services aren't too far behind in volunteering.

Yes, I can see a Coalition for the Killing pulling together, and with all the flawed intelligence going around the world today, they could very well be coming down your way soon. Watch out!