Report on Human Rights Violations in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic

September 2026

An analysis of open sources for September 2026, including information from human rights organizations, independent media and court proceedings, reveals a persistent pattern of violations of human rights and freedoms by the authorities, security agencies and judicial bodies of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. The documented incidents reveal a profound crisis in the regional justice system, manifested in internal purges of the loyalist camp through punitive psychiatry and the prolonged isolation of former supporters of the regime. Particularly pressing are instances of severe administrative repression against believers through the use of the Ministry of Justice's dysfunctional Federal List of Extremist Materials, as well as the escalation of assembly-line prosecutions of minors in "terrorism cases," built on online sting operations and the security services' quota-driven performance system in an atmosphere of pervasive intimidation and an information vacuum. Coordinated action by the security apparatus, prosecutors and military courts to fabricate charges of assisting terrorism as a means of exerting economic pressure on regional businesses, while circumventing international extradition safeguards, together with the practice of imposing maximum prison terms in absentia and pursuing leaders of the Circassian anti-war movement across borders through INTERPOL channels, makes an urgent expansion of human rights efforts in the republic essential.

The machinery of repression catches up with pro-Kremlin blogger Ilya Remeslo

Another symbolic threshold has been crossed in contemporary Russian law enforcement: the mechanisms of repression created to suppress independent civil society have begun systematically consuming loyal propagandists and defenders of the establishment. The criminal prosecution of Ilya Remeslo, a Nalchik-born lawyer and formerly prominent pro-Putin blogger, provides a striking illustration of this destructive trend.

The Primorsky District Court of St. Petersburg, presided over by Judge Dmitry Khamadiyev, extended Remeslo's detention by a full six months, until March 8, 2027. The blogger, who for years helped security agencies fabricate cases against the opposition, is now himself in detention on charges of spreading "false information" about the Russian army under Article 207.3(2) of the Russian Criminal Code. He faces five to ten years in prison.

Remeslo's problems began in March 2026 after he published a post containing veiled criticism of the president. The publication prompted a sharp response from Apti Alaudinov, the head of the Chechen Akhmat special forces, who questioned whether it had been written "voluntarily." Immediately afterward, the blogger was forcibly placed in a psychiatric hospital in St. Petersburg.

On July 17, 2026, Remeslo was formally detained and remanded in custody by Moscow's Basmanny District Court. The case was based on statements contradicting official reports from the Russian General Staff, made during a video interview with journalist Ksenia Sobchak. Notably, investigators

accused the loyalist of acting out of "political hatred."

The blogger was subsequently transferred from the pretrial detention center to a specialist clinic, where he was held for almost a month, from July 28 to August 24, before being returned to detention. Courts entirely disregarded the defense's attempts to challenge his detention and invoke the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.

The court conspicuously rejects every defense argument. During the hearing in St. Petersburg, which Ilya Remeslo attended by video link from a Moscow detention center, the prosecution sought to exclude the press, but the court kept the proceedings open.

Lawyers Sergei Badamishin and Anri Tsiskarishvili sought a less restrictive preventive measure, reminding the court that the investigation had already been completed and the defendant could no longer interfere with it. The defense pointed out that Remeslo has permanent residence registration in St. Petersburg, supports young children and a father with disabilities, and has no previous convictions.

Nevertheless, the court proved entirely deaf to the arguments of this former ally of the system. Judge Khamadiyev dutifully granted the prosecutor's request, keeping Remeslo in prison conditions for another six months.

Clearly, systemic dictatorship admits no exceptions. Ilya Remeslo's case is important for understanding the nature of contemporary Russia's machinery of repression. It vividly demonstrates three propositions about the legal system:

1. No immunity through loyalty. Years of publicly serving the regime, denouncing independent journalists and displaying loyalty to the Kremlin no longer guarantee safety. State security institutions have become an autonomous punitive machine that must continually identify "enemies" to meet reporting targets, even when those enemies are manufactured from yesterday's ultrapatriots.

2. Total conformity. The "military censorship" legislation, Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code, is structured so that any departure from the Russian Ministry of Defense's official line is treated as a crime against the state. Only complete reproduction of propaganda formulas is tolerated: the slightest attempt by a loyal blogger to express an individual view or criticism leads to immediate isolation.

3. The revival of punitive medicine. The use of psychiatric hospitals to isolate bloggers and political opponents in the North Caucasus and the capital has fully returned to the security services' repertoire as an extrajudicial means of breaking a person psychologically and depriving them of legal protection.

It is also significant that the system applies the harshest measures available.

The length of this extension may be described as unprecedented: the court kept the accused in custody for six months at once. Courts of general jurisdiction use such lengthy, single extensions during the trial stage as a means of maximizing psychological pressure on defendants, effectively depriving the defense of regular opportunities to request a less restrictive preventive measure as circumstances change.

By keeping Remeslo in detention until spring 2027, the court completely disregarded the fact that the preliminary investigation had officially concluded, all case materials had been assembled and the indictment had been approved by the prosecutor's office. When a defendant is physically unable to influence the collection of evidence or destroy it, continued imprisonment loses its procedural justification and becomes a form of punishment before conviction.

Ilya Remeslo's story is a classic illustration of a historical rule: a dictatorship, having eliminated external opponents, inevitably begins purging its own ranks. For the human rights community, this case is evidence that justice in the country has been completely destroyed and arbitrary state action has become a universal threat to every Russian citizen, regardless of political views.

https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/8908986

https://forpost-sz.ru/a/2026-09-17/sud-v-peterburge-reshil-ostavit-blogera-remeslo-v-sizo

Importantly, Remeslo's case is only one element of the purge of the ultrapatriotic camp and the repression of pro-Kremlin bloggers and "war correspondents" in Russia.

Whereas in 2022-2023 Russia's machinery of repression focused exclusively on destroying the liberal opposition and independent media, by 2026 punitive policy had turned inward toward the loyalist camp.

The federal authorities and security services, particularly the FSB's Military Counterintelligence Department and the Interior Ministry's Main Directorate for Countering Extremism, began systematically eliminating all autonomous media activity on the right wing. The campaign aims to establish the Russian Ministry of Defense's total control over war-related coverage and eradicate "uncontrolled patriotism."

Human rights monitoring identifies three principal waves and groups of repressed pro-Kremlin media figures:

1. The dismantling of the radical wing of the "angry patriots"

The first and most severe signal of the purge of the loyalist camp was the arrest of former FSB officer Igor Strelkov (Girkin), leader of the Club of Angry Patriots. Despite his ultranationalist position and personal participation in fighting in the Donbas in 2014, courts of general jurisdiction sentenced him to four years in prison for incitement to extremism under Article 280 of the Criminal Code. The charges arose from Telegram posts criticizing the Defense Ministry's leadership and questioning the effectiveness of military operations. This precedent demonstrated that, for the system, a person's past service to the pro-Kremlin agenda counts for nothing once they step outside official censorship boundaries.

2. Assembly-line criminal prosecutions of Z-channel administrators and war correspondents

Following the opinion leaders, those operating and writing for popular ultrapatriotic outlets also came under attack:

- The Rybar project and the Goodwin media holding's network of channels. Preventive measures against authors of major military channels ranged from FSB searches to compulsory designation as "foreign agents" and account freezes for "unauthorized fundraising for the army."

- Arrests for "discrediting" the military and extortion. Numerous administrators of patriotic online communities, including projects in the Kremlyovskaya Prachka network, the Nezygar and Brief channels, and associated entities, were placed in pretrial detention. Security agencies began extensively combining "military censorship" provisions, Articles 207.3 and 280.3, with economic offenses, including extortion under Article 163, to criminalize any unofficial information. Bloggers who published information about losses, corruption in supplying military units or command failures were arrested either for alleged falsehoods or in cases involving the blackmail of senior officials through paid arrangements to suppress Telegram coverage.

3. The criminalization of "subjective loyalty"

What distinguishes the prosecution of Ilya Remeslo is that he did not belong to the radical military opposition. His criminal case demonstrates the stage of absolute monopolization of the information space. Open rebellion against the authorities is no longer necessary to be held in pretrial detention for six months, until March 2027: a subjective opinion that departs even slightly from the Russian General Staff's daily briefings is sufficient.

The integration of regional security powerbrokers such as Apti Alaudinov into the federal repressive agenda enables criminal prosecutions and punitive psychiatry against bloggers on the basis of personal conflicts with Chechen units or criticism of the Defense Ministry's leadership in interviews with major media outlets, as in the interview with Ksenia Sobchak.

Thus, the purge of the loyalist information space has finally eliminated "authorized criticism" in Russia. The state system has shifted to totalitarian censorship, in which only official military spokespeople have the right to broadcast. The fate of former pro-Kremlin bloggers and war correspondents demonstrates that loyalty no longer guarantees safety in contemporary Russia. The machinery of repression operates autonomously, consuming its own personnel to demonstrate complete effectiveness and create the illusion of absolute unanimity.

Diana Zhaboyeva: a victim of successive prosecutions for online statements

Law enforcement agencies and the judicial system of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic are methodically and deliberately destroying the remaining freedom of expression in the digital sphere. The criminal conviction of Nalchik resident Diana Zhaboyeva, subjected to successive administrative and criminal proceedings by the regional FSB and Interior Ministry apparatus, exemplifies this repressive practice.

The Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don found her guilty under Article 205.2(2) of the Russian Criminal Code, covering public justification or propaganda of terrorism on the internet. The court imposed a fine and a severe restriction of her civil rights: a two-year ban on activities involving the administration of websites and online channels.

Diana Zhaboyeva's case reflects the standard North Caucasus pattern of escalating charges against citizens with independent or critical views:

Initially, Zhaboyeva came to the attention of the Center for Countering Extremism because of her statements about the actions of the Russian armed forces. In late July, Nalchik City Court found her

guilty of "discrediting" the Russian army under Article 20.3.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses and fined her. At that stage, the security agencies identified the user's political reliability as a matter for further surveillance and investigation.

The security services considered a local administrative penalty insufficient. The FSB Directorate for Kabardino-Balkaria, together with the republic's Interior Ministry, initiated a more extensive examination of her publications. They found an online comment or repost that security-agency experts categorically interpreted as "justification of terrorism." This enabled the woman's conduct to be reclassified as a serious criminal offense.

An analysis of the assembly-line handling of Article 205.2 cases in southern Russia highlights the following systemic failures of justice in Zhaboyeva's case:

- Secrecy and opacity of the accusation. Neither the regional FSB Directorate nor the official judicial bodies disclosed the specific text, phrase or image for which Zhaboyeva was branded an "apologist for terrorism." Completely concealing the substance of a case is a deliberate tactic of security agencies in the Caucasus. It allows ordinary pacifist or anti-war rhetoric and everyday comments to be disguised as a "terrorist threat," preventing the public from assessing the absurdity of the accusation.

- "Linguistic examinations" as a tool. Charges under Article 205.2 rest entirely on the conclusions of state-funded linguistic experts attached to the Interior Ministry or the FSB. In the absence of genuinely independent adversarial proceedings in the North Caucasus, courts treat such assessments as incontrovertible evidence, disregarding the context and the author's actual intention.

- Restrictions of rights as censorship. A two-year ban on administering online resources forcibly excludes a civic activist from the information space. The state does more than impose a fine: it deprives the person of the technical means of communicating an alternative opinion, creating a sanitized digital environment.

Diana Zhaboyeva's case demonstrates that Kabardino-Balkaria has established a system of dual prosecution for the same online behavior, first under the administrative code and then under the Criminal Code. Security services equate peaceful citizens who express disagreement online with members of a radical armed underground, enabling the FSB to artificially inflate its statistics for solved terrorism offenses in the North Caucasian Federal District.

https://kbrria.ru/proisshestviya/VKabardinoBalka155riiosuzhdenamestnayazhitelnitsaprichastnayakopravdaniyuterrorizma

A conviction in Nalchik over a money transfer made five years earlier

Law enforcement agencies and courts in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic continue retrospectively prosecuting citizens for past lawful activities. Nalchik City Court's conviction of a 51-year-old local man for financing extremism is a striking example.

The man was found guilty under Article 282.3(1) of the Russian Criminal Code, financing extremist activity. The court imposed a suspended three-year prison sentence with a one-year probation period. Although the outcome was less severe than the provision's prescribed penalty of three to

eight years of actual imprisonment, the precedent reveals dangerous mechanisms of pervasive financial control.

The criminal case arose from an ordinary money transfer that the Nalchik resident made to an unidentified nonprofit organization in August 2021.

According to FSB investigators and the Interior Ministry's Center for Countering Extremism, the defendant "knew" that the organization's activities had been prohibited in Russia and designated extremist. A joint regional team carried out the surveillance operation and stopped his activities.

A human rights review of the case identifies systemic indicators of the fabrication of such proceedings:

- Retrospective prosecution. Security agencies deliberately retrieve bank-transfer records from five years earlier. A citizen who made a one-time donation or transfer when an organization may have been legally operating, or in the process of being banned, is automatically criminalized in 2026.

- Suspended sentences as a means of control. Courts in the Caucasus often use suspended sentences to create an illusion of "lenient justice." In reality, a suspended conviction for an extremism offense leads to immediate inclusion on Rosfinmonitoring's list of terrorists and extremists. All personal bank cards are blocked, monthly spending is restricted to a subsistence allowance, and the individual loses the ability to engage lawfully in employment or economic activity.

- Assembly-line "financial" cases. This Nalchik case is not unique. The republic's prosecutor's office previously reported the detention of a 31-year-old local resident under a similar scheme, likewise accusing him of transfers to extremist organizations.

A particularly serious failure in Kabardino-Balkaria's penal and law enforcement practices is the information vacuum surrounding political trials. The Kabardino-Balkaria Human Rights Center has officially reported a critical shortage of detailed information about fabricated "terrorism" and "extremism" cases in the republic.

The principal cause is direct blackmail and intimidation of suspects by security personnel. Upon detention, officers from the Center for Countering Extremism and the FSB "recommend" that defendants and their relatives neither complain nor contact independent human rights defenders, threatening otherwise to replace suspended sentences or less restrictive preventive measures with actual imprisonment in strict-regime penal colonies. Frightened people agree to expedited proceedings and guilty pleas, enabling the republic's security services to manufacture case-clearance statistics without obstruction while concealing the defendants' lack of actual intent.

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/426510

Irina Pokhorenko sentenced for financing "extremist activity"

The Prokhladnensky District Court of Kabardino-Balkaria convicted local resident Irina Pokhorenko of financing extremist activity under Article 282.3(1) of the Criminal Code and imposed a suspended three-year prison sentence.

Official agency statements did not disclose the exact amount transferred or the name of the extremist organization. Analysis of the court docket established the convicted woman's identity: the criminal case reached the court on June 2, and the verdict was delivered on July 20.

Pokhorenko's case displays the security agencies' characteristic lack of transparency:

- A vague accusation. Investigators alleged that in August 2021 Pokhorenko transferred money to an organization "knowing" that its activities were prohibited in Russia. As usual, neither the Interior Ministry nor the FSB disclosed the amount or the organization's name.
- Involvement of the security services. A substantial security apparatus was deployed against the woman: operational support was provided by officers of the regional Interior Ministry's Center "E," together with officers from the republic's FSB Directorate.
- Nonpublic proceedings. The agencies chose to conceal the convicted woman's name entirely in their press releases. Independent journalists verified her identity only by monitoring the Prokhladnensky District Court docket. The proceedings were completed quickly: the case reached court on June 2, and the guilty verdict was announced on July 20.

Human rights monitoring groups note that Article 282.3 is often applied nonpublicly in the North Caucasian Federal District, leaving independent lawyers and human rights defenders with a serious shortage of information about extremism and terrorism cases in the region.

https://www.instagram.com/p/Dc9Rxoggzi5/

Diana Indreyeva's case and the systemic absurdity of prosecution for selling religious books

Nalchik City Court held 40-year-old local resident Diana Indreyeva administratively liable under Article 20.29 of the Code of Administrative Offenses, production and distribution of extremist materials, for an ordinary attempt to sell an old printed book on a popular online classified-advertising platform.

The Interior Ministry's Center for Countering Extremism treated the commercial advertisement as "dissemination of extremism" because that particular religious publication had been included in the Federal List of Extremist Materials in 2015. The court fined the woman. The incident did more than add to the regional Interior Ministry's repressive statistics: it again exposed the profound systemic flaws and technical absurdity of Russia's practice of banning literature.

The substance of Indreyeva's case is striking for its everyday triviality and the disproportionate security apparatus deployed by the state. During targeted investigative operations, officers discovered an advertisement for an old printed book. An ordinary attempt to dispose of unwanted household reading material or earn a small amount of money was classified as an offense against state security. As usual, neither the police nor the court disclosed the religious publication she had attempted to sell.

The security services deliberately conceal book titles to shield the absurdity of such accusations from public scrutiny. Confiscation and the fine were imposed without any fresh substantive analysis of the text: the court considered a formal match between the book title and an eleven-year-old list

entry sufficient.

https://kbrria.ru/proisshestviya/VKabardinoBalkariipreseklipopytkuprodazhiekstremistskoyliteratury14

A human rights analysis of Diana Indreyeva's case reveals a fundamental problem: ordinary citizens cannot realistically protect themselves from prosecution under Article 20.29 because of the structural collapse of the Federal List of Extremist Materials itself.

Human rights experts and researchers identify several factors that turn the list into a trap for the public:

- The registry's enormous size. The Ministry of Justice's list has expanded to several thousand entries. It is a vast, chaotic collection of textual data containing the titles of books, brochures, leaflets, songs and videos banned by hundreds of different district courts nationwide. Checking it before selling an old item through a service such as Avito is practically impossible for an ordinary person.

- Inadequate identifying information. Court orders banning literature are entered in the Ministry's list exactly as worded in the operative sections of the judgments. Entries often contain only a fragmentary title, such as "Religious Book" or "Book with a Green Cover," without the author, publication year, publisher, print run or International Standard Book Number (ISBN). Peaceful citizens may own and attempt to sell entirely lawful academic or classic works without knowing that a particular translation or edition has been banned by a regional court.

- Inadequate search functions and interface. The Ministry's official banned-materials registry website is unstable and lacks flexible filters and precise search tools. Searching for a book title often yields no result because of spelling mistakes or peculiar wording introduced by court clerks. A citizen sincerely attempts to check a book, fails to find it in the database, posts an advertisement and immediately becomes the target of a Center for Countering Extremism operation.

Human rights defenders, including independent experts on freedom of conscience, note a pronounced religious imbalance in the application of Article 20.29. Muslims account for a disproportionate number of those fined or detained for possessing and selling books.

This is connected to the sweeping, effectively uncontrolled bans on classical and foundational Islamic literature imposed by regional courts in southern Russia and the Volga region in the mid-2010s. Authoritative collections of hadith, translations of the Quran, works by classical theologians and popular books on Islamic ethics were banned. Millions of Russian Muslims consequently became unwitting possessors of "extremist materials" overnight. Today, the FSB and the Center for Countering Extremism use this vast body of prohibited Islamic literature as a convenient means of artificially inflating case-clearance figures by fining homemakers and ordinary believers.

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/426023

Diana Indreyeva's case in Nalchik clearly demonstrates that Article 20.29 has entirely lost its original purpose of preventing the dissemination of dangerous radical material. It has instead become an instrument of administrative repression against ordinary citizens. A person is held liable not for intending to incite hatred, but for being technically unable to navigate the Ministry of

Justice's chaotic, opaque and poorly constructed lists.

Human rights organizations call for a fundamental reform of the list: a moratorium on prosecution over printed books published before their inclusion, the complete removal of classical religious literature, and strict requirements for internationally recognized identification through an ISBN for every prohibited item. Until these measures are adopted, any attempt to sell an old family library in Kabardino-Balkaria carries heightened legal risk.

Fabricated sabotage or a real threat? Analysis of the detention of a Ukraine-born man in Kabardino-Balkaria over an alleged plan to blow up a gas pipeline

The FSB Directorate for the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic reported detaining a 40-year-old Russian citizen born in Ukraine in the republic's Maysky District. He is accused of preparing sabotage against critical infrastructure. Security officials claim that he acted on instructions from Ukrainian intelligence services and planned to blow up the region's gas distribution system.

A criminal case was opened under Article 30(1), in conjunction with Article 281(1) of the Criminal Code, for preparation to commit sabotage. The provision carries a prison term of ten to twenty years. The court swiftly authorized pretrial detention.

This case joins a succession of "sabotage" and "treason" proceedings sweeping the North Caucasus, highlighting systemic human rights risks associated with the secrecy of the penal system and state security agencies' investigative methods.

According to the agency's official press release, the suspect allegedly initiated contact with handlers from the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and, "on their instructions, acquired components for making an improvised explosive device." The alleged target was a gas pipeline in the Maysky District supplying residential and industrial facilities.

Investigators claim that a search of the detainee's home yielded "assembled components of an explosive device, messenger correspondence containing assembly instructions, and topographic maps of the area." On the basis of these materials and operational footage of the arrest, immediately circulated by state media, the court placed the suspect in a pretrial detention center.

Human rights lawyers and experts on state security cases who study such proceedings in the North Caucasus urge extreme caution in assessing official FSB reports. Cases in this category regularly display recurring patterns of human rights violations:

- Complete isolation and "secret" lawyers. From the first moments of detention, suspects accused of sabotage and treason are cut off from the outside world. Independent lawyers hired by relatives or human rights defenders are denied access. Investigators impose appointed defense counsel, often described as compliant or "pocket" lawyers, whose role is reduced to formally signing interrogation records and persuading clients to plead guilty.

- Prohibited methods of coercion, including torture. In the North Caucasus, detainees in FSB-led cases face severe physical and psychological pressure. Without public scrutiny, filmed confessions presented by security services as the primary evidence are often extracted through electric shocks, beatings or threats against family members. Documenting signs of violence at an

early stage is impossible because independent doctors and lawyers are denied access to detention centers.

- Vague definitions and entrapment. In its current wording, Article 281 permits even online discussion of the theoretical possibility of protest or the purchase of household items, such as saltpeter, acetone or laser pointers, to be interpreted as "preparation for sabotage." Human rights defenders do not rule out operational provocations in some cases, with intelligence officers posing as "Ukrainian handlers" in private chats and pushing emotionally unstable individuals into ill-considered actions to obtain further departmental awards and promotions for "preventing a terrorist attack."

https://www.interfax.ru/russia/1116804

https://expert.ru/news/fsb-presekla-diversiyu-na-gazoprovode-v-kabardino-balkarii

The Maysky District has a distinctive demographic context: migration routes intersect there, and a significant number of people born in Ukraine have settled in the region at different times, including refugees from conflict zones.

Against a continuing anti-Ukrainian campaign in state media, people with Ukrainian roots, connections or citizenship face heightened risk. Any contact with relatives outside Russia or money transfers to loved ones is automatically flagged as "suspicious activity" by the Interior Ministry's Center for Countering Extremism and the FSB, facilitating the fabrication of criminal cases.

The case concerning the alleged thwarted bombing of the republic's gas distribution system reflects the broader militarization of Russian law enforcement. Placing a person in pretrial detention on the basis of operational materials that cannot be independently verified demonstrates the effective elimination of the presumption of innocence in state security cases.

The human rights community insists on maximum procedural transparency: immediate access to the detainee for independent lawyers, a medical examination by civilian doctors and an open trial. Without these basic safeguards, the case of the Ukraine-born man in Nalchik will remain another episode of opaque, extrajudicial persecution.

Southern District Military Court sentences a minor from Kabardino-Balkaria to seven years in a penal colony in an ISIS and traffic-police attack case

The Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don delivered a harsh guilty verdict against a minor from the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. The teenager was found guilty of preparing a terrorist attack and attacking law enforcement officers. The judicial panel sentenced him to seven years in prison.

The judgment reflects a broader repressive trend in the North Caucasian Federal District, where the punitive system is bringing large numbers of teenagers to trial under particularly serious "terrorism" provisions. Investigative and judicial bodies refuse to assess the extent of children's involvement in radical organizations, disregard psychological manipulation by adult recruiters and use formal legal mechanisms to obtain maximum prison terms.

Investigators allege that an underground unit of the international terrorist organization Islamic State (ISIS) was established in Kabardino-Balkaria in 2024 and that the minor was drawn into it.

On July 3, 2024, members of the group allegedly decided to attack Interior Ministry officers in Nalchik to seize their service weapons. The court's press service said that they initially planned to attack one facility, but its door was locked. The next day, July 4, at the intersection of Nogmov Street and Lenin Avenue in Nalchik, traffic police stopped a taxi that had run a red light. A young man jumped out with a knife and attacked the officers. In the ensuing exchange of fire, one attacker was killed by return fire and the other escaped.

In September, security officers detained a teenager whom investigators identified as the second participant who had escaped. The case was rapidly referred to court, which classified the child's conduct as complicity in a terrorist community and an attempt on the lives of security personnel. The teenager himself maintains that the incident came as a complete surprise and that he ran away because he was confused and frightened.

In a related development in November 2025, a young resident of the republic's Urvansky District was charged with failure to report a crime under Article 205.6. The FSB alleged that he knew about the attackers' plans but did not inform the authorities.

https://m.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/426737

https://tlmtr.io/en/channels/1113237779-cknot/posts?cursor=IDw=

https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/78674

Human rights organizations strongly reject a system that relies solely on punishment rather than rehabilitating and deradicalizing children.

Because of their age and psychological immaturity, teenagers are easily manipulated in private Telegram chats. Professional recruiters, or undercover operatives, use psychological pressure and promises of "heroic status" or financial reward to turn children into unwitting instruments of crime.

State security bodies are entirely unresponsive to minors' motives. Rather than tracing the recruitment networks and identifying the real organizers, security agencies find it more advantageous to place the teenager in detention. Assembly-line indictments for especially serious offenses enable the regional FSB to meet its departmental targets for "exposing terrorist cells" and demonstrate its value to Moscow.

The Southern District Military Court's harsh sentence was imposed amid a dangerous public debate: Alexander Bastrykin, head of Russia's Investigative Committee, officially demanded legislation reducing the age of criminal responsibility for particularly serious crimes from fourteen to twelve. This indicates that the state intends to expand the imprisonment of children further.

The situation is aggravated by the profound fear among relatives of defendants in Kabardino-Balkaria's "terrorism" cases of contacting human rights defenders. Representatives of the regional Human Rights Center report a severe shortage of information: upon detention, FSB officers issue families an ultimatum that any attempt to publicize the case or hire an independent lawyer will result in the harshest possible conditions for the suspect. Frightened families accept closed proceedings and compliant appointed lawyers, allowing security agencies to manufacture convictions without obstruction, as in the case of 18-year-old Alikhan Shaoyev from Nizhny

Kurkuzhin, sentenced to ten years in a penal colony under a similar scheme.

https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/79232

https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/79254

The human rights community insists that a seven-year sentence for a minor from Nalchik in a closed military court is a clear sign of a crisis in juvenile justice. Children in the North Caucasus are left defenseless between cynical online recruiters and the security services' harsh machinery of punishment.

https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/78674

https://oc-media.org/juvenile-crime-on-the-rise-in-three-north-caucasus-republics/

Statistics on sentences and arrests documented by human rights defenders in southern Russia indicate an alarming scale of children's involvement in severe criminal proceedings:

- Astrakhan Regional Court sentenced a school student and a first-year college student born in 2008 to nine and a half and six and a half years in prison, respectively. They were accused of treason and sabotage after an anonymous messenger user offered a small payment to set fire to a communications facility.
- In Stavropol Territory, a court remanded teenagers aged fifteen and seventeen in custody over an alleged attempted terrorist attack. The scenario was identical: an offer of easy money for setting fire to a cellular base station arrived through Telegram.
- In Volgograd Region, a criminal case against a 17-year-old girl was referred to court. She is accused of two acts of sabotage involving similar arson attacks on base stations at the direction of online handlers.
- In Rostov-on-Don, a 15-year-old with a documented mental illness is being held in pretrial detention. According to lawyer Kaloy Akhilgov, the child threw a burning rag toward a relay station. It immediately went out without causing damage, but the FSB charged the legally incapacitated teenager with sabotage and treason. During their chat-based manipulation, the recruiters convinced the child that he was acting in the interests of Russian intelligence services.

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/426958

Anzor Apazhikhov and Albert Tabukhov sentenced to twenty years in a case dating back thirteen years

The Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don delivered harsh guilty verdicts against two men from Kabardino-Balkaria, Anzor Apazhikhov and Albert Tabukhov. The judicial panel found them guilty of organizing and assisting an illegal armed formation and participating in the Caucasus Emirate and ISIS, terrorist organizations prohibited in Russia.

Each was sentenced to twenty years in a strict-regime penal colony. The principal procedural feature, however, is that the judgments were delivered in absentia, as the defendants have lived outside Russia for many years.

The ruling reveals a systemic law enforcement pattern in the North Caucasus: the use of trials in absentia to impose maximum prison sentences for events more than a decade old, depriving defendants of the basic right to a defense and adversarial proceedings.

The criminal case concerns the period of active armed conflict in Kabardino-Balkaria during the first half of the 2010s.

In September 2013, a counterterrorism operation was declared in the republic's Urvansky District. During fighting involving FSB special forces between the villages of Kakhun and Nizhny Cherek, a local armed group was surrounded and killed. Among the dead was Ruslan Makoyev, leader of the "Urvan jamaat," whom security agencies accused of a series of high-profile attacks, including the murder of Boris Zherukov, rector of the Kabardino-Balkarian Agrarian University.

According to the court, Apazhikhov and Tabukhov voluntarily agreed in 2013 to assist members of this group, which formed part of the Caucasus Emirate. The case materials state that they supplied militants with money, transported them covertly by car, purchased food and found safe houses.

According to the FSB, in 2015 Apazhikhov and Tabukhov left Russia for the Syrian Arab Republic, where they joined the prohibited ISIS organization as fighters. Contact with them was subsequently lost entirely.

https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/8973486

https://epp.genproc.gov.ru/ru/proc_glskfoyufo/mass-media/news/main/e8661106/

The serious systemic flaws and human rights risks embodied in this judgment deserve particular attention:

1. The effective elimination of the right to a defense and adversarial proceedings. In a trial in absentia, defendants are not physically present, cannot testify personally, provide an alibi or identify falsified evidence. Appointed lawyers play a purely decorative role, agreeing with every prosecution argument and turning the trial into a sterile procedure for legitimizing FSB materials.

2. Circumventing limitation periods by preserving wanted status. As in related cases across the wider region, investigators use the absence of limitation periods for terrorism offenses to revive thirteen-year-old cases. Declaring individuals wanted suspends the ordinary running of limitation periods, preserving accusations for decades.

3. Establishing a basis for transnational persecution. The principal purpose of a twenty-year sentence in absentia is to update INTERPOL databases immediately through the circulation of Red Notices. Human rights organizations Safeguard Defenders and Red Notice Monitor state that Russia systematically uses international policing channels to pursue Caucasian refugees in third countries, including Turkey, EU states and the Middle East. A final military-court conviction significantly facilitates Moscow's use of administrative removal and extradition mechanisms against refugees held in temporary detention facilities abroad.

The judgments against Anzor Apazhikhov and Albert Tabukhov are another example of a repressive apparatus operating under a mobilization imperative and continuing to process counterterrorism-operation archives from the early 2010s to demonstrate a perfect case-clearance rate. Imposing such severe terms in the complete absence of the defendants and independent oversight violates international fair-trial standards.

The republic's Supreme Court finds developer Andzor Khalilov's detention unlawful, exposing the procedural absurdity of "terrorism" charges

The Supreme Court of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic granted the defense's appeal and overturned the order remanding prominent Nalchik developer Andzor Khalilov in custody in a case involving irregularities in raising funds from purchasers of housing under construction. This ruling is crucial to human rights monitoring: the region's highest court effectively acknowledged a serious violation of international obligations by prosecutors and investigators.

Andzor Khalilov headed a construction company in Nalchik. Amid an economic crisis and complaints from supervisory authorities, he left Russia in 2024. In January 2025, the Interior Ministry placed him on an international wanted list; he was detained in the United Arab Emirates in March. His official deportation and extradition to Russia took place in late December 2025.

Russian security agencies accused the developer of two offenses: an economic offense, unlawfully raising citizens' funds under Article 200.3(2), and a particularly serious state security offense, assisting terrorist activity through terrorism financing. In May, investigators deliberately separated the construction-related case into independent proceedings.

The procedural arbitrariness challenged by lawyer Vyacheslav Blazhko before the republic's Supreme Court consisted of the prosecution's attempts to artificially extend Khalilov's custody in direct contravention of the Code of Criminal Procedure:

1. Khalilov was remanded for three months under Article 200.3, until August 3. The prosecutor did not request an extension when that period expired. Ten days later, the prosecution suddenly sought a fresh detention order. The lawyer pointed out the absurdity: "Khalilov is already in pretrial detention in the other case; he physically cannot destroy evidence or pressure witnesses." The defense also established that the total period of custody under this provision could not exceed six months. Khalilov had already spent three months in a deportation prison in the UAE and another three in Nalchik's detention center after the case reached court. The lower court had no authority to order renewed detention. The republic's Supreme Court accepted the lawyer's arguments and overturned the unlawful order.

The ruling's principal human rights significance is that it formally recorded Khalilov's official extradition from the UAE. This gives the defense a direct legal basis for seeking the complete termination of the "terrorism financing" prosecution.

Under international law and the official written assurance issued by Russia's Prosecutor General's Office to the UAE authorities on April 23, 2025, when requesting extradition, Russia undertook to prosecute Khalilov ONLY for the offense underlying the extradition request, Article 200.3. Under the international rule of specialty, prosecuting an extradited person for other offenses committed before extradition, without the surrendering state's specific consent, constitutes a serious breach of international law. Vyacheslav Blazhko emphasized that the defense would continue challenging the legality of the developer's detention on terrorism charges.

The accusation of assisting terrorism against the businessman bears all the indicators of the standard fabrication of cases in the North Caucasian Federal District:

- Security agencies accused Khalilov of a bank transfer to a man named Sabanchiyev, whom the FSB considers a member of a terrorist organization. The developer explains that Sabanchiyev was an acquaintance who asked him for personal financial assistance in 2018, solely for the treatment of a seriously ill female relative. He could not have known of any alleged involvement in the underground.
- The FSB's accusation rests entirely on the testimony of a key witness named Kardanov. At a hearing, Andzor Khalilov openly stated that Kardanov was a wholly fictitious person whose personal details and testimony had been fabricated by operatives to construct evidence. Other defendants also categorically deny any involvement in fundraising for militants.

Andzor Khalilov's case demonstrates the dangerous practice of using "terrorism" accusations to exert economic pressure on regional businesses and legitimize unlawful prosecution methods. Reclassifying ordinary donations for medical treatment as "financing extremist cells," and fabricating witnesses through the Center for Countering Extremism and the FSB, occur within a profound information vacuum: intimidation often makes suspects afraid to publicize their cases.

The Supreme Court's decision to side with the defense is a rare example of judicial resistance to security-service pressure. Human rights organizations demand that Russia's Prosecutor General's Office immediately honor the international assurances given to the UAE and end Khalilov's unlawful prosecution under Article 205.1.

https://memorialcenter.org/ru/news/vs-kbr-otmenil-arest-zastrojshhika-andzora-halilova-po-delu-o-moshennichestve

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/427022

https://www.instagram.com/reels/DeJDlpkt-IT/

Public repentance from pretrial detention: why the apology of a terrorism defendant in Nalchik prompted skepticism

An unusual incident in Kabardino-Balkaria's investigative practice was recorded: an official government newspaper published a "statement of public apology and repentance" in the name of a person detained on serious terrorism charges. The publication sparked substantial public debate, and independent observers saw indications of psychological or administrative pressure.

Eldar Aloyev, a 25-year-old from Nalchik, is in pretrial detention on charges of preparing a terrorist attack, participating in a terrorist organization, undergoing training for terrorist activity and attempting to manufacture an explosive device. His details were added to Rosfinmonitoring's register of extremists and terrorists in June 2026.

Aloyev's statement appeared on page eleven of Kabardino-Balkarskaya Pravda, the official newspaper founded by the republic's parliament and government. According to the newspaper, Aloyev personally asked the republic's human rights commissioner to help communicate his repentance to the public.

In the statement, Aloyev acknowledges having embraced destructive ideas between March and May 2026 and declares active cooperation with FSB investigators. The publication is accompanied by a column by editor-in-chief Raneta Bzhakhova discussing young people's vulnerability to recruiters while acknowledging that the editorial staff knows nothing about Aloyev's life or his actual motives.

The apology's wording and the regional community's response reveal inconsistencies that cast doubt on the sincerity and voluntariness of the repentance:

1. Artificial language. The statement uses dry bureaucratic language, including "I fully understand the unlawful, destructive and socially dangerous nature..." and "I undertake never again to commit..." Such wording is wholly uncharacteristic of a 25-year-old's spontaneous speech.

2. No verification. Social-media users and commenters noted that the text bears neither Aloyev's signature nor an agency seal. In a detention center, where media access is tightly restricted, arranging such a publication itself appears to be a coordinated security-agency operation.

3. No specifics. Aloyev "repents" of abstract matters without naming a terrorist organization, intended targets or places where an attack was planned.

Public skepticism is reinforced by the wider context. Forced public apologies, first developed and expanded in Chechnya, have increasingly been adopted elsewhere in Russia. Previously, bloggers, activists and traffic offenders were compelled to apologize on camera or in the press; now this tool appears to be entering the investigative process in FSB cases itself. Human rights defenders in the North Caucasus have repeatedly reported a shortage of objective information about terrorism cases because defendants and their relatives are intimidated and afraid to contact independent lawyers. Under these conditions, local residents interpret "voluntary" repentance in the press as a product of an opaque investigative system rather than evidence of rehabilitation: a guilty plea and public humiliation may be conditions for a reduced sentence or consequences of physical coercion.

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/427021

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/427071

The 2026 elections in Kabardino-Balkaria: from information silence to allegations of widespread fraud

The September 2026 campaign for elections to the ninth State Duma in Kabardino-Balkaria demonstrated a profound crisis of public trust in elections. Experts and local residents remember the process as exceptionally passive; it ended with allegations of extensive electoral manipulation familiar to the North Caucasus.

Even before the three-day vote, September 18-20, regional journalists and activists described this as the weakest campaign in informational terms in the history of modern Russian elections.

Local observers reported "absolute silence" on city streets: candidate portraits were virtually absent, there were no public debates, and parties entirely abandoned efforts to introduce voters to their platforms.

The Russian Supreme Court's removal of Yabloko's federal party list, on the formal pretext of copyright infringement involving Soviet slogans, deprived part of the opposition electorate of representation, although single-member constituency candidates, including regional branch head Khakim Kuchmezov, remained registered.

As a result, residents developed a strong sense that no genuine political alternative existed.

Interviews in Nalchik on the first voting day clearly reflected voters' attitudes:

1. Even those who reached polling stations admitted that choosing was extremely difficult. Parliamentary parties' positions differed little, and polling stations were empty, occupied mainly by commission members and police; voters simply did not notice independent observers.

2. Many attendees, including pensioners and socially vulnerable citizens, openly admitted that they were voting solely as a defensive measure: "So that my ballot won't be used by someone else."

3. Some former activists and election observers boycotted the elections on principle, openly expressing disbelief that voting could affect figures dictated "from above." Voters emphasized that none of the admitted parties had included the public's central demand: an end to the military operation in Ukraine.

After polling stations closed on September 21, independent election analysts assessed the Caucasus campaigns. Experts openly stated that official turnout figures and vote distributions in several North Caucasus regions, including Kabardino-Balkaria, appeared entirely fabricated.

According to specialists, anomalies identified by independent monitoring groups and discrepancies between actual voter traffic and final protocols indicate that the campaign followed the familiar administrative script, aggravated by a complete purge of the information space.

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/426646

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/426740

https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/426799

In September 2026, Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced ten people to actual imprisonment for unauthorized absence from their units during mobilization*

The cases include:

Ibragimov

The serviceman was sentenced by the court in Nalchik to six years in prison for absence from service for more than one month.

According to the case materials, Ibragimov left his place of service without authorization on April 24 and reported to the military investigative department in Nalchik on June 25. Investigators believe he spent that entire period at his residence as he saw fit.

Ibragimov had previously received a suspended sentence of five years and six months with a three-year probation period for unauthorized absence. Taking these circumstances into account, Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced him to six years in a general-regime penal colony for absence exceeding one month, the court's press service reported that day on its VKontakte page.

Albert Duduyev

Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced Duduyev to five years in a penal colony for leaving his unit without authorization and failing to report for duty for more than one month during mobilization, under Article 337(5) of the Criminal Code. The provision carries five to ten years in prison. The court's press service reported the sentence on VKontakte.

According to the prosecution, Duduyev left his unit stationed in Chechnya without authorization on August 14, 2025. A police officer found him in Baksan, Kabardino-Balkaria, on July 27, 2026. Throughout the intervening period, more than eleven months, he "spent his time as he saw fit at his place of residence," according to the court.

Albert Guzoyev

Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced Guzoyev to five years in a penal colony for unauthorized absence and failure to report for duty for more than one month during mobilization under Article 337(5), which carries five to ten years in prison. The court's press service reported this on VKontakte.

Guzoyev failed to report at the appointed time to a military unit in the stanitsa of Troitskaya, Sunzhensky District, Ingushetia, on July 21, 2025. On March 2, 2026, police in Nalchik discovered during an identity check that he was wanted and took him to a police station. He had thus been absent for approximately seven and a half months.

Zhamanov

The serviceman was sentenced by the court in Nalchik to five years in prison for absence from service for almost six months.

According to the case materials, Zhamanov left his place of service without authorization on October 17, 2025, and reported to the military commandant's office on April 15 of the current year. Investigators believe that he spent the entire period at his residence as he saw fit.

Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced him to five years in a general-regime penal colony for unauthorized absence, the court's press service reported on VKontakte.

Pshukov

The serviceman was sentenced by the court in Nalchik to five years in prison for absence lasting more than a year and a half.

On September 10, Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced Pshukov under Article 337(5), which carries five to ten years in prison.

The court found that on October 27, 2024, during mobilization, Pshukov left his place of service, a temporary deployment site of his military unit, without authorization, the court reported on VKontakte.

On July 20, 2026, Pshukov voluntarily reported to the military investigative department in Mozdok, North Ossetia. From October 28, 2024, until July 20, 2026, he had spent his time as he saw fit at his residence.

Ruslan Demchenko

The court in Nalchik sentenced Demchenko to imprisonment in a penal colony after finding him guilty of three instances of evading military service during mobilization.

Nalchik Garrison Military Court reported on VKontakte that the serviceman was convicted under Article 337(5).

According to the court, Demchenko left his unit without authorization "on July 17 and November 25, 2025, and on January 9, 2026, in all three cases during mobilization"; in the third instance, he failed to report for service without a valid reason.

"In the first case, Demchenko was detained in Budyonnovsk, Stavropol Territory, on October 6, 2025. In the second, his evasion of military service ended on January 8, 2026. In the third, he voluntarily reported to the military investigative department in Mozdok, Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, on July 24, 2026. From July 17 to October 6, 2025; from November 23, 2025, to January 8, 2026; and from January 9 to July 24, 2026, he spent his time as he saw fit. At the hearing, Demchenko fully admitted guilt to the charges," the publication states.

Khizir Gergov

The court in Nalchik sentenced Gergov to seven years in a penal colony for evading military service during mobilization.

Nalchik Garrison Military Court reported on VKontakte that he was found guilty of unauthorized absence under Article 337(5).

According to the court, Gergov failed to report at the appointed time to a unit in Rostov Region on June 1, 2026. He voluntarily reported to the military commandant's office in Mozdok, North Ossetia, only on July 28. From June 1 to July 28, he spent his time as he saw fit at his residence.

In 2025, Gergov had already received a suspended five-year sentence under the same provision. That suspension was now revoked, and the aggregate final sentence was seven years in a general-regime penal colony.

Notably, at a picket in Vladikavkaz in March of this year, Gergov's mother demanded the reversal of her son's unauthorized-absence conviction. He had been declared fit for duty despite a spinal injury sustained at a training ground. Human rights defenders described the return of incompletely treated soldiers to service as a systemic practice.

https://www.instagram.com/p/DWPCCFRjIUZ/

Timur Keligov

Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced Keligov to five and a half years in a penal colony for failure to report for duty lasting almost a year and a half during mobilization.

He was charged with failing to report on time for more than one month during mobilization under Article 337(5), which carries five to ten years in prison.

According to the prosecution, Keligov failed to report at the appointed time to a unit stationed in Kaliningrad Region on October 21, 2024. From that day until February 15, 2026, he "spent his time

as he saw fit," according to the court. On February 15, a police officer detained Keligov while he was driving and handed him over to military commandant's-office personnel who were searching for him, the court's press service reported.

Nikolai Soloninka

Nalchik Garrison Military Court sentenced Soloninka to six years in a penal colony for two instances of failure to report for duty.

According to the court, Soloninka failed to report at the appointed time to a unit in Rostov Region on June 12 and October 23, 2026, both during mobilization. He remained at his residence until October 11, 2025, in the first case and until July 16 in the second, the court's press service reported. [Translator's note: These dates are inconsistent in the source and have been retained as written.]

In the first case, Soloninka was admitted to the Central District Hospital; in the second, he voluntarily reported to the military commandant's office in Mozdok, North Ossetia.

The court found him guilty under Article 337(5), which provides for five to ten years in prison, and sentenced him to six years. He will serve his sentence in a general-regime penal colony.

Fanil Shafikov

The court in Nalchik sentenced Shafikov to three years and five months in prison for failing to return to his unit a week after receiving a suspended sentence for absence from service.

According to the case materials, Shafikov failed to report for service on August 3 and spent his time as he saw fit in Kabardino-Balkaria until August 17. He then reported voluntarily to the military investigative department.

Nalchik Garrison Military Court found him guilty of leaving his place of service without authorization for more than ten days but no more than one month, and sentenced him to three years and five months in a general-regime penal colony, the court's press service reported on VKontakte.

https://vk.com/public215822488

In total, in September 2026 alone, ten people in Kabardino-Balkaria were sentenced to actual imprisonment for unauthorized absence from their units during mobilization*.

Vladimir Putin announced partial mobilization on September 21, 2022. On October 28 of that year, the defense minister reported its completion to the president, but no corresponding decree followed. According to Putin's press secretary, lawyers concluded that a presidential decree was unnecessary to end partial mobilization.

Importantly, all the incidents described above occurred well after October 28, 2022, that is, after the completion of partial mobilization.

On September 24, 2022, paragraphs 2.1, 3.1 and 5 were added to Article 337 of the Criminal Code concerning unauthorized absence from a unit or place of service during mobilization. The amendments provide for imprisonment of up to ten years. The tightening of legislation after mobilization was announced resulted in harsher sentences for absence from military units.

As of the end of September 2026, at least 474 servicemen from Kabardino-Balkaria had been officially acknowledged as killed since the beginning of the military operation in Ukraine.

In June 2026, it became known that the following men would not return from Ukraine:

- Alan Kushkhov (Nartkala) - Rustam Tatrokov (Zolsky District) - Aslanbek Akkulov (Zolsky District) - Murad Zhukov (Zolsky District)

By the end of September, authorities and security agencies had officially acknowledged at least 9,752 fighters from southern Russia as killed in the military operation: 4,846 from the North Caucasian Federal District and 4,906 from the Southern Federal District.

Dagestan continues to account for the largest number of deaths, 2,123. Also confirmed are the deaths of 976 fighters from Stavropol Territory, 591 from North Ossetia, 474 from Kabardino-Balkaria, 265 from Chechnya, 212 from Ingushetia and 205 from Karachay-Cherkessia.

Among Southern Federal District regions, Volgograd Region has the highest number of deaths, 1,836. Also officially acknowledged as killed are 1,016 fighters from Rostov Region, 886 from Krasnodar Territory, 763 from Astrakhan Region, 264 from Kalmykia and 141 from Adygea.

Actual losses among combatants from the North Caucasus may be significantly higher than the officially acknowledged figures.

Activists against the "special military operation"

Ibrahim Yaganov was the first among leading Circassian (Adyghe) national activists to express an uncompromising anti-war position openly and publicly. Immediately after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, Yaganov sharply criticized the federal authorities, articulating the central proposition that "this is not our war" in September 2022. In his appeals, he consistently urged Circassians and North Caucasus residents not to participate in the armed conflict, emphasizing the devastating effect of mobilization on the survival and future generations of the Caucasus's small indigenous peoples.

https://www.instagram.com/reels/CjIkaWVhDfi/

https://www.svoboda.org/a/protokol-ob-otsutstvii-markirovki-inoagenta-sostavili-na-cherkesskogo-aktivista-yaganova/33066015.html

Because of his firm civic stance and defense of the Adyghe people's interests, Ibrahim Yaganov faced threats of criminal prosecution by the security services for "discrediting" the Russian army and "high treason" under Article 275. The Russian Ministry of Justice officially added him to the register of "foreign agents."

Another prominent Circassian activist, Aydamir Kazanokov, publicly expressed a clear anti-war position shortly afterward.

In May 2023, during an extensive interview in Tbilisi with journalists from Ekho Kavkaza, Radio Liberty's regional service, Kazanokov openly opposed the use of Caucasian youth in combat. On this international media platform, he connected anti-war protest with the fundamental defense of the indigenous Circassian (Adyghe) people and their historical memory.

https://www.ekhokavkaza.com/a/32419442.html

In March 2026, Kazanokov's anti-war rhetoric became even more explicit:

"Circassians are not allowed to be a people, but they are allowed to be expendable material.

"In Nalchik, in Kabardino-Balkaria, Circassians are prohibited from holding rallies, processions and any form of self-organization. We are not allowed to be a people in our own homeland: we cannot hold Adyghe Jegu, our traditional festivities; properly celebrate March 14, Circassian Language Day; celebrate April 25, Circassian Flag Day; honor those who died for Circassia's freedom on May 20; or join a procession on May 21, the anniversary of the end of the Russo-Circassian War of 1763-1864.

"Yet under the same national, ideological and religious pretexts, we are allowed to go to someone else's war. We are allowed to die for the interests of a state that destroyed our country, scattered our people and still prevents us from restoring our historical memory and developing our own culture. The question is: why are we forbidden to live as a people, yet allowed to die as a resource?"

https://t.me/The_Circassian_Times/14514

He also observed:

"Recently, calls to join volunteer battalions have become increasingly frequent. Newspapers, advertisements for military contract service and interviews with frontline soldiers create the impression that young people should increasingly aspire to go to war.

"The commander of the Elbrus volunteer unit urges people to follow him and speaks of 'comfortable conditions' at the front. When a combat zone is described as a 'sanatorium with a religious emphasis,' it feels absurd. Halal food and prayer rooms are decent living conditions, but can they justify participating in an extremely severe military conflict?

"Our national community, language and faith should unite and preserve our people, rather than serve as attractive packaging for recruiting people into a combat zone."

https://t.me/The_Circassian_Times/14515

Investigative authorities opened a criminal case over Kazanokov's activism with the independent Circassian Media project and his forceful anti-war statements. Because he is outside Russia, a court ordered his arrest in absentia. He was officially placed on the federal wanted list, and the Interior Ministry began the procedure for seeking him internationally. Russian authorities classified his media activity under "terrorism" or "extremism" provisions of the Criminal Code. Kazanokov was consequently included in the List of Organizations and Individuals in Respect of Whom There Is Information Concerning Their Involvement in Extremist Activity or Terrorism. This entails a complete freeze of his assets and accounts in Russia.

Conclusion

A comprehensive analysis of documented incidents, court materials and law enforcement practices in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic during the reporting period records the systemic degradation of justice institutions and the deliberate construction of totalitarian mechanisms of control over civil society. The region's law enforcement and judicial systems have fully shifted to compliance with a mobilization imperative, in which citizens' basic constitutional guarantees, from freedom of speech and conscience to property rights and the personal inviolability of minors, are systematically sacrificed to departmental reporting targets and the federal center's fiscal policy.

On the basis of the cases analyzed, human rights monitoring identifies four principal repressive trends that shaped Kabardino-Balkaria's legal landscape in September 2026: [Translator's note: The source says "four" but lists five trends below.]

1. Internal purges and the complete monopolization of military censorship.

2. The expansion of assembly-line "terrorism cases" against dissenters and teenagers.

3. Administrative repression through opaque lists and "dual" prosecution for dissent.

4. Economic pressure under the cover of counterterrorism legislation.

5. Transnational repression and the criminalization of the national movement.

The human rights situation in Kabardino-Balkaria in September 2026 indicates that the regional judiciary has finally become a punitive and revenue-extracting appendage of the security agencies. Courts have completely abandoned their duty to uphold the presumption of innocence and the principle of legal certainty.

Hava Beshtoeva

Translator's notes on the source

The translation preserves the source's assertions, assessments, names, figures and cited links. It is a translation of the supplied report, rather than an independent verification of the events or legal claims described.

The source contains several internal inconsistencies retained in the translation: the Soloninka chronology gives dates in 2026 followed by an end date in 2025; the Demchenko section gives both November 25 and November 23, 2025, for the start of the second absence; the election section describes voting on September 18-20 but subsequently refers to polling stations closing on September 21; and the conclusion announces four trends but lists five. The asterisk after references to mobilization appears in the original without a corresponding footnote.