

Russia pays high price for its own criminal policy in Chechnya

Since 1994 the small region in the North Caucasus which is well known as Chechnya continues to be «the black hole» of Russia which involved, mutilated or broke the lives of hundred thousands of human beings. They are victims... of what? For Federal Russian authorities there is no war in Chechnya. The political jugglers invented many terms to avoid the term «war» and the last «fashionable» name for it is «anti-terrorist operation». The soldiers mothers never accepted these political games, they know more then any other peoples there is a real war in Chechnya without any legal justification for it. And they know it is a great concern for the Federal authorities in spite of their intentions to hide the illegal war behind the slogans of anti-terrorist struggle.

In March, 2003, by Decree of the President, there should be referendum on Constitution and elections in Chechnya. These steps should put the legal foundation to the Federal policy in Chechnya. Those citizens of Chechnya who will stay outside of the referendum and elections, who will not accept their results could be easily classified as terrorists, fighting against the interests of Chechen people majority. So the motives of present Moscow policy are quite understandable. Russia hopes to transform the illegal war on its own territory into a just fight with the global threat of international terrorism.

It is true that there are terrorists in Chechnya. But is only one feature of regional situation. In general it is a horrible mixture of bloody armed struggle, military arbitrariness, economical and financial crimes, corruption, contradictions between all pro-Federal authorities, slave and arms trade, treachery, outrageous lies, all possible violations of human rights and many other crimes. In its attempts to pacify Chechnya with referendum and elections the Federal authorities repeat the previous mistakes: all political decisions concerning Chechnya since 1991 are made without any participation of Russian and Chechen peoples. But without people support of Moscow policy the war could not be stopped. The evident split in Russian and Chechen societies on Chechen problem does not give Moscow the necessary support. But state authorities are in a hurry — ahead there are elections of the State Duma, and of the President, and the failure of Putin promises of victory in Chechnya ...

In October, 2002, the Union of the Soldiers Mothers Committee of Russia called the conference «Chechen dead-end: where to search the road to peace?». In the Statement of the Conference 80 soldiers mothers NGO declared, that they lost the faith in Russian state powers abilities to maintain civic peace in the country. They do not believe that the State is capable to be responsible before present and future generations for the grave consequences of the war on their own territory,

for irresponsible violations of the UN Charter and other norms of international law, proclaiming the values of human rights, of human beings dignity, of gender equality and equality of large and small nations.

The soldiers mothers stated that the so called anti-terrorist operation on the North Caucasus serves by itself as a powerful source of the state and non-state terrorism, of intra-ethnic hate, racialism and intolerance, of everyday disappearances and killings of their sons and peaceful citizens of Chechnya. Continuation of Chechen war is highly profitable for criminal communities of both conflicting sides. One of the main obstacle on the road to peace is position of military who resist all the efforts of civic diplomacy directed to peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The soldiers mothers insisted on participation of women, human rights and peaceful NGO and other democratic forces of Russia in decision making concerning Chechen conflict settlement, for internationalization of peaceful solution of Chechen problem. They called the members of the UN Security Council to discuss this problem at its meeting.

The soldiers mothers support the idea of round table, which should be organized before referendum with participation of all the forces interested in bringing peace to Chechnya, including women peaceful and HR NGO and those Chechen fighters who are willing to participate in this Forum. The State authorities should give them the necessary guarantees of security and freedom to express their views on the perspective of future Chechen development. The soldiers mothers do not want to accept the situation when the State ignores the majority of population in Russia and Chechnya when making decisions on the problem which is of vital importance for the country.

The military reacted to the soldiers mothers activities with blaming them in violations of law and in involving draftees, soldiers and their parents into these violations. After numerous 2002-2003 precedents when soldiers went straight to the soldiers mothers NGO for help after leaving their military units by large groups, the Minister of Defence threatened soldiers mothers to investigate their financing and activities which, by his opinion, are out of their Charters frames.

Russia pays a very high price for the illegal war in Chechnya. This war is against interests of Russia in the North Caucasus and of the world. It leads to destabilization of socio-political life in the country, to growth of terrorism, to deepening crisis of the armed forces, to stagnation of military reform, to destruction of Russian Federation security. The soldiers mothers do not believe that the present federal policy? beginning referendum will bring peace to Chechnya.

In the new age our world is changing too quickly and too aggressively. Iraq, Northern Korea, Middle East conflict... The soldiers mothers call to all peaceful forces to support each other to save peace and future of our children.
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Ida Kuklina

Member of the UCSMR Coordination council

Member of the Commission on Human Rights of the President of Russian Federation