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## **Chechen rebels attack Russian city**

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**14 October, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Chechen rebels attack Russian city**

Chechen rebels have launched a series of attacks on government buildings in the southern Russian city of Nalchik. The attacks seem to have been meticulously planned and orchestrated as 300 armed militants simultaneously attacked their targets. This prompted the usual heavy-handed response from Moscow. Vladimir Putin quickly used his trademark massive force to quell any potential uprising. The response quickly erupted into bloody street battles. Panicked citizens were seen fleeing amid heavy arms fire and explosions for the relative safety of their homes. More than 60 people have died, including 50 attackers, with scores injured. Sporadic fighting can be heard throughout the city as pockets of resistance continue to cause problems for Russian troops.

The Caucasus Front, a group thought to be an offshoot of the Chechen rebel armed forces, has claimed responsibility for the attacks. It is also believed to have been behind the Moscow theater siege, which saw 130 citizens die in 2002, and the Beslan hostage crisis, which saw 344 civilians killed in 2004. The separatist group is fighting for an independent Chechnya and other Islamic states in the Russian south, where up to 90 percent of the population is Muslim. The latest attack casts doubt on Mr. Putin's claim that his army has control of the area. He promised the poverty-stricken region massive economic aid after the Beslan crisis, acknowledging that poverty helped fuel the unrest. However, little help arrived and people remain impoverished and disgruntled.

## WARM-UPS

**1. CHECHNYA SEARCH:** Walk around the class and find as much information as you can on Chechnya and the problems Chechen separatists are causing Vladimir Putin's government. After you have finished, sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. What did you find out that was interesting? What was surprising? Did you hear anything that you disagreed with?

**2. FIGHT:** Would you ever take up arms and fight in a struggle or war? In which of the following cases would you choose to fight? Explain your reasons why to your partner(s). Change partners often to find out other reasons for fighting or not fighting.

- a. To help win the war on terror
- b. Religious persecution
- c. To get food and water
- d. To defeat an army invading your country
- e. Because your government told you to fight
- f. To protect your home and family
- g. To gain independence for your area
- h. Other

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Chechnya / rebels / Russian cities / armed militants / targets / force / panic / gunfire / separatists / independence / Islamic states / poverty / Vladimir Putin*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. CHECHNYA:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Chechnya. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think all regions in which the majority of people want independence should be able to have it. Students B think otherwise. Change partners often.

**6. NEW GEOGRAPHY:** Thirty new countries have been created since 1990. How many can you name? Do you think the following names should be added to the list of names recognized by the United Nations as legitimate countries? What do you know about them?

Chechnya	Taiwan	Somaliland	The Basque Region
Kurdistan	Aceh	Palestine	Kashmir

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Chechen rebels have launched a major offensive in Moscow's streets.  | T / F |
| b. A major target was Russia's most eminent and meticulous orchestra.   | T / F |
| c. Vladimir Putin is known for his softly-softly approach to militancy. | T / F |
| d. Pockets of resistance continue to cause problems for Russian troops. | T / F |
| e. Al-Qaeda is thought to be behind the latest attacks.                 | T / F |
| f. A separatist group is fighting for an independent Chechnya.          | T / F |
| g. The vast majority of the Chechen population is Christian.            | T / F |
| h. Many people in the Russian south are impoverished and disgruntled.   | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. meticulously | crush           |
| b. orchestrated | unhappy         |
| c. quell        | intermittent    |
| d. sporadic     | throws          |
| e. resistance   | organized       |
| f. offshoot     | responsible for |
| g. behind       | carefully       |
| h. casts        | destitute       |
| i. impoverished | branch          |
| j. disgruntled  | opposition      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| a. meticulously planned and             | of resistance              |
| b. heavy-handed                         | an independent Chechnya    |
| c. quell any potential                  | orchestrated               |
| d. sporadic                             | response                   |
| e. pockets                              | the unrest                 |
| f. thought to be an offshoot of the     | and disgruntled            |
| g. The separatist group is fighting for | Chechen rebel armed forces |
| h. casts                                | uprising                   |
| i. poverty helped fuel                  | fighting can be heard      |
| j. people remain impoverished           | doubt on Mr. Putin's claim |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**WHOOPS!** Five of the ten words in bold in each paragraph are incorrect. Find and delete them. In pairs / groups, think of a better word.

### Chechen rebels attack Russian city

Chechen rebels have **lunched** a series of attacks on government buildings in the southern Russian city of Nalchik. The attacks seem to have been meticulously planned and **orchestrated** as 300 armed militants **simultaneously** attacked their targets. This prompted the usual heavy-handed response from Moscow. Vladimir Putin quickly used his **logo** massive force to **swell** any potential uprising. The response quickly **erupted** into bloody street battles. Panicked citizens were seen **fleeting** amid heavy arms fire and explosions for the relative safety of their homes. More than 60 people have died, including 50 attackers, with **shores** injured. **Sporadic** fighting can be heard throughout the city as **pockets** of resistance continue to cause problems for Russian troops.

The Caucasus Front, a group thought to be an **off ramp** of the Chechen rebel armed forces, has **claimed** responsibility for the attacks. It is also believed to have been **behind** the Moscow theater siege, which saw 130 citizens die in 2002, and the Beslan hostage crisis, which saw 344 civilians killed in 2004. The **septuagenarian** group is fighting for an independent Chechnya and other **Islamic** states in the Russian south, where up to 90 percent of the population is **Muslim**. The latest attack **coasts** doubt on Mr. Putin's claim that his army has control of the area. He promised the poverty-stricken **religion** massive economic **aid** after the Beslan crisis, acknowledging that poverty helped fuel the unrest. However, little help arrived and people remain impoverished and **happy**.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**pockets**' and '**resistance**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WHOOPS!** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "CHECHNYA" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about Chechnya and the problems it poses for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| • meticulously | • offshoot     |
| • prompted     | • behind       |
| • trademark    | • independent  |
| • erupted      | • casts        |
| • amid         | • massive      |
| • pockets      | • impoverished |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Do you like to follow Russian affairs?
- d. What do you know about Chechnya's fight for independence?
- e. Do you think Chechen's should have their independence or are they terrorists?
- f. Why did East Timor get independence from Indonesia but Chechnya cannot get independence from Russia?
- g. Mr. Putin's main election promise was to defeat Chechen militants. The struggle has spread beyond Chechnya. What do you think?
- h. Is Mr. Putin right to respond to crises with such massive force?
- i. Why could ex-Soviet states such as Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Estonia, etc. have independence but not Chechnya?
- j. What is your image of Russian troops?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think of Vladimir Putin?
- d. Do you think Vladimir Putin cares about or understands the majority Muslim populations in Russia's south?
- e. Do you think Mr. Putin will be able to defeat the separatists in Chechnya?
- f. Do you think Mr. Putin would deal differently with the separatists if they were Christian?
- g. What do you remember about the Moscow theater siege and the hostage taking at the school in Beslan?
- h. Would the region become more settled and peaceful if Chechnya became independent?
- i. Do you think injecting money and investment into poverty-stricken areas can reduce the danger of people resorting to terrorism?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## **SPEAKING**

**THE NEXT COUNTRY:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these “non-countries” should be next to be recognized by the United Nations as an official country

“Non-country”	Reasons for statehood	Reasons against statehood	Likelihood of achieving statehood
Chechnya			
Kurdistan			
Taiwan			
Aceh			
Somaliland			
Palestine			
The Basque Region			
Kashmir			

Change partners and compare your decisions.

Return to your original partners and report on what your previous partners decided.



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Chechen rebels attack Russian city**

Chechen rebels have \_\_\_\_\_ a series of attacks on government buildings in the southern Russian city of Nalchik. The attacks seem to have been \_\_\_\_\_ planned and \_\_\_\_\_ as 300 armed militants simultaneously attacked their targets. This prompted the usual \_\_\_\_\_ response from Moscow. Vladimir Putin quickly used his trademark massive force to \_\_\_\_\_ any potential uprising. The response quickly erupted into bloody street battles. Panicked citizens were seen fleeing \_\_\_\_\_ heavy arms fire and explosions for the relative safety of their homes. More than 60 people have died, including 50 attackers, with \_\_\_\_\_ injured. Sporadic fighting can be heard throughout the city as \_\_\_\_\_ of resistance continue to cause problems for Russian troops.

The Caucasus Front, a group thought to be an \_\_\_\_\_ of the Chechen rebel armed forces, has claimed responsibility for the attacks. It is also believed to have been \_\_\_\_\_ the Moscow theater \_\_\_\_\_, which saw 130 citizens die in 2002, and the Beslan \_\_\_\_\_ crisis, which saw 344 civilians killed in 2004. The separatist group is fighting for an independent Chechnya and other Islamic \_\_\_\_\_ in the Russian south, where up to 90 percent of the population is Muslim. The latest attack \_\_\_\_\_ doubt on Mr. Putin's claim that his army has control of the area. He promised the poverty-\_\_\_\_\_ region massive economic aid after the Beslan crisis, acknowledging that poverty helped \_\_\_\_\_ the unrest. However, little help arrived and people remain impoverished and \_\_\_\_\_.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on Chechnya. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. NEW COUNTRY:** Choose an area of the world that wants to be recognized as an independent country. Make a poster about it. Include facts on its history and why it deserves international recognition as an independent country. What is standing in the way of its independence? Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Are there any strong contenders for full statehood?

**4. REPORTER:** Imagine you are a reporter in the Russian city of Nalchik. Write your report in as much detail as you can about the attack by the Chechen rebels and the response from the Russian army. Show your report to your classmates in the next lesson. Which one was best?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. meticulously	carefully
b. orchestrated	organized
c. quell	crush
d. sporadic	intermittent
e. resistance	opposition
f. offshoot	branch
g. behind	responsible for
h. casts	throws
i. impoverished	destitute
j. disgruntled	unhappy

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. meticulously planned and	orchestrated
b. heavy-handed	response
c. quell any potential	uprising
d. sporadic	fighting can be heard
e. pockets	of resistance
f. thought to be an offshoot of the	Chechen rebel armed forces
g. The separatist group is fighting for	an independent Chechnya
h. casts	doubt on Mr. Putin's claim
i. poverty helped fuel	the unrest
j. people remain impoverished	and disgruntled

### WHOOPS!

#### Chechen rebels attack Russian city

Chechen rebels have **launched** a series of attacks on government buildings in the southern Russian city of Nalchik. The attacks seem to have been meticulously planned and orchestrated as 300 armed militants simultaneously attacked their targets. This prompted the usual heavy-handed response from Moscow. Vladimir Putin quickly used his **trademark** massive force to **quell** any potential uprising. The response quickly erupted into bloody street battles. Panicked citizens were seen **fleeing** amid heavy arms fire and explosions for the relative safety of their homes. More than 60 people have died, including 50 attackers, with **scores** injured. Sporadic fighting can be heard throughout the city as pockets of resistance continue to cause problems for Russian troops.

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