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Stavropol and Krasnodar Krai

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Stavropol Krai

Stavropol Krai is the only predominantly ethnic Russian region included in the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD). Because of its contemporary geopolitical position, at the center of the North Caucasus, contiguous to a majority of the republics of the area, Stavropol Krai occupies a special place in the strategy for Russia's territorial development¹.

Most of its territory is steppe-like with a marked trend toward drier grassland to the south and east. The rayons on the borders with Kalmykia and Dagestan are sparsely populated, with sheep-herding as the major agricultural activity. To the northwest, large farms (formerly kolkhozy), dominate in the chernozem soils. Here, grains are the main product. In the south of the region lies the piedmont, of which the southwestern part known as *Kavkaz Mineral'nyye Vody* (Caucasian Mineral Waters) is a region of spa and resort cities that developed during the early to mid-19th century.

Because it is a region with attractive urban and rural opportunities for employment in the immediate vicinity of conflict zones, it has become a primary destination for migrants. Stavropol city and Krai have historically been known as an advance post of Russia in the Caucasus, with the Krai mirroring numerous contemporary ethnic-demographic and migration problems of the North Caucasus region and, more generally, of the entire country.

Migration in Stavropol Krai

Differential ethnic mobility and patterns of settlement, in addition to the usual demographic factors (mortality, fertility, and migration) are increasingly important in influencing the nature of social and political development that is occurring in contemporary Russia².

During the post-Soviet migrations of the 1990s, millions have moved to their titular lands, both

¹ „Population Change and Migration in Stavropol'Krai: The Effects of Regional Conflicts and Economic Restructuring”, John O'Loughlin, Alexander Panin and Frank Witmer 2007, page 250.

² „Population Change and Migration in Stavropol'Krai: The Effects of Regional Conflicts and Economic Restructuring”, John O'Loughlin, Alexander Panin and Frank Witmer 2007, page 249.

the ethnic republics within Russia and, at a more general scale, to Russia from the former republics of the Soviet Union. Among ethnic republics of the North Caucasus, both rapid population growth and outmigration remain a well-established tradition. Within the latter region, the natural population decrease of ethnic Russians contrasts dramatically with the high natural increase of the Caucasian peoples.

The ethnic Russian population in the North Caucasian republics decreased from 26 percent of the region's total population in 1989 to an estimated 12-15 percent in 2002. In the same period, the indigenous population of the North Caucasus increased from 66 percent of the total population to 80 percent³.

The exodus of ethnic Russians from the North Caucasian republics seems to have continued after 2002, as security and the economic situation have remained problematic across the region.

Analysis of the ethnic structure of migration in the Krai over the past decade indicates that the most important groups are Russians, Armenians, Dargins, Nogays, and Chechens. Events in the broader Caucasus region have had an impact on the migration flow of Russians, first promoting their movement outward from the former Transcaucasian republics (south of the Great Caucasus Range), and then from the republics of the North Caucasus, especially Chechnya and Dagestan.

Census data⁴ indicate acceleration in the population growth of North Caucasian peoples in Stavropol' Krai, both as a function of in-migration and high rates of natural increase. For example, the number of Dargins in the Krai increases and its

³ In Chechnya and Ingushetia, the ethnic Russian population fell by 94 percent, in Dagestan by 31 percent, in Karachaevo-Cherkessia by 26 percent, in North Ossetia by 16 percent, in Kabardino-Balkaria by 10 percent and in Adygea, where ethnic Russians are still a majority, by 3 percent, *Demographic Tug of War in Stavropol Undermines Kremlin Plans for North Caucasus Melting Pot* Publication: North Caucasus Analysis Volume: 12 Issue: 18; September 14, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.

⁴ „Population Change and Migration in Stavropol'Krai: The Effects of Regional Conflicts and Economic Restructuring”, John O'Loughlin, Alexander Panin and Frank Witmer 2007, page 256.

Diaspora in the Krai is one of the largest in Russia⁵.

Among the entire population of net in-migrants to Stavropol' Krai, Russians predominated until 2001. A trend of "de-Russification," reflecting Russians' low rates of net in-migration and natural increase, is manifest in a noticeable reduction in the ethnic Russian share of the total population, now 82 percent of the total as compared to 84 percent in 1989 and 88 percent in 1979⁶.

Given negative natural population growth in most rayons and the aging of the population, future demographic projections for Stavropol' are similar to most other subjects of the Russian Federation - population decline.

What distinguishes the Krai is the increasing share of non-Russians and a regional stratification of the population along ethnic lines⁷. Because migration has tended to be ethnic-specific in character, and to specific areas of Stavropol' Krai, the end result is increasing internal differentiation. Taken to an extreme, this sorting could lead to ethnic spatial polarization, although because job opportunities remain largely in the major cities (Stavropol' and those of the Kavkaz Mineral'nyye Vody region), future in-migration to these sites is likely to exhibit a mixed ethnic character. Conversely, as in the case of Dagestan, rural areas will likely experience increasing ethnic segregation.

The more prominent population dynamic is the overall shift of inhabitants from rural areas to cities, both in the Krai and elsewhere in Russia. In this respect, Stavropol' Krai is more typical of a Russian oblast than a North Caucasian territory. On October 18, the Russian public chamber held a special hearing on the exodus of ethnic Russians from the North Caucasus. Poor economic conditions, personal insecurity and the regional

⁵ Dargin in-migrants initially clustered in Levokumskiy, Neftekumskiy, and Arzgirskiy rayons, near the Dagestani border in the eastern part of the Krai, areas concentrating on sheep rearing, a traditional Dargin activity in their Dagestani homeland.

⁶ „Population Change and Migration in Stavropol'Krai: The Effects of Regional Conflicts and Economic Restructuring”, John O'Loughlin, Alexander Panin and Frank Witmer 2007, page 254.

⁷ „Population Change and Migration in Stavropol'Krai: The Effects of Regional Conflicts and Economic Restructuring”, John O'Loughlin, Alexander Panin and Frank Witmer 2007, page 265.

political climate were cited most often as the main factors driving ethnic Russians out of the North Caucasus. A well-known Russian expert from Stavropol region, Viktor Avksentyev, stated that Stavropol should be prepared to take in ethnic Russians who leave the North Caucasian republics⁸. According to Avksentyev, ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus do not have "the mechanisms for ethnic consolidation and self-defense," unlike the North Caucasians.

So while the results of the 2010 census are still unknown, they will likely indicate yet another decrease in the size of the Russian population in the North Caucasus.

In July 2011, President Dmitry Medvedev appealed to the North Caucasian muftis to help bring ethnic Russians back to the region. Moscow's envoy to the region, Aleksandr Khloponin, offered to design a most-favored-migrant regime to lure ethnic Russians back to the region.

Possible Ethnic Conflicts

Since the 1980s Islam in the North Caucasus has undergone a renaissance throughout the region. One of the driving forces behind this growth has been its rising popularity among the younger generations, a trend evident across the region.

Just as the North Caucasus is home to many ethnic groups, it is also representative of numerous Islamic movements. Hanafi Muslims are predominantly concentrated in the north-west, whereas Sufis are mostly found in the north-east. The increasing growth of Islam is diversifying its geographical makeup⁹. A tranquil and latent Islamization is taking place in the north-western part of the North Caucasus, particularly among the youth in Karachay-Cherkessia and the Stavropol district, which will ultimately transform the demographic context of that part of the region in years to come.

Stavropol region has also been affected by the spread of violence in the North Caucasus, though to a considerably lesser extent. The shoot-outs

⁸ *Russian Ethnic Outflow From the North Caucasus Continues to Worsen*, Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 8 Issue: 197 October 26, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.

⁹ „The North Caucasus, Russia's Volatile Frontier”, Andrew C. Kuchins, Matthew Malarkey, Sergei Markedonov, A Report of the CSIS, Russia and Eurasia Program 2011, page 7.

and explosions that are becoming far too frequent occurrences in the area appear to be fueled by ethnic unrest¹⁰.

In 2010, after the beginning of a new wave of violence in the region in 2009, the spread of terrorism had two different geographic directions: the first - toward Dagestan and the second - toward Kabardino-Balkaria and the Stavropol Territory. This is worrying because the Stavropol Territory is close to Sochi, which will host the 2014 Winter Olympics and could become an enticing target for terrorists. Stavropol faces a possible increase in terrorism but has not adopted any targeted measures to improve the situation. Experts believe the problem of the *Nogai Jamaat Wahhabi group*, which is active in the region, is more the product of journalists' inaccurate information than indicative of the presence of a real organization¹¹.

In 2011 at least 1378 people were victims of the ongoing armed conflict in Northern Caucasus, including 750 casualties and at least 628 wounded. These are the results of calculations run by the "Caucasian Knot" based on its own materials and information from open sources.¹² In Stavropol Territory there were reported about 24 victims, including 17 casualties and seven wounded persons (in 2010, the territory had 89 victims: 10 casualties and 79 wounded persons).

The most prominent terrorist incident in Stavropol in 2010 was a suicide attack at a concert hall in Stavropol that killed seven individuals and injured another 40, on May 26.¹³

In 2011, the regions of the North-Caucasian Federal District (NCFD) saw at least 167 explosions and terror acts, two of which in the Stavropol Territory. For comparison, in 2010, Northern

Caucasus saw at least 238 explosions and terror acts and three in the Stavropol Territory, respectively. Let's note that the 2011 statistics of explosions and terror acts included 14 suicide bombings and self-explosions.

According to police reports, in 2011, the losses of the armed underground in Northern Caucasus made 335 victims (in 2010 - 349 persons), who died as a result of self-explosions and actions of power agents; 15 of these were in the Stavropol Territory (in 2010 - two persons).

In 2011, the overall losses of law enforcers in Northern Caucasus, suffered as a result of shootings, explosions and armed clashes, made 239 casualties (in 2010 - 225 lost persons), including two in the Stavropol Territory (in 2010, there were no casualties there). In 2011, in total, 462 power agents were wounded (in 2010 - 467 persons), of which 6 in the Stavropol Territory (in 2010, there were no wounded law enforcers there).

The confrontation of power agents and members of the armed underground is directly affecting the civilian population of the Northern Caucasus regions; and the statistics of civilian victims is a confirmation. In 2011, Northern Caucasus lost - as a result of terror acts, bombings and shootings - at least 176 civilians (in 2010 - 180 persons). At least 163 civilians were wounded (in 2010 - 489 persons). There were no such victims in Stavropol Territory.

In 2011, Northern Caucasus continued registering kidnappings, disappearances and unlawful detentions. In total, there were at least 70 such registered cases (in 2010 - at least 50 cases). Again, Stavropol Territory is not present in the statistics.

Affected by increasing instability in the North Caucasus, Stavropol and Krasnodar Krai are considerably more nationalistic than other territories of Russia. The political background and political culture of the southern Russian regions differ significantly from those in central Russia¹⁴.

The ethnic structure of the Krai's population has changed more dynamically than any of the other North Caucasian territories, which is clearly

¹⁰ „*The North Caucasus, Russia's Volatile Frontier*”, Andrew C. Kuchins, Matthew Malarkey, Sergei Markedonov, A Report of the CSIS, Russia and Eurasia Program 2011, page 5.

¹¹ *North Caucasus: Results of 2010* Grigory Shvedov, Alexey Malashenko March 15, 2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/15/north-caucasus-results-of-2010/41rj>.

¹² These and the following data related to the armed conflict are from: *In 2011, armed conflict in Northern Caucasus killed and wounded 1378 people*, Caucasian Knot, <http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/19641/>.

¹³ „*Stability in Russia's Chechnya and other regions of the North Caucasus: Recent Developments*”, Congressional Research Service, Jim Nichol, December 13, 2010, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34613.pdf>, page 6.

¹⁴ „*Southern Russia: The Heartland or Russia's Soft Underbelly?*”, Ivan Kurilla, April 2000, PONARS Policy Memo 120 Volgograd State University, page 4.

evident in the growing territorial differentiation and increase in the Krai's population.

An important feature of migration in contemporary Russia, and indeed in all of the post-Soviet space, is its ethnic character¹⁵. *If movement to/from origins and destinations is not proportionate to the shares of various ethnic groups in the broader population, spatial polarization can result.*

Falling (and now largely negative) rates of natural population increase among ethnic Russian populations combined with an increase in the percentage share of Caucasian peoples in Stavropol' Krai are dramatically altering the structure of the population at the beginning.

Once predominantly mono-ethnic areas have become increasingly multiethnic and this changing demographic makeup of some communities has led to an increase in tension and hostility between ethnic groups.

Migratory patterns have probably contributed to conflict in the eastern part of Stavropol¹⁶, where tensions are escalating between the local population and the Chechen minority and Mineralny Vody, where locals are in a struggle with Vainakh, Dagestani, Karachay and Circassian migrants.

The Stavropol region borders Dagestan, and many Dagestanis moved to the region in search of agricultural land and jobs. Ethnic tensions, mainly between Russians, on one side, and Chechens and the Dagestanis, on the other, have erupted periodically in Stavropol region because of the mass influx of North Caucasians.

Tensions inside Dagestan are also on the rise as people from mountaineous areas of the republic resettle in the plains, putting a strain on the limited local resources. Thus some Dagestanis choose to move further into the Stavropol region, which conveniently borders Dagestan in the northwest. Over 100,000 ethnic Dagestanis reside in Stavropol region.

¹⁵ „Population Change and Migration in Stavropol'Krai: The Effects of Regional Conflicts and Economic Restructuring”, John O'Loughlin, Alexander Panin and Frank Witmer 2007, page 253.

¹⁶ „The North Caucasus, Russia's Volatile Frontier”, Andrew C. Kuchins, Matthew Malarkey, Sergei Markedonov, A Report of the CSIS, Russia and Eurasia Program 2011, page 15.

The hardships North Caucasians face in Stavropol region have been reported for years and in fact become routine. Whether Dagestani settlers in Stavropol region encounter subtle opposition from the local Russians or a state orchestrated campaign, this contradicts the Kremlin's officially stated plans¹⁷. According to a Russian government document outlining its strategy for the North Caucasus unveiled in September 2010, one of the main elements was an outflow of ethnic North Caucasians to other Russian regions. Stavropol region's example, however, raises questions about the feasibility of these plans and whether the government remains fully committed to pursuing them.

On September 12, 2011 there was a large-scale displacement of ethnic Dagestanis from the Stavropol region¹⁸. A local court in the region's Andropovsky district annulled the registration of at least 21 Dagestanis. The loss of registration makes these people ineligible for owning any property they acquired. The website's source, Murad Khalilov, stated that the Dagestanis had lived in the area for several decades and were suddenly deprived of their rights. Court officials say the places where these people lived were not part of any existing settlements and therefore they should not have been registered there.

This year, 2012, in the Stavropol Territory, at the mosque of Pyatigorsk, free courses on Russian language for foreign immigrants are to be established.¹⁹ Opening of the courses was initiated by the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in the Stavropol Territory. Implementation of the initiative was made possible due to the agreement on cooperation signed between the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in the Stavropol Territory and Department of the Federal Migration Service. Initially, the courses are intended for migrants from the former Soviet Union territory and neighboring countries. In practice, young

¹⁷ „Demographic Tug of War in Stavropol Undermines Kremlin Plans for North Caucasus Melting Pot”, Publication: North Caucasus Analysis Volume: 12 Issue: 18; September 14, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.

¹⁸ „Demographic Tug of War in Stavropol Undermines Kremlin Plans for North Caucasus Melting Pot”, Publication: North Caucasus Analysis Volume: 12 Issue: 18; September 14, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.

¹⁹ *Pyatigorsk mosque opens Russian language courses for immigrants*, Caucasian Knot, Dec 23 2011, <http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/19446/>.

people from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan can hardly speak Russian, since local schools ceased to teach it long ago, so the initiative could be very useful.

Hope for the Economy

The special economic zone in the Stavropol territory is one of the seven tourism and recreation zones formed in Russia. The North Caucasus has the tallest mountain range in Russia with five peaks exceeding 5,000 meters above the sea level; the most famous of them is the Elbrus. The construction of five alpine skiing resorts in the North Caucasus - Matlas in Dagestan, Mamison in North Ossetia, Arkhyz in Karachayevo-Cherkessia, Lagonaki in the Krasnodar territory and Adygeya and Elbrus in Kabardino-Balkaria - is a priority project of the federal authorities. The development of modern resorts will be environmentally friendly. The new resorts will be primarily oriented at residents of the North Caucasian Federal District²⁰. The cluster will spur on the development of airports and other means of transport in the area. The investments may reach one trillion rubles within ten years, and about 300,000 jobs will be created. The Mineralnye Vody International Airport will be the main air hub of the prospective North Caucasian tourist cluster.

The Stavropol spa within the Caucasian Mineralnye Vody center²¹ will become a part of the North Caucasian tourism cluster. The federal authorities have proposed to put all projects within the Caucasian Mineralnye Vody special economic zone under control of the North Caucasian Resorts Company. The Grand Spa Yutsa project²² will be the center of the new resort. The center is located on Mount Yutsa, ten kilometers away from

²⁰ Authorities expect that residents of the North Caucasian Federal District will make up 50% of the tourists, about 20% of tourists will come from Central Russia, Siberia and the Far East, about 20% from Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan and 10% from abroad.

²¹ *Stavropol spa center to become jewel of North Caucasian tourism cluster*, 25/10/2011, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/256236.html>.

²² A recreation and spa center on the area of 843 hectares for 4,500 clients. It is planned to build 14 hotels with more than 2,800 rooms with three to five star service. It is also planned to build artificial water ponds of six hectares, two golf fields, an indoor water park, a horse riding center and a delta and paragliding center.

Pyatigorsk and 35 kilometers away from the Mineralnye Vody International Airport.

Meanwhile, the North Caucasian Resorts Corporation (NCRC) is drafting a tourist security concept. Security in the North Caucasus is a key criterion of the success of this project. Experienced Israeli companies will be involved in the drafting this concept, while the government will give the concept final approval. There is a whole set of measures, including security agents and technical means, such as drones and video cameras. NCRC will bear some of the expenditures, while the state and law enforcers will bear others.

Krasnodar Krai

Geographically the region is located in the south of Russia. 740 kilometers of the total length of the border, constituting 1,540 kilometers, stretches along the Black and the Azov Seas. Also known as Kuban, it is the southern sea gate of Russia, an international transportation corridor, connecting Europe and Asia.

As a result of the collapse of the USSR, Krasnodar, which has become more important as a frontier territory, borders of the former Soviet Republics of Ukraine and Georgia became part of the state borders. The Krai is now Russia's southern maritime gateway. The region's ports, Novorossiisk, Tuapse and Eisk, are now the only Russian ports in the south. Krasnodar Krai and Rostov oblast provide Russia with its only access to the Black and Azov Seas, which are vital for the country's future as a sea power, as well as for its trade routes.

Novorossiisk is an important terminal for the oil transport and at the same time, it is considered the main base of Russia's Black Sea Navy in the event of Russian-Ukrainian complications over Sevastopol. Additionally, it is worth noting that the southernmost Russian space launch site Kapustin Yar is situated there, on the border of Volgograd and Astrakhan oblasts.

Krasnodar region is located on the latitude of northern Italy and southern France. Krasnodar kraï is the largest Russian producer of farm products. Some 130 kinds of crops are produced here. In Kuban wheat ripens one month earlier than the Russian average, and vegetables two months

earlier. The region has a vast network of fruit and vegetable farms. With its developed agricultural-industrial complexes and tourist industry, Krasnodar has maintained its image of being a peaceful and well-off region.

Moscow has separated the North Caucasus republics from the Southern Federal District. Pyatigorsk, Stavropol is the capital city, but the de facto military and security center is Rostov-on-Don. The explanation²³ for the new federal district is that it would allow for better focus addressing the shared problems across the republics of NC; an attempt to improve the effectiveness of Moscow's financial support to the NC; it could also be an attempt to isolate the troublesome NC from the rest of southern Russia, especially with the Winter Olympics fast approaching, to stress that Sochi is not in the NC.

The Economy

A heavily agricultural region, its prosperity has been severely damaged by the steep decline since 1991 of the farm sector's terms of trade with the rest of the economy, while its Black Sea resort sector has at the same time been hammered by the polarization of the Russian income distribution.

Krasnodar Krai has a special economic geography; it contains two sharply differentiated sub-regional economies²⁴: the rural heartland that has traditionally been Russia's strongest agricultural region, and the coastal strip that contains two substantial ports, Novorossiisk and Tuapse, and the Sochi-Adler resort area. The main seaside resorts of Russia are concentrated in Krasnodar region. The coastal strip is in many ways more "modern", and certainly more connected with the outside world (including Moscow).

In present times, Krasnodar region is one of the most rapidly developing regions of Russia. Krasnodar's favorable local attitude toward foreign investment could be a model for other

regions. When it comes to the level of small business development, Kuban is in the first five among Russian regions.

A key geopolitical objective for Russia in the 21st century will be to get a large part of the economic rents from Caspian oil, developing a profitable network of oil pipelines, and ensuring that Volga, Azerbaijani and Kazakh oil is piped to the port of Novorossiisk for export²⁵. One political aspect of a successful development of the Novorossiisk oil pipeline option is that it will keep the Caspian states of the CIS heavily dependent on Russia.

In October 2011 the federal government, the Krasnodar territorial administration and the authorities of the Apsheron district of the Krasnodar territory approved the drafting of a development plan for the Lagonaki resort. The agreement on forming a tourist and recreation zone in Lagonaki was signed in February 2011 in fulfillment of the Federal Government Resolution "On the Formation of the Tourist Cluster in the North Caucasian Federal District, the Krasnodar Territory and the Republic of Adygeya"²⁶. Lagonaki will be a part of the tourist cluster in the North Caucasus with the yearly tourist capacity of about 28,000. Apartments, cottages and hotels will provide space for 16,000 people. The alpine skiing tracks will be about 164 kilometers long. The Lagonaki resort in the Apsheron district is a new step in the development of the Krasnodar district. One of the priority projects of the federal authorities in the North Caucasus is the construction of five alpine skiing resorts - Matlas in Dagestan, Mamison in North Ossetia, Arkhyz in Karachayevo-Cherkessia, Lagonaki in the Krasnodar territory and Adygeya and Elbrus in Kabardino-Balkaria. To implement this project The North Caucasian Resorts State Corporation was created. To assist the provision of security of tourists in the North Caucasus, Russia and Israel are forming joint working groups. Israeli specialists are assisting the drafting of a *multi-level systemic*

²³ „The North Caucasus, Russia's Volatile Frontier”, Andrew C. Kuchins, Matthew Malarkey, Sergei Markedonov, A Report of the CSIS, Russia and Eurasia Program 2011, page 17.

²⁴ „Samara and Krasnodar: A Different Routes of Russian Adaptation to Political Democracy and Market Economy”, Arbakhan Magomedov, NATO Research Fellowship Program 1999, page 4.

²⁵ „Samara and Krasnodar: A Different Routes of Russian Adaptation to Political Democracy and Market Economy”, Arbakhan Magomedov, NATO Research Fellowship Program 1999, page 6.

²⁶ Stavropol spa center to become jewel of North Caucasian tourism cluster 25/10/2011

<http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/256236.html>.

concept of the security²⁷ of North Caucasian resort clusters.

Ethno-Nationalism

The Cossacks, who enjoy the support of the regional regime, are conceived of within regional discourse as the "indigenous people" and "titular nationality," laying claim to special political status in the region. In declaring themselves to be the "indigenous people"²⁸, the Cossacks lay claim to having a special link with the land of Krai, announcing their right and "sacred duty" to protect the natural and agricultural resources of the region from being pillaged or destroyed. Cossacks have emerged as opponents of market reform in agriculture and are especially against the introduction of land buying and selling, claiming that private landownership is contrary to the traditional Cossack form of communal land usage.

In Krasnodar the regional leadership has been traditionalist and nationalist in character. Krasnodar Krai is one of the few Russian regions which have a regional law on land use: "On the special regime of land use in Kuban"²⁹. It stipulates that land cannot be an object of sale. Strategically, the most important aspect of the region is its prospective role in Caspian oil development.

The Kuban is known among both Russian and Western researchers of post-Soviet regionalism for its conservative and reactionary political elite³⁰, with the region frequently called the stronghold of radical left-wing and national-patriotic forces in contemporary Russia. International "recognition"

²⁷ Israeli specialists to help provide security in North Caucasian resorts, <http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/182184.html>.

²⁸ *Ethnic Discrimination and the Discourse of "Indigenization": The Regional Regime, "Indigenous Majority" and Ethnic Minorities in Krasnodar Krai in Russia*, Anton Popov and Igor Kuznetsov, Nationalities Papers, Vol. 36, No. 2, May 2008, page 243.

²⁹ „Samara and Krasnodar: A Different Routes of Russian Adaptation to Political Democracy and Market Economy”, Arbakhan Magomedov, NATO Research Fellowship Program 1999, page 6.

³⁰ *Ethnic Discrimination and the Discourse of "Indigenization": The Regional Regime, "Indigenous Majority" and Ethnic Minorities in Krasnodar Krai in Russia*, Anton Popov and Igor Kuznetsov, Nationalities Papers, Vol. 36, No. 2, May 2008, page 231.

has assisted the regime of discrimination against ethnic minorities and migrants that has formed in Krasnodar Krai.

Although out of the population of 5 million, the majority, at approximately 85% (4,314,783), is Russian, it is still possible to call the Krai multinational. Armenians (241,964) and Ukrainians (198,570) are the most numerous of the ethnic minorities, even though they comprise only approximately 5% and 4% of the region's population, respectively.

The Krai authorities have paid special attention to the Meskhetian Turks living in the region, in relation to whom a whole body of normative acts has been created defining their "special" position of not enjoying equal legal rights in the territory of the Krai³¹. The Meskhetian Turks were exiled to Soviet Central Asia in 1944 (mainly to Uzbekistan) from Meskhet-Javakheti (southern Georgia). The main mass moved to Krasnodar Krai in 1989/1990, after a wave of pogroms swept through areas with high density populations of Meskhetian Turks in the Ferghana Valley.

The decision to host the upcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi may have reignited latent ethno-nationalist sentiments and aspirations among Circassians³². The decision to hold the Games, set to take place in 2014, in Krasnaya Polyana has raised intense debate. That region represents for Circassians their historical homeland and the site of the last battle of the Caucasian War, in which they were defeated by Russian troops.

The region is close to territories that are still prone to ethnic conflicts, like Chechnya and Abkhazia and received the first wave of refugees

³¹ *Ethnic Discrimination and the Discourse of "Indigenization": The Regional Regime, "Indigenous Majority" and Ethnic Minorities in Krasnodar Krai in Russia*, Anton Popov and Igor Kuznetsov, Nationalities Papers, Vol. 36, No. 2, May 2008, page 234.

³² The ethno-nationalist movements are also gaining traction in Ingushetia and North Osetia with the ongoing failure to resolve the status of the Prigorodny District. Some analysts have contended that the August 2008 Russian intervention in Georgia and its subsequent recognition of the sovereignty of Abkhazia and South Osetia have reignited ethno-nationalist discourses about the lack of settlement over the Prigorodny, an issue about which the Ingush have long harbored historical grievances against Moscow, „*The North Caucasus, Russia's Volatile Frontier*”, Andrew C. Kuchins, Matthew Malarkey, Sergei Markedonov, A Report of the CSIS, Russia and Eurasia Program 2011, page 6.

from the various civil war "hot spots". With the approach of the Sochi Olympic Games, which will heighten the international visibility of the region and its actors, there exists the risk of rising tensions. The authorities' ineffectiveness in combating terrorist attacks not only in the North Caucasus but also in central Russia contributes to a climate of fear.

Another important minority in Krasnodar is the Adygs-Shapsugs. The most important issue for the Adygs-Shapsugs, living near the Black Sea, is the land issue and the fact that the statute of the Krasnodar Territory had not fixed the fact of residence of Shapsugs as the indigenous nation. Shapsugs are the nation from the group of Adygs (Circassians) in the Russian Federation. In the Krasnodar Territory, Adygs-Shapsugs mainly live in the Tuapse and Lazarevskoe Districts.

In May 2011, at the seventh conference of the public organization "Adyge Khase", delegates discussed the current problems of the Shapsugs, living near the Black Sea, including the problem of territories for their stay. The conference noted that "many mountain villages are on the verge of extinction" and that the provisions of the Federal Law "On guarantees of rights of indigenous nations" are hardly fulfilled.³³

Officially, support of the Adygs-Shapsugs, living near the Black Sea, is being conducted within the "Programme for harmonization of interethnic relations and development of national cultures in Krasnodar Territory" and within other targeted programmes. The programme has a section "Saving of environment of traditional habitat of indigenous nations", which is also relevant to Adygs-Shapsugs, programme approved in 2006. Also other targeted programmes to support villages of Adygs-Shapsugs are underway (like a grant support of the newspaper "Shapsugiya" and Adyg Cultural Centre in the Lazarevskoe District).

Circassian Problem

The Russian and Circassian narratives on Circassian history continue to clash. The latest incident is related to Circassian activists who are currently lobbying the Russian government to launch a

³³ Anzor Nibo: *Shapsugs in Krasnodar Territory hope for soonest solution of land problem*, Caucasian Knot, Jan 10 2012, Asya Kapaeva, <http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/19650/>.

program for repatriating Circassians from Syria. The Circassians in Syria traditionally were aligned closely with the government, as in most other countries of the region. However, as the government of Bashar al-Assad and his regime increasingly comes under international pressure, the Circassians have reportedly been singled out by the local Arab population for their support for the Assad regime. As some Circassians have been looking for exit options, only Turkey appears to have offered them refuge.

Officially, Moscow responded by saying that no Russian involvement was necessary. The Russian reaction to the plight of Circassians in Syria indicates once again that Moscow *does not treat ethnic Russians and other ethnicities native to the Russian Federation equally*³⁴.

The Circassian organization in Adygea, Adyge Khas unveiled plans³⁵ to declare 2014, when the Winter Olympics are to be held in Sochi, a *year of mourning and remembrance*. According to Circassians, Sochi was the scene of mass killings and the deportation of Circassians by the Russian Empire in 1864.

On November 7, 2011 the European Parliament in Brussels observed Circassian Day³⁶. The Circassian issue garnered some public attention internationally because of the Winter Olympics in Sochi set to take place in 2014. The Circassians insist that the Olympics be moved to another location in order to avoid a conflict with the principles of the Olympics. Circassians occupied the lands around Sochi prior to the Russian empire's brutal conquest of the region in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Circassians were forcibly deported to the Ottoman Empire and are now dispersed among many Middle Eastern and European countries, as well as the U.S. Only an estimated 10 percent of the prewar population was allowed to stay in the North Caucasus, but they were driven out of the areas along the Black Sea coast.

³⁴ *Moscow and Circassians Increasingly Diverge On History and Repatriation* Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 8 Issue: 217 November 30, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.

³⁵ *Moscow and Circassians Increasingly Diverge On History and Repatriation* Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 8 Issue: 217 November 30, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.

³⁶ *With Sochi Olympics on the Horizon, Russia Bolsters Military Presence in Northwest Caucasus* Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 8 Issue: 207 November 9, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.

Russia's reaction to the increased awareness of the Circassian issue was mixed³⁷. Even though most pro-government media and Russian officials dismissed Circassian claims the government also made gestures of accommodation. For example, in Tuapse district of Krasnodar region, where Sochi is located, the local government plans to open Circassian museums. Two ethnic villages will strive to replicate the life of the Circassians prior to the Russian conquest of the nineteenth century.

Moscow's reaction, however, was not only about accommodating Circassian interests. The Russian military has quietly relocated the 33rd mountain infantry brigade from Botlikh, Dagestan, to Maikop, Adygea. The mountain infantry brigade has a listed staff of 2,300 people and became a structural part of the newly formed 49th army in the North Caucasus, headquartered in the city of Stavropol. Various explanations were given as to why this brigade was removed from Botlikh (including, among others, the hostility of the local Dagestani population), yet another reason may have been the need to strengthen the Russian military presence in the northwestern Caucasus to protect the Sochi Olympic from possible attacks.

³⁷ *With Sochi Olympics on the Horizon, Russia Bolsters Military Presence in Northwest Caucasus* Publication: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 8 Issue: 207 November 9, 2011 By: Valery Dzutsev.