

# The Future of Chechens in ISIS

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Oct 9, 2017

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Anna Borshchevskaya is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, focusing on Russia's policy toward the Middle East.



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## Factors such as corruption, socioeconomic inequity, and ignorance among Russian officials regarding Islam could end up fueling radicalism rather than deterring it.

In recent years, Russia has emerged as third among the top five countries from which ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, aka Islamic State] receives its recruits. Most fighters come from Russia's restless North Caucasus, and increasingly also from Central Asia. This trend has been long in the making.

On 23 June 2015, official ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani declared the formation of a new wilayat, or governorate, in Russia's North Caucasus. The announcement marked a turning point. Never before had ISIS made a territorial claim inside Russia, as press reports noted at the time. Al-Adnani's announcement came just days after reports that thousands of Islamic militants in Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria -- four declared provinces of the Caucasus Emirate, Russia's main jihadist group -- had formally pledged allegiance to ISIS. In doing so, these fighters echoed a December 2014 declaration of allegiance to ISIS by several of the Emirate's senior militants...

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