



2014 Winter Olympics: The Terrorism Threat

Information cut-off date: 24 JULY 2013



Bottom Line Up Front

Every two years athletes and spectators from around the globe turn their attention to the Olympic Games. There have been two violent attacks throughout the 117 year history of the modern Olympic Games, the 1972 hostage taking in Munich, and the 1996 bombing in Atlanta. The upcoming Sochi Winter Games will be located within 300 miles of Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia, an area within the North Caucasus that has experienced ongoing violence from separatist and Islamic fundamentalist organizations since the Chechen independence movement began during the 1990s. Recently, Doku Umarov, emir of the Caucasus Emirate, made threats directly targeting the Winter Olympics. The capabilities of these groups and proximity of these groups creates a substantial threat to the Olympic Games and the subsequent influx of athletes and spectators in the region.



The logo of the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. [8]



Image of Doku Umarov captured from video released on July 13, 2013. [9]

On July 3, 2013, Doku Umarov released a video statement urging Islamic militants to “do their utmost to derail’ the (Sochi Olympic) games... ‘We have an obligation to use all means to prevent this.’” [1] The Caucasus Emirate, a terrorist organization that conducts near daily attacks throughout the Russian North Caucasus; has proven their ability to carry out high profile terrorist attacks in areas outside the Caucasus, having claimed responsibility for several terrorist incidents throughout Russia. [1] The most notable attacks include, the November 2009 training bombing that killed 26, the March 2010 suicide bombing by two females on Moscow’s Metro, and the January 2011 suicide bombing of the Moscow airport. [2]

Umarov described the games as “satanic dances on the bones of our ancestors,” in reference to the location of Sochi, which sits on land depopulated of Muslim Circassian tribes during the Russian invasion of the Caucasus in the 1800s. [1] [3] The video provides the most specific threat to the games so far; contradicting orders issued previously, which urged fighters under his command to avoid targeting civilians, and to avoid carrying out attacks outside the Caucasus. [1][3] Sochi is located in Krasnodar-Krai, which is not considered part of the Caucasus, due to its Russian ethnic majority. The Olympic Games in Sochi, viewed by many as a pet project for Russian President Vladimir Putin, provides an international platform for the Caucasus Emirate to demonstrate its strength, and further its efforts of creating an Islamic caliphate in the Caucasus.



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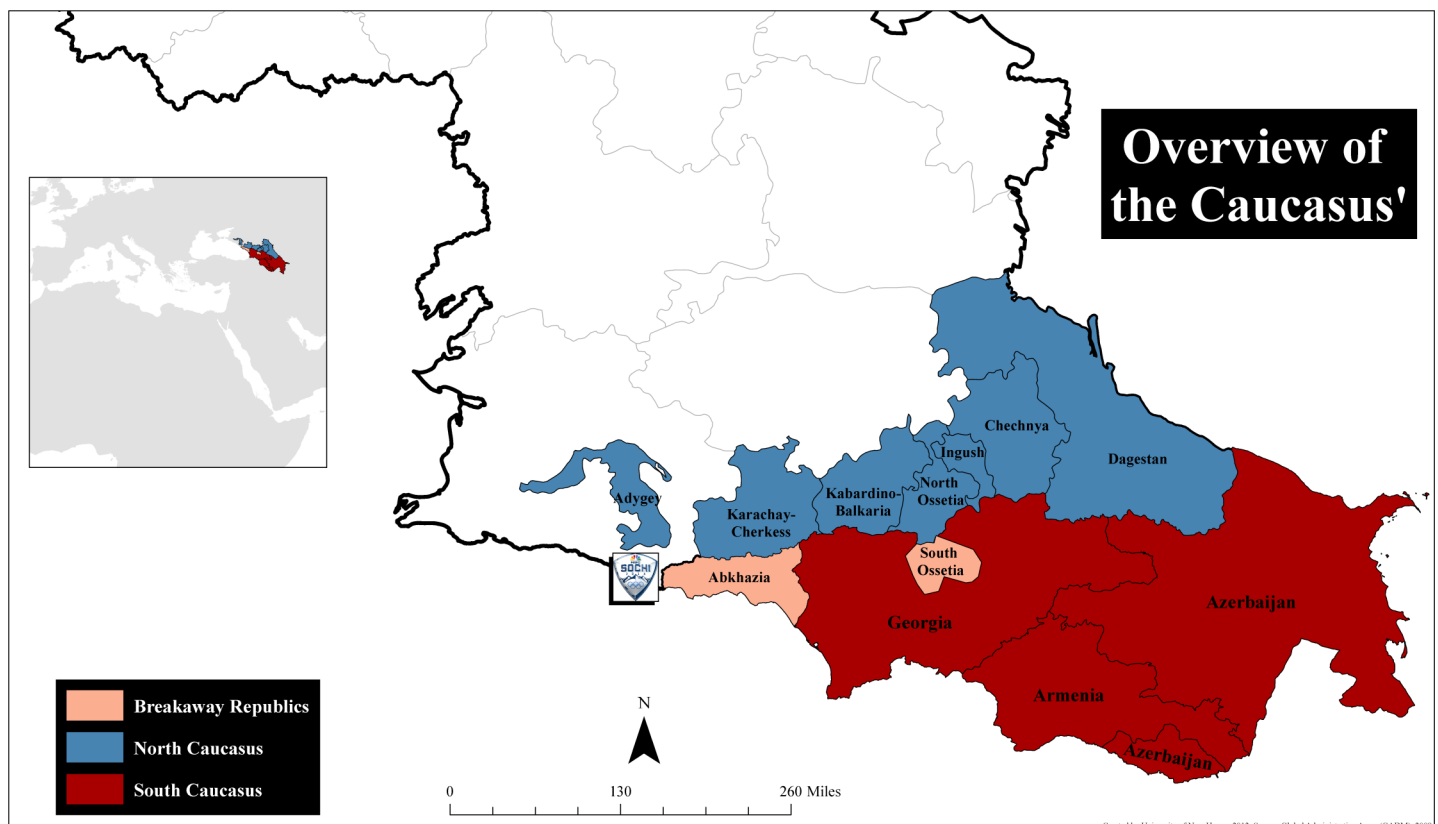
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Foiled Terror Plot

In May 2012, Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) personnel arrested three Caucasus Emirate rebels and seized a large number of weapons including surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), TNT, and grenade launchers. The FSB was able to establish that members of Caucasus Emirate were planning on transporting the weapons to Sochi in order to conduct a terrorist attack during the Olympic Games in February. The detained militants claimed that the plot had been created by Umarov. A statement released by the Russian anti-terror committee alleged, “Umarov, while maintaining close contacts with the Georgian special services, coordinated all activities to organize the delivery of materials to carry out acts of terror.” [4]

The raid occurred in Abkhazia, the border of which is approximately 10 miles from Sochi. [4] Abkhazia, considered by Georgia to be a “breakaway region,” declared independence in 1999. Originally part of Georgia when the Soviet Union fell in 1991, the Abkhaz people revolted and drove Georgian soldiers out of the territory during an armed conflict that occurred throughout 1992 and 1993. Russia was the first country to formally recognize Abkhazia’s independence, and utilized the Abkhaz-Georgian border to invade Georgia proper in 2008 during the conflict between the two nations over South Ossetia. Since that time Russia has maintained a strong military presence along the Abkhaz-Georgian border with permission of the Abkhaz government. [5]



Above is a map of the Caucasus Region. The North Caucasus lay entirely within the geographic boundaries of Russia, while the South Caucasus span across Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.



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Russian Efforts to Secure the Games

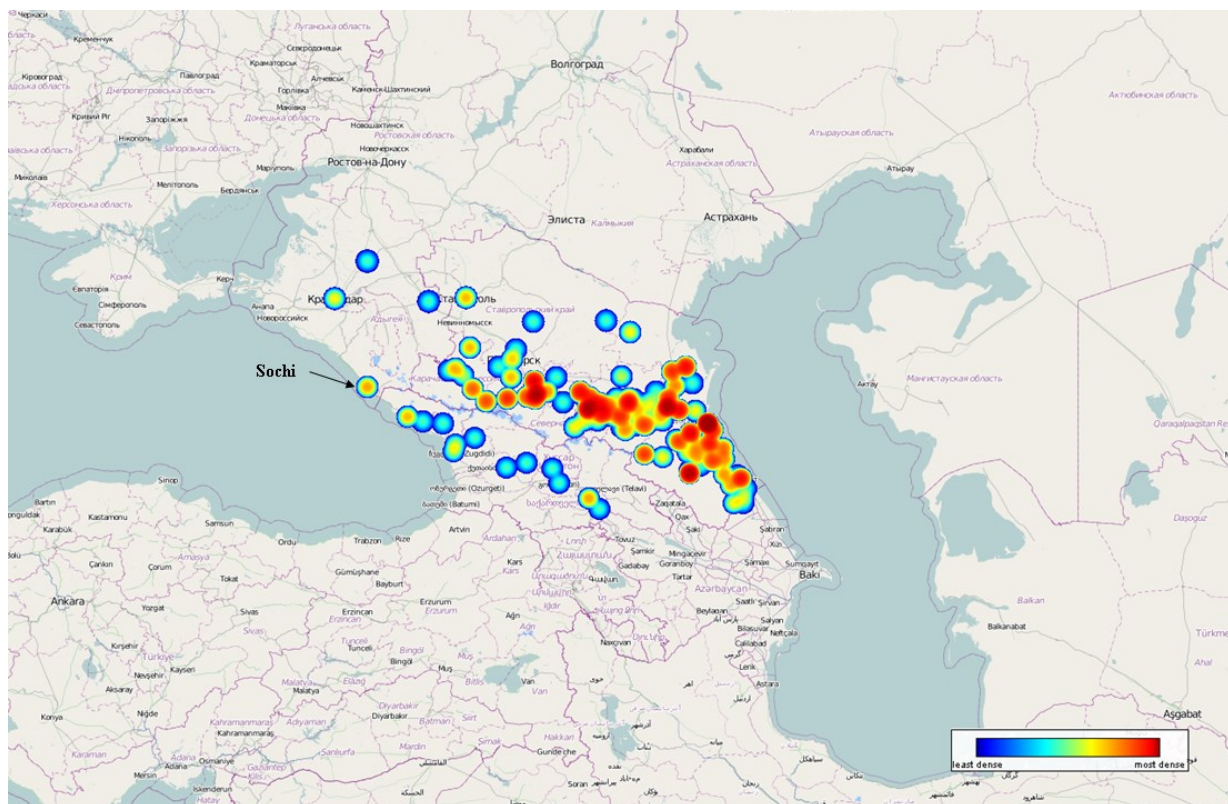
Russia has taken a number of steps to ensure the safety and security of the Sochi Games. On July 5, 2013, Russia announced that 37,000 police officer will be deployed to Sochi. [6] Additionally, Russia has announced that drones, high-speed boat patrols, and explosive-seeking robotic vehicles will be used to provide continuous security of the Olympic site. In an effort to prevent “lone wolf” terrorist attacks, the Sochi games will employ a “spectator pass.” The pass will require individuals to disclose personal background information to the Russian government such as passport details and biographical information. The pass will be required for entry into the Olympic park. [7]



Security forces in Sochi inspect a bus entering the Olympic Park for explosives. [10]

Analysis of Threats in the Region

According to the ISVG database, there have been 1,560 violent events have occurred throughout the Caucasus region, resulting in 3,449 casualties since January 1, 2010. These attacks predominately take place in the North Caucasus, within the borders of Russia. The majority of attacks have occurred within 500 miles of the Olympic Games; Dagestan (832), Ingushetia (256), Karbardino-Balkaria (246), and Chechnya (159) have all experienced a large number of violent events.



The above heat map illustrates the location of violent events throughout the Caucasus.



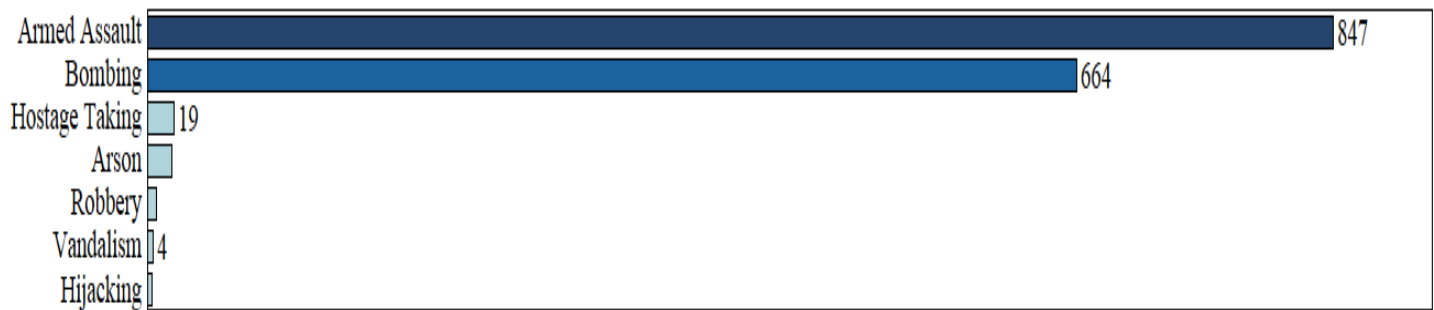
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The most violent attack type has been bombings, resulting in 1,844 casualties in 644 events, an average of 2.86 casualties per event. Armed assaults resulted in 1,570 casualties in 847 events, an average of 1.85 casualties per event.

Events by Type



The image above illustrates the number of violent events by event type.

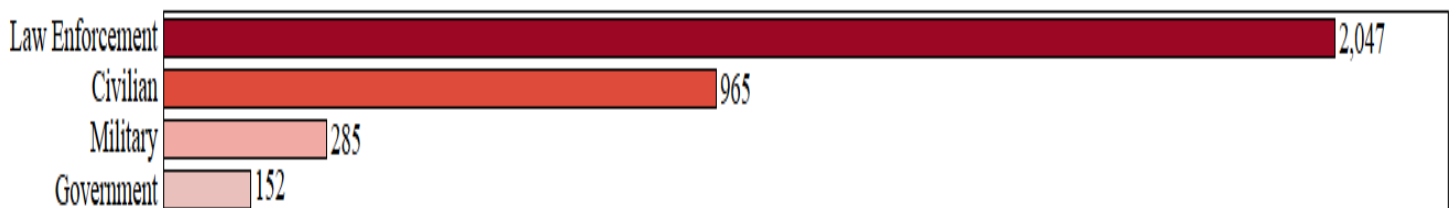
Events by Group

While all of the events collected for this report were conducted by militants, only a small number of attacks are actually claimed by terrorist organizations. The NVF (Незаконные вооружённые формирования) or Nezakonnnye Vooruzhennye Formirovaniya in latin, which translated means “Illegal Armed Group,” was responsible for 59 violent events, while unidentified Chechen rebel groups were responsible for 18 events, and the Caucasus Emirate was responsible for 15.

NVF	59
Unidentified Chechen Rebel Groups	18
Caucasus Emirate	15
Animal Liberation Front	1
Hezbollah	1
Islamic Jamaat of Dagestan Shariat	1
Khasavyurt Gang	1
Riyadus Salikhin	1
Total	97

The above chart illustrates the number of violent events claimed by each group.

Casualties by Target Type



The chart above illustrates the number of violent events that targeted a specific target type.

Law enforcement officials are the most common targets of attacks, having been targeted in 2,047 violent events. While the number of attacks per quarter has decreased over the last two and a half years the high level of violence that has occurred within 500 miles of Sochi poses the greatest threat to the safety and security of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.

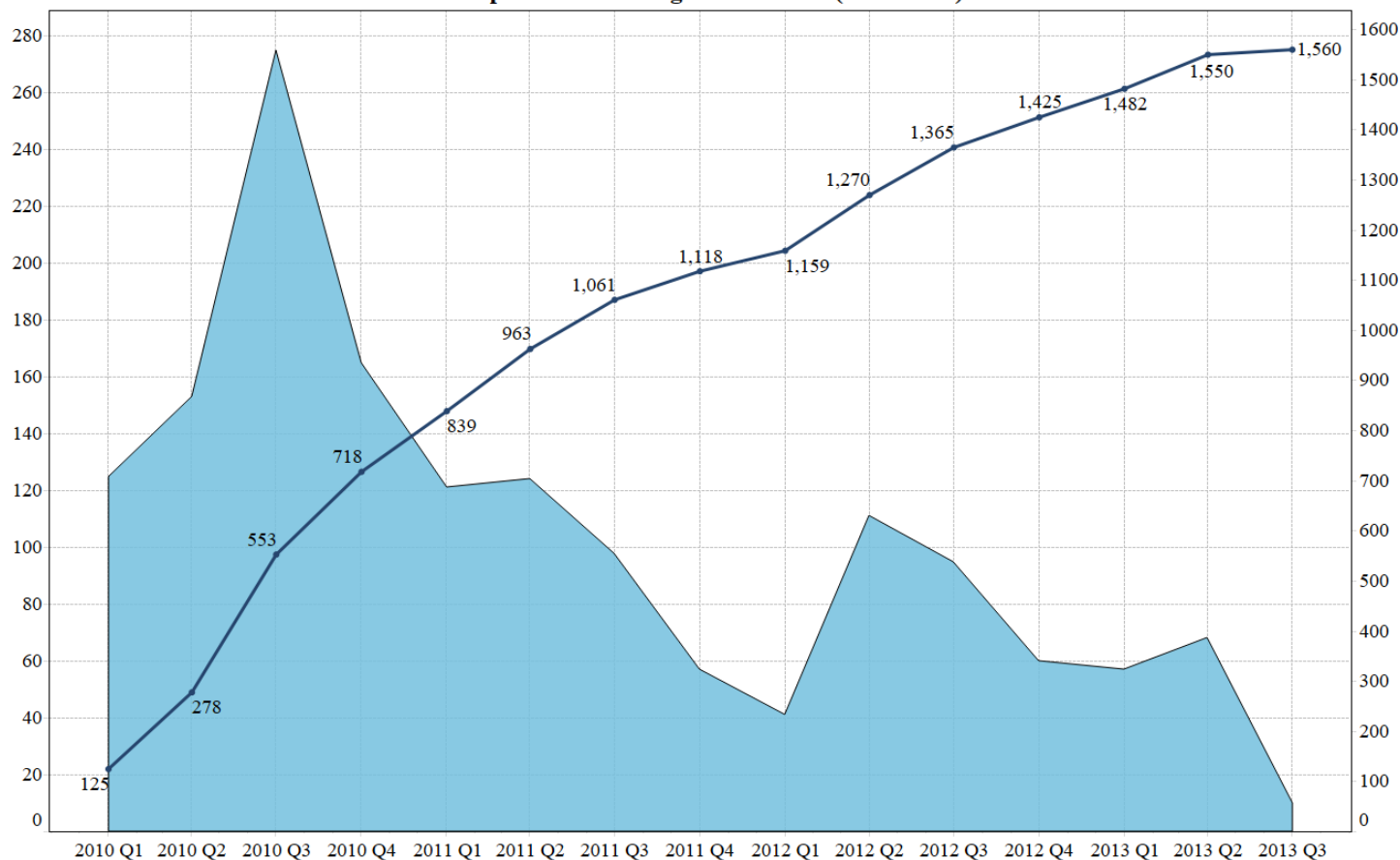


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Quarterly Total Number of Events (Light Blue)
Compared to Running Total Events (Dark Blue)



This graph is a dual axis line chart that shows the running total of events compared to the quarterly number of events over time. The dark blue line indicates the running totals and the scale on the right of the chart indicates the value of the dark blue line. The light blue area indicates the quarterly total of events and as indicated by the scale on the left.

The Institute for the Study of Violent Groups (ISVG) is a federally funded institute based at the University of New Haven. For more information on Chechen rebel groups or Doku Umarov, please visit the ISVG Violent Extremism Knowledge Base VKB at www.isvg.org or email info@isvg.org. For more information on the University of New Haven please visit www.newhaven.edu



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