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## **SHEIK SAID ABU SAAD BURYATSKII: NEW BASAEV OF THE CAUCASUS**

The summer of 2009 was the most active period for the North Caucasus mujahedin since the summer 2005. At that time, Shamil Basaev was still alive and the symbol of the so-called Chechen Republic of Ichkeria's jihadists and Dagestan had briefly become the center of jihadi activity. Now there is a new personification of the North Caucasus jihad, with its center of gravity moving to Ingushetia. The mujahedin are now joined under the ChRI's successor organization, the purely jihadist 'Caucasus Emirate' (CE) declared by amir Abu Usman Doku Umarov in late October 2007. By far the most effective Caucasus Emirate terrorist operation in all of 2009 was the August 17<sup>th</sup> suicide truck bomb that destroyed the MVD headquarters in Nazran, Ingushetia. This was the most spectacular jihadi operation in the nearly four years that have passed since the October 13<sup>th</sup> 2005 ground assault on Nalchik, the capitol of Kabardino-Balkaria, by some 200 mujahedin organized by Basaev and Anzor Astemirov (Seifullah).

The CE's present resurgence has coincided with the rise to prominence of the charismatic force behind the Nazran attack, mujahed and sheikh Said Abu Saad Buryatskii. Who is Buryatskii and what does his emergence mean for the CE jihad?

Buryatskii (sometimes rendered al-Buryati) has been the most prominent Islamic preacher on the CE websites since his joining the jihad in spring 2008. In 2009, he emerged as the CE's deadliest operative. Buryatskii represents a new generation of young Muslims and mujahedin in the North Caucasus who are attracted to Islamism, jihadism, and the global jihad rather than the cause of Chechen independence. This new generation has increasingly dominated the North Caucasus 'separatist' movement since 2002.

As his new name suggests, Buryatskii is an ethnic Buryat, a Mongol and traditionally Buddhist ethnic group. He was born in 1982 as Aleksandr Tikhomirov in Ulan-Ude, the capitol of Russia's republic of Buryatia, in a family of mixed Russian-Buryat and Christian-Buddhist heritage. His mother reportedly is Russian and Orthodox Christian, prompting Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov to claim that Buryatskii had changed religion three times.<sup>1</sup> His father died at some point, leaving him to live with his mother and sister in Ulan-Ude, the capitol of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Kadyrov nazval Saida Buryatskogo 'ideologom terakta, nakachivayushchim smertnikov tabletkami,'" 30 July 2009, 11:39, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/07/30/67080.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/07/30/67080.shtml).

Russia's Republic of Buryatia.<sup>2</sup> Buryatskii is well educated. He studied in a Buddhist datsan, but at age 15 he converted to Islam after independently reading Islamic literature. He moved to Moscow and then to Bugurslan, Orenburg where he studied at the Sunni madrassah 'Rasul Akram'. In the period 2002-2005, he studied Arabic at an Arabic language center 'Fajr' before travelling to Egypt to study Islamic theology at Cairo's Al-Askhar University as well as under several authoritative sheikhs in Egypt, Kuwait and, according to Russian prosecutors, Saudi Arabia.<sup>3</sup>

Buryatskii's conversion and/or radicalization might be connected to his relationship in Ulan-Ude with a local imam formerly from Uzbekistan. This imam, Bakhtiyar Umarov, was arrested in November 2008 charged with having ties to the radical international Islamist party 'Hizb ut-Tahrir Islami' and had his recently granted Russian passport confiscated. The CE-affiliated site *Kavkaz tsentr* claimed locals were sure imam Umarov's arrest was a consequence of his association with Buryatskii and the local Muslim community was being subjected to reprisals as a result of Buryatskii's defection to the jihad.<sup>4</sup> However, it remains unclear if Buryatskii was an associate of imam Umarov's before and/or after his travel to the Middle East.

For those who would doubt the influence of the outside Islamic *umma* and its present revolutionary crisis on Russia's Muslims and the Caucasus jihad, the following from Buryatskii perhaps will be instructive: "At one time when I was in Egypt at the lecture of one of the scholars, who openly said to us: 'Do you really think that you can so simply spread Allah's religion without the blood of martyrs?!' The disciples of Allah's prophet spilt the blood of martyrs on many lands, and Islam bloomed on their blood!"<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly, Buryatskii reportedly ran afoul of the Egypt's secret services and was expelled from the country. After returning to Russia, Buryatskii worked at 'Umma', a publisher of Islamic literature, and in an unknown capacity at

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<sup>2</sup> Said Abu Saad Buryatskii, "Vzglyad na Dzhikhad iznutri: Geroi Istiny i lzhi," *Hunafa.info*, 30 May 2009, 1:01, <http://hunafa.com/?p=1534>.

<sup>3</sup> Said Abu Saad Buryatskii, "Vzglyad na Dzhikhad iznutri: Geroi Istiny i lzhi," and "Aleksandr Tikhomirov (Sheikh Said Abu Sadd al-Buryatii – Said Buryatskii)," *Kavkaz uzal*, 17 August 2009, 17:02, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565).

<sup>4</sup> "Buryatiya. Arestovan znakomyi Sheikha Saida Burtaskogo imam Balkhtiyar Umarov," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 21 November 2008, 07:53, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2008/11/21/62314.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2008/11/21/62314.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> Said Abu Saad Buryatskii, "Vzglyad na Dzhikhad iznutri: Geroi istiny i lzhi, Chast' 2," *Hunafa.info*, 24 June 2009, 4:04, <http://hunafa.info/?p=1715>.

Moscow's Central Mosque. There his contacts with some of the official Muslim clergy, perhaps including Chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia Ravil Gainutdin, alienated him from Russia's traditional Islamic community. A lecture tour through several former Soviet Muslim countries and the distribution of his numerous taped lectures on cassettes and the Internet brought Buryatskii popularity as an Islamic sheikh and missionary, not only in Russia but in the broader, especially Russian-speaking, Muslim world. Buryatskii then married and returned to Ulan-Ude to live with his wife, mother and sister.<sup>6</sup>

However, apparently inspired by the November 2007 declaration of a Caucasus Emirate and a video letter he received in spring 2008 from the CE's deputy (*naib*) military amir, the Jordanian Abu Anas Muhannad, asking him to join the Caucasus mujahedin, Buryatskii's domestic life came to a quick end. In May 2008, he secretly left for the Caucasus jihad, taking the bayat or Islamic loyalty oath to CE amir Umarov.<sup>7</sup> According to Buryatskii: "After the declaration of the Caucasus Emirate all doubts fell away. We have one amir and one state. And it is the immediate obligation of each Muslim today to leave for Jihad by word and property."<sup>8</sup> In a June 2009 video, Buryatskii stated that he joined the jihad ultimately because of Muhannad's video letter. According to Buryatskii, the letter praised him as someone Muslims listen to and this compliment moved him to begin jihad.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, it appears that the CE was seeking to recruit an authoritative Islamist preacher to strengthen their appeal to young Muslims and has certainly found one in Buryatskii. Upon arriving in the Caucasus, he reportedly met with and took the Islamic loyalty oath or 'bayat' to Doka abu Usman Umarov.<sup>10</sup> The typical new recruit, even one from Buryatia, is unlikely to be received by amir Umarov. This was an indication of the value the CE leadership placed on their new acquisition.

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<sup>6</sup> "Aleksandr Tikhomirov (Sheikh Said Abu Sadd al-Buryatii – Said Buryatskii)," *Kavkaz uzal*, 17 August 2009, 17:02, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565).

<sup>7</sup> "Aleksandr Tikhomirov (Sheikh Said Abu Sadd al-Buryatii – Said Buryatskii)," *Kavkaz uzal*, 17 August 2009, 17:02, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565).

<sup>8</sup> Said Abu Saad Buryatskii, "Vzglyad na Dzikhad iznutri: Geroi istiny i lzhi, Chast' 2," *Hunafa.info*, 24 June 2009, 4:04, <http://hunafa.info/?p=1715>.

<sup>9</sup> Video "How I went to Jihad and What I have seen here (english subtitles) - Sheikh Sayeed of Buratia 1," "i24 sishan tschetschenien jihad islam nasheed qoqaz kaukasus", *You Tube*, 17 June 2009, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgE19xcasEg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgE19xcasEg).

<sup>10</sup> <http://hunafa.com/?p=1534> and [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565).

Since then, by his own account, Buryatskii has participated directly or indirectly in multiple jihadi operations, including some of the most important in 2008-2009. These included the May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 suicide bombing on Grozny's central square that kicked off the suicide bombing campaign of summer 2009 and his noted August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 attack on the Nazran MVD station. Numerous videos posted on various CE-affiliated sites, including *kavkazcenter.com*, *jamaatshariat.com*, and especially the Ingush mujahedin's *hunafa.com* show Buryatskii's propaganda and operational activity. On July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Chechnya's branch of the Russian MVD's Investigations Committee opened a criminal case against Buryatskii.<sup>11</sup>

Despite his lack of an official position within the CE and his boast that he is but a rank-and-file mujahed, Buryatskii betrays a great deal of ambition. His presence on CE-affiliated websites is pervasive. He is the only CE mujahed who has his own separate page or blog on a website, the Ingush mujahedin's *Hunafa.com*. It is filled with videos and some audio recordings of his lectures and operations.<sup>12</sup> Buryatskii has explicitly expressed his hope that the mujahedin will be able to carry the jihad wherever it may, "Israel, the USA, and Great Britain," "Allah willing." However, he himself promises that the CE will achieve its goal of seeing the Caucasus ruled by the "Koran and Sunna alone."<sup>13</sup> A *Hunafa.com* video "O, uprekayushchii menya," featured numerous terrorist attacks and two mujahedin: Said Abu Saad Buryatskii and Osama bin Laden.<sup>14</sup>

Buryatskii was described by one *Hunafa.com* discussion participant: "He busies himself with self-education all the time and possesses a strong mind, excellent memory, and dignified character."<sup>15</sup> He certainly demonstrates a good knowledge of Islam, Koran and the Sunna, quoting at length from memory in his numerous videotapes. There is no doubt that he has charisma and has captured the imagination of the mujahedin and many of those young Caucasus Muslims contemplating heading 'for the forest.' Buryatskii's ability to add a human touch likely helps in recruitment and contributes to his attraction among Muslim youth. A good example is his description in one article of returning to the forest where a fellow mujahed had met his end in battle with Russian security forces: "The

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<sup>11</sup> [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565).

<sup>12</sup> See Buryatskii's web blog at *Hunafa.com* at [http://hunafa.com/?page\\_id=398](http://hunafa.com/?page_id=398).

<sup>13</sup> "Said abu Saad. Ob rezutatakh operatsii v Nazrani 17 avgusta 2009g," *Hunafa.com*, 7 September 2009, 11:23, <http://hunafa.com/?p=1984>.

<sup>14</sup> See the video "O, uprekayushchii menya," *Hunafa.com*, accessed on 20 and 23 October 2009, <http://hunafa.com>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://hunafa.com/?p=1534>.

infidels did not take (his body) despite their rules and only took his machine gun and cartridge and covered his face with a jacket. I am a happy that among such waste with which we have to fight there are still people of honor, granted their own. But they did not mutilate his corpse, like the apostates do, and even covered him. That infidel who did this is a dignified person, and I call upon him to consider accepting the religion of Truth.”<sup>16</sup>

Buryatskii’s works most closely with Ingushetia’s mujahedin. His articles and videos are usually featured first on the *Hunafa.com* website of Ingushetia’s jihadists (now referred to by the jihadists with a mixture of Vainakh and Arabic as “the mujahedin of the G’alg’iache Vilaiyat of the Imarat Kavkaz”). Many of the other CE-affiliated sites then pick them up. Ingushetia has been the center of the gravity of the CE jihad for two years, and it is no surprise that two of the three key figures in the movement have emerged from Ingushetia. The amir of Ingushetia (G’alg’iache) – Akhmed Yevloev, known in mujahed circles as Magas – is also the CE’s military amir. This puts Buryatskii at the center of the Caucasus jihad. However, Buryatskii claimed in a June 2009 *Hunafa.com* article that he holds no leadership position and leads not one mujahed; rather, he is a rank-and-file fighter.<sup>17</sup>

It remains unclear in what sector or jamaat Buryatskii fights, but it appears that, like some combat jamaats, he moves back and forth between Ingushetia and Chechnya. In the first installment of his “An Inside Look at Jihad” on the Ingush jihadists’ *Hunafa.com* website, Buryatskii stated that he prepared the suicide belt for Beslan Chagiev, a 39-year old former wrestling champion of Europe.<sup>18</sup> Chagiev, who became a mujahed named ‘Kharun’, wore that belt when he blew himself near the Chechnya MVD headquarters in central Grozny on May 16, an event that signaled the onset of this summer’s jihadi campaign. Indeed the general impression one gets from this article is that it was Buryatskii who prepared Kharun spiritually for his “shakhad” or martyrdom.<sup>19</sup> Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov accused Buryatskii of personally preparing suicide bomber Rustam Mukhadiev, who detonated his bomb on July 26<sup>th</sup> near the entrance to Grozny’s main theatre on Theatre Square in a failed attempt to kill Kadyrov who had arrived there to attend a performance. Kadyrov was not far off when he asserted that Buryatskii is the CE’s

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<sup>16</sup> <http://hunafa.com/?p=1534>.

<sup>17</sup> “Said Abu Saad – ‘Vzglyad na Dzhikhad iznutri: Geroi istiny i lzhi’, Chast’ 2,” *Hunafa.info*, 24 June 2009, 4:04, <http://hunafa.info/?p=1715>.

<sup>18</sup> [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/154474](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/154474).

<sup>19</sup> <http://hunafa.com/?p=1534>.

“main ideologist.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, Buryatskii’s central role in the 2009 summer suicide bombing campaign suggests he is working closely with, and might even command, the revived ‘Riyadus Salikhin’ martyrs’ battalion, perhaps running its suicide operations in Ingushetia and Chechnya. Indeed, both Riyadus Salikhin and Buryatskii claimed responsibility for the August 2009 suicide attack on Nazran’s MVD headquarters.<sup>21</sup>

In his recent ideological and theological propaganda, Buryatskii has concentrated on Islamic teachings pertaining to jihad and most recently on writing a series of articles on the exploits of recent CE martyrs called “An Inside View of the Jihad.”<sup>22</sup> He could become something of a rival to Anzor Astemirov, aka Seifullah, amir of the United Vilaiyat of Kabarda, Balkaria, and Karachai which unites the few jihadists of the Kabardino-Balkaria and the even fewer from Karachaevo-Cherkessia. Seifullah is also head of the Shariat committee of the CE’s ruling Madzhlisul Shura and supreme judge or *kadi* of the CE’s Shariah Court. Buryatskii’s Islamic education and leadership potential may be superior to that of Seifullah. This and his Islamic status as a sheikh certainly qualify him to be a leading CE ideologist and theologian. The latter might have an advantage in being a native of the Caucasus. However, the supra-ethnic nature of the jihadism that has gripped the movement may reduce the cache of nativism. Indeed, there are many foreigners in CE leadership positions; most prominently is the Jordanian Abu Anas Muhhanad, who is deputy or *naib* to military amir Magas.

Buryatskii’s key role has been noticed by Russian intelligence. In a recent broadcast on Chechen republic television, an intelligence officer listed Buryatskii alongside Umarov in mentioning the jihadists who were deluding the Caucasus’s young Muslims to head to the forest for jihad.<sup>23</sup> However, Buryatskii was not noticed in time.

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, a video appeared on the Ingush jihadi website of Buryatskii referring to him as ‘al-Buryati’ and a martyr. He is shown sitting in a truck filled with explosives, calmly even gently describing his plans to deliver a “gift” to

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<sup>20</sup> [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/158565).

<sup>21</sup> “Zayavlenie batal’ona Shakhidov ‘Riyadus Salikhin’ ob operatsii po istishkhadu v Nazrani i diversii v Rossii,” *Kavkaz tsentr*, 21 August 2009, 10:34, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/08/21/67511.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/08/21/67511.shtml) and “Said abu-Saad,”

*Hunafa.com*, 5 September 2009 (dated 4 September on video), 4:28, <http://hunafa.com/?p=1971>.

<sup>22</sup> <http://hunafa.com/?p=1534>, <http://hunafa.info/?p=1715>, and <http://hunafa.com/?p=1855>.

<sup>23</sup> “Siloviki v Chechne obyavili odnogo iz komandirov boevikov svoim agentom,” *Kavkaz uzal*, 13 August 2009, 10:40, [www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/157857](http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/157857).

Ingush president Yevkurov and other Ingush “infidels and apostates.” Yevkurov had just returned to duty in the republic after recovering from wounds he suffered in the attempt on his life in June, also probably orchestrated by Buryatskii. The video closes with images of the truck driving down the street and exploding at the entrance to Nazran’s MVD headquarters.<sup>24</sup> Buryatskii closed the video with drama: “If Allah wishes the main thing in this operation is that Allah give us the gift of His mercy and accept from us our action which we are preparing for this path in order to attain His mercy on that Day when nothing else and no other judgment besides the Judgment of Allah and no one will be saved besides those who stood firmly on that which the Prophet of Allah came and which came in the Almighty Allah’s book the Koran. And saying this, I ask Allah forgiveness for myself and for us, and our last prayer will be praise to Allah, the Ruler of the worlds. Peace to you and the Mercy of Allah and His Blessing.”<sup>25</sup> On the next day, *Hunafa.com* posted an urgent report based on an alleged communication from the “armed forces of the G’alg’iache Vilaiyat” that the information on Buryatskii’s martyrdom had not been confirmed. The site then malfunctioned for some 24 hours with the same posting appearing on other CE-affiliated sites.<sup>26</sup>

This appeared to have been an effort by the mujahedin to peak interest in both the jihad and Buryatskii’s martyrdom, itself designed as a recruiting advertisement for attracting young Muslims to the cause. Buryatskii’s original martyrdom videotape sparked unprecedented interest on *Hunafa.com* and other CE-affiliated sites. Previous articles and videos posted on *Hunafa.com* rarely if ever provoked close to 100 discussants even after months. Those that did were usually Buryatskii’s articles. But his martyrdom video attracted 291 comments within 24 hours of posting. The propagandistic retraction produced consternation among *Hunafa.com* readers, many of who complained they did not know how to react anymore to Buryatskii’s demise. Should they hope he is alive, or rejoice in his martyrdom in the name of Allah?<sup>27</sup> The website of the Vilaiyat of Kabardia,

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<sup>24</sup> Podryv logovo kafirov i murtadov ‘GOVD g.Nazran. Operatsiyu provyol sheikh-shakhid Said abu Saad,” *Hunafa.com*, 26 August 2009, 11:11, <http://hunafa.com/?p=1938>.

<sup>25</sup> See the video “Podryv logovo kafirov i murtadov ‘GOVD g.Nazran. Operatsiyu provyol sheikh-shakhid Said abu Saad” or the transcription of Buryatskii’s last words in the video by one Ansar, a participant in the discussion of the article “Vilaiyat Nokhchicho: Kadyrov vpal v depressiyu n ‘zanykalsya’ v Khosi-Yurte. Vyzov k Medvedevu ego ne raduet,” *Kavkaz tsentr*, 28 August 2009, 00:41, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/08/28/67664.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/08/28/67664.shtml).

<sup>26</sup> “Srochno! Soobshchenie ot komandovaniya VS VG,” *Islamdin.com*, 28 August 2009, 15:44, [www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=471:2009-08-28-15-48-33&catid=27:2009-02-09-17-38-17&Itemid=16](http://www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=471:2009-08-28-15-48-33&catid=27:2009-02-09-17-38-17&Itemid=16).

<sup>27</sup> Podryv logovo kafirov i murtadov ‘GOVD g.Nazran. Operatsiyu provyol sheikh-shakhid Said abu Saad.”

Balkaria and Karachai saw a similarly strong response, in relative terms, of 27 responses to Buryatskii's martyrdom video on the first day.<sup>28</sup> The Moscow daily *Moskovskii komsomolets* or *MK* demanded that the FSB close down the site warning of the Buryatskii video's "terrible propaganda power" and how it was "spreading on the net like metastasis."<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the CE's *Kavkaz tsentr* claimed that Chechen president Kadyrov had reportedly fallen into a deep depression after viewing Buryatskii's video. In addition, the article reinforced the veracity of Buryatskii's martyrdom for those who were confused by *Hunafa.com*'s earlier quasi-retraction. It claimed that *Hunafa.com* had contacted its staff and affirmed there could be no doubts about the veracity of either the source from whom the video was received or of the video itself. One commentary in the discussion of the article included a transcription of Buryatskii's last words and drew readers' attention to his phrase "last prayer." The *Kavkaz tsentr* article, like Buryatskii's video, attracted over two hundred comments.<sup>30</sup>

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, *Kavkaz tsentr* published a special article in honor of "Sheikh Said Abu Saad, The Martyr," noting that he "succeeded in conquering the hearts of the mujahedin and all true Muslims" before taking a "ticket to Paradise through the station 'Jihad'" that "was impossible to return." The article closed with the words "We, swallowing tears, rejoice for our brother Said, the Martyr, Allah willing. His reward is with Allah. And the name Sheikh Said Abu Saad is next to one of the brightest stars" and a poem that ended, asking: "Where to Take a Ticket to the Station 'Jihad'?"<sup>31</sup> In sum, the video had a powerful propaganda effect across Russia, but especially in the North Caucasus.

The propaganda value of Buryatskii's Nazran operation was extended on September 5<sup>th</sup> when Buryatskii appeared alive and well in a new *Hunafa.com* video. He asked forgiveness for the fact that the August 26<sup>th</sup> video had given a mistaken impression that it was he who committed martyrdom in the Nazran attack. Instead, another "good brother" had, and the attack killed around 80 MVD, rather than the 25 Russian authorities claim. He insists that he will not die until he

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<sup>28</sup> See [www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=470:2009-08-26-12-03-25&catid=7:2009-02-04-15-45-20&Itemid=8#JOSC\\_TOP](http://www.islamdin.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=470:2009-08-26-12-03-25&catid=7:2009-02-04-15-45-20&Itemid=8#JOSC_TOP).

<sup>29</sup> Vadim Rechkalov, "Unit' smertnika," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 27 August 2009, [www.mk.ru/social/341369.html](http://www.mk.ru/social/341369.html).

<sup>30</sup> "Vilaiyat Nokhchicho: Kadyrov vpal v depressiyu n 'zanykalsya' v Khosi-Yurte. Vyzov k Medvedevu ego ne raduet," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 28 August 2009, 00:41, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/08/28/67664.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/08/28/67664.shtml).

<sup>31</sup> "Sheikhu Saidu Abu Saadu, Shakhidu, insha Allah, posvyshchaetsya," *Kavkaz tsentr*, 1 September 2009, 21:02, [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/09/01/67760.shtml](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2009/09/01/67760.shtml).

has completed his service and do everything to die on the path of jihad for Allah and ‘congratulates’ those in the MVD who survived the attack and promises to prepare a “new gift” for them.<sup>32</sup>

In a September 7<sup>th</sup> video, Buryatskii again explained the “mistaken” impression and confusion surrounding the August 26<sup>th</sup> video, stating that he had merely participated in the Nazran attack with a shakhid who requested that his name not be revealed so that there would be no investigation or consequences for family and friends. Loading bullets into a machine gun throughout the video and occasionally pausing to cite Islamic texts in Arabic, he again warns the Russians and their local allies of the plague he plans to visit on them. Buryatskii boasted about the destruction the August 17<sup>th</sup> attack wrought. He claimed that a unit which had come to the GOVD/ROVD station that day on its way to hunt mujahedin was the same that had fought against them at Plievo, Ingushetia earlier in August. He stated that the entire unit was destroyed, bringing the total killed “to at least 80.” He added that two of the mujahedin killed at Plievo were ethnic Russian; one had just joined the jihad in February and another, named Mohammed Chiginskii, who had served six years in a Vorkuta prison. Buryatskii reserved special venom for Ingushetia president Yevkurov, the West and Israel, noting that a recent statement by Yevkurov exhibited the low level of intelligence of “no higher than a 70 IQ” usually found in “Israel, Britain, and the USA.” Preaching his usual brand of jihadi theology, he equated the CE’s position with Mohammed the Prophet’s when he and his followers were treated as “aliens to society” that could not understand their actions and asked: “Why is this (jihad) necessary?” “Today, we are alien people. Today we are alien to all...The infidel’s propaganda about ‘children were killed’ - yes, all of this goes on because of Allah’s will.” Consistent with the late ChRI’s and CE’s stated policy of avoiding civilian casualties, however, Buryatskii emphasized that the mujahedin put less explosives in their truck and car bombs than they might otherwise in order to reduce the possibility of collateral damage “to Muslims” and warns them to keep far away from the infidel or *kufr*. He expressed pride regarding the more than 10 suicide-bombings in the previous three months, noting that this scale of operations was accomplished for the first time in the Caucasus jihad because Allah willed it. As noted earlier, Buryatskii hoped the jihad will go wherever it may, “Israel, the USA, and Great Britain,” “Allah willing.” Buryatskii, however, promises that the CE will achieve its goal of seeing the Caucasus ruled by the “Koran and Sunna alone.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “Said abu-Saad,” *Hunafa.com*, 5 September 2009 (dated 4 September on video), 4:28, <http://hunafa.com/?p=1971>.

<sup>33</sup> “Said abu Saad. Ob rezultatakh operatsii v Nazrani 17 avgusta 2009g,” *Hunafa.com*, 7 September 2009, 11:23, <http://hunafa.com/?p=1984>.

The fact that Buryatskii managed to find a return ticket from martyrdom did not compromise but rather enhanced the marketing effect. In fact, this and subsequent videos should bring new attention to the CE jihad and Buryatskii's subsequent activity could substantially increase the CE's propaganda influence. *Hunafa.com* readers expressed their joy over Said's 'return.' Now those inspired by the 'shakhid video' can go to the jihad and perhaps associate with the famous and infamous Buryatskii.

It remains to be seen for how long Buryatskii can succeed in avoiding Russian security and law enforcement organs. However, it is clear that as long as he remains at large the North Caucasus will be plagued by a revived jihadi movement and the haunting specter of a future Caucasus Emirate. No less clear and perhaps more importantly, Buryatskii represents the new generation of jihadists in the North Caucasus: fervent in his belief, uninterested in the national independence of Chechnya or other Caucasus peoples, and committed to Islam's expansion through jihad both at home and abroad.