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THE REASON FOR THE PRESENCE OF ACUTE PROBLEMS THAT WORRY THE POPULATION OF THE NORTH CAUCASIAN FEDERAL DISTRICT AND PROVOKE THEM TO THE GREATEST DISCONTENT

Abstract: In the article, the authors analyze public opinion in 6 republics of the North Caucasus on the main issues that concern residents, causing mass discontent and protests. The empirical basis for the analysis is the results of a sociological study conducted by the authors in July-September 2023: mass representative surveys in all republics with a sample of 500 to 1000 people, 18 group discussions - focus groups and 13 in-depth interviews with experts and public opinion leaders. The study is a continuation of the 2021 survey, which allows us to identify the dynamics of public opinion on the main issues. The study showed a slight increase in positive assessments of the situation in the republics; more people note development and progress rather than decline. At the same time, the republics of the North Caucasus are characterized by the presence of authoritarian forms of government; people are afraid to publicly express critical views regarding political institutions and the leadership of the republics, they tend to more often give socially acceptable answers to pressing questions, and evaluate the successes of the republic higher than they do in private conversations. At the same time, when discussing specific life problems, people give more realistic assessments. As the study showed, in recent years the set of the most pressing problems worrying the population in the republics of the North Caucasus has remained virtually unchanged. The four problems that far outstrip the others in terms of their severity in population estimates are unemployment, corruption, poverty and terrorism. Over the past three years, a fifth problem has been added to them - the high cost of housing and communal services. Each republic has its own pain points that cause the greatest dissatisfaction among residents. In Chechnya, the population calls unemployment the most pressing problem; in Dagestan, in addition to unemployment, they name corruption, in In Kabardino-Balkaria, along with unemployment, there is terrorism, in Karachay-Cherkessia - poverty, low incomes; in Ingushetia - terrorism and in North Ossetia - poverty. Research has shown that the population's dissatisfaction with unsolvable problems and the activities of the authorities did not lead to an increase in separatist sentiments; the majority of the population of the republics does not see their existence outside of Russia.

Key words: public opinion, North Caucasus, socio-economic problems, social tension, discontent, criticism of government, unemployment, terrorism, corruption, poverty, housing and communal services, healthcare, education, crime, youth, separatism.



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Introduction

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Research conducted in the republics of the North Caucasus has shown that, given the mass dissatisfaction of the population with unsolvable acute problems in the republics, over the past 2-3 years there has been a certain positive shift in residents' assessments of the situation in their republics. In most of them, the number of people who are satisfied with the state of affairs, and who also believe that the republic as a whole is characterized by development and progress, has noticeably increased. The only exception is North Ossetia, where scores have deteriorated slightly compared to 2021.

In all republics, with the exception of North Ossetia, noticeably more people note progress than 2 years ago. Only in Alanya the assessments have decreased - 2/3 speak of stagnation and decline. Residents of Chechnya are especially optimistic, first of all comparing the current situation with what it was like during two recent wars. Table 1 provides assessments of the state of affairs in the republics in 2023 and 2021.

Republic	Years	Completely satisfied	Rather satisfied	Rather not happy	Not happy at all	I find it difficult to answer
Deserter	2021	3	19	52	24	2
Dagestan	2023	8	34	39	15	6
In much at a	2021	9	37	37	13	4
Ingushetia	2023	30	45	14	11	1
CDD	2021	2	27	49	21	1
CBD	2023	4	44	40	12	0
KCD	2021	3	28	50	18	1
KCR	2023	3	42	43	8	4
North Ossetia Alania	2021	3	34	51	12	1
	2023	2	33	47	17	1
Chasher Dereklis	2021	33	52	11	1	3
Chechen Republic	2023	38	48	11	2	1

Table 1. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the republ	ic, º	%
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These assessments are rather based on people's personal experience, but more general assessments of the direction of the republic's movement – progress, stagnation or decline – are also close to them. The trends here are the same - respondents in Chechnya and Ingushetia are the most optimistic,

with Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria occupying the middle position. The estimates are lower in Dagestan and North Ossetia, although residents of Dagestan now express more optimism than 3 years ago (Table 2).

Table 2. How would you	describe in general what	has been happening in the re	public in recent years, %

Republic	Years	Development and progress	Almost nothing changes, stagnation	Decline	I find it difficult to answer
Deverter	2021	15	60	21	4
Dagestan	2023	25	34	15	6
Ingushetia	2021	19	63	18	1



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	2023	60	32	7	1
CDD	2021	22	55	19	4
CBD	2023	32	44	14	2
KCD	2021	26	50	18	6
KCR	2023	41	46	8	5
North Ossetia	2021	27	46	11	14
(Alanya)	2023	23	56	12	8
Chechen Republic	2021	88	7	1	4
	2023	91	7	1	1

The results of mass public opinion polls in the republics of the North Caucasus must be approached critically. These republics are characterized by the presence of authoritarian forms of government and insufficient development of freedom of speech and press. People are afraid to publicly express critical views regarding the political institutions and leadership of the republic; they tend to give socially acceptable answers to fundamental, political questions more often, and evaluate the successes of the republic higher than they do in private conversations. This is especially characteristic of the population of Chechnya, and recently, to an increasing extent, of the residents of Ingushetia. Meanwhile, when discussing more specific life problems, people give much more realistic assessments. Residents of the republics are more outspoken and critical in group discussions. Their estimates often provide the necessary balance to the results of a mass survey. We present the opinions of residents of the North Caucasus republics, expressed during group discussions in focus groups, and the judgments of experts.

The situation, one might say, is good. No bombing, no kidnappings. We have been reborn, one might say, from the ashes, thanks to our leadership. But there are problems that have not yet been resolved in our country. We hope, there is hope (Chechnya).

There is no decline. They say that everything is bad with us, nothing like that. On the contrary, everything is growing here. In fact, we have very little industry left. Rostov, Moscow, Krasnoyarsk dismantled our entire economy, we were left with small things. Even so, we have growth. Growth is underway (Dagestan).

Life is great. Because you know that if, God forbid, something happens, everyone in your family will help you and raise money. It's more of a tradition here. People are sympathetic, kind, sincere. At the same time, unfortunately, everything here is corrupt. Without money you won't get a job, without money you won't advance, you won't earn anything (CBD).

Today one category lives luxuriously, the other category lives in poverty. Therefore, the category of suppliers, utilities, all this is robbery. Doctors are bribe takers! Unemployment. There is no life in the areas. The family contract is ruining us. The Chechen becomes a leader and wins over all his relatives. Clannishness. The rich rob everyone! This tragedy is for all of Russia, not only for Chechnya! (Chechnya).

We are comparing everything here with the year 2000. Therefore, a lot has changed for the better. To say that we are thriving is a fallacy. In a material sense, people live very hard. Unemployment. Hundreds, thousands of young people cannot find an application for their strength. This is a very big problem. I often come across the fact that outside our republic they believe that Chechnya is prospering and money is pouring in on us. One Russian newspaper wrote: "There is no public transport in Chechnya, everyone there drives their own car." Not really. There are social problems, they are very acute. The same as in the whole country (Chechnya).

There are problematic republics, and there are less problematic ones. If, for example, Chechnya fought a war, it deserves the money it receives. And if Ossetia was silent, it gets what it gets. Wahhabism comes from Chechnya. I'm not sure that today the militants who have come to power live off subsidies. If today they are deprived of these subsidies, they will go back to the forest (SO-A).

If in assessments of the situation in their republic optimism is slowly increasing along with criticism of the situation in many areas, then residents of the republics assess the situation throughout Russia mainly critically. The all-Russian background makes it possible for residents of the republics of the UK to more balancedly assess the state of affairs at home.

There is development in some segments. And maybe this development is not based on today's developments, maybe these are developments that have existed since Soviet times, or the groundwork that was laid in those years. Probably, in 10–15 years, hydroelectric power stations will fail. Other large enterprises that are already behind technologically may also fail. But today we can note development (Dagestan).

In Russia it's a nightmare! I'm sorry. If you take Central Russia, climb into some village, it's a nightmare! It's not like decline. All the young people are drinking there! Again, because there is no work! (Dagestan).



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The entire Black Earth Region, which produced millions of tons of grain. Now these collective farms are completely collapsed! Agriculture has collapsed, livestock farming has collapsed. Everything that exists in this country is falling apart. We see that ships have begun to be ordered abroad, armored personnel carriers have begun to be ordered. Industry and agriculture - everything in this country is falling apart (Ingushetia).

The general assessment of the situation in the republic is revealed in the answers to the traditional question in sociological surveys: in which direction is the republic moving - right or wrong. There is also a shift in the positive direction compared to estimates 3 years ago (Table 3).

Table 3. Do you think things in the republic are now going in the right direction or do you think that the
republic is moving along the wrong path?, %

Republic	Years	Things in the republic are going in the right direction	The Republic is heading down the wrong path	I find it difficult to answer
Deserter	2021	21	47	32
Dagestan	2023	52	17	31
Terration in	2021	48	49	3
Ingushetia	2023	71	24	5
CBD	2021	35	45	20
	2023	45	44	5
KCD	2021	35	46	19
KCR	2023	52	24	12
North Ossetia	2021	27	46	27
Alania)	2023	26	49	25
Chechen Republic	2021	85	5	10
	2023	88	7	5

The assessment of the course taken varies greatly between the republics: in Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia and Chechnya it is higher, in Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia it is significantly lower. This is rather a vote of confidence in the top leadership of the republic, the president, and a "degree of optimism" among the population.

I'm glad I live here. I was born and raised here. He went to St. Petersburg for two years, lived there and returned home. Now I have a job, the salary is small, but enough. If you compare in St. Petersburg and here, our people are kinder, somehow nicer, simpler (KBR).

Kadyrov wants to return us to the fold of Sharia. But it won't work. Because today the Chechen nation is a nation where there is complete lack of spirituality, immorality, and crime. Children are involved in this (Chechnya).

At least we have stability, unlike other republics (Chechnya).

Overall, I like everything. But very slowly. There must be a demand from everyone so that they respond in their place. Then it will be faster. Some adjustments can be made, but, in general, they are going in the right direction, we need to speed up the pace (Ingushetia). Development is happening because what was stolen from us over the previous 20 years is being tried to somehow get back on its feet (Dagestan).

The stagnation is already clear, because not a single enterprise that existed before now operates normally (KCR).

At the moment, the Czech Republic, against the backdrop of the entire North Caucasus, looks like Las Vegas, compared to a provincial town. But since all issues are decided in the Kremlin, then to say that the UK has its own policy, while the Chechen Republic has a completely different policy, then this is not true (Chechnya).

There is probably some progress. But if you dig deeper, we stand still, the economy in the republic is not developing, neither industry nor agriculture (KCR).

I don't see any improvement. Some beauty appears in the city, but this doesn't make it any easier for anyone (SO).

The republic cannot take the wrong path; the federal center will not allow it. And the fact that it is slow, yes (Ingushetia).

Assessing your own life situation, expectations from the future.

To a large extent, people's assessments of the situation in their republic, the severity of problems,



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the activities of the authorities and protest moods are formed on the basis of their assessments of their own lives, the financial situation of the family, its improvement or deterioration. And here the opinions of respondents differ significantly between the republics: in Chechnya and Kabardino-Balkaria they are on average 2 times higher than in Karachay-Cherkessia, Dagestan and North Ossetia (Table 4).

Republics	Years	good	Rather good	Average, satisfactory	Rather bad	Bad	I find it difficult to answer
Desector	2021	9	15	54	15	6	0
Dagestan	2023	8	16	59	11	5	1
Tu an alt at a	2021	11	18	53	12	7	1
Ingushetia	2023	22	46	27	3	1	0
CDD	2021	8	14	57	18	4	0
CBD	2023	10	28	48	11	3	0
KCD	2021	5	21	54	15	4	1
KCR	2023	4	22	59	11	3	0
North Ossetia Alania	2021	3	15	57	21	4	0
	2023	5	16	52	20	6	0
Chechen Republic	2021	27	33	32	5	1	2
	2023	31	28	33	5	3	0

Table 4. How can you describe the financial situation of your family?, %

At the same time, in all republics people note some improvement in their financial situation compared to the situation 2-3 years ago. It should be noted that in most republics people prefer to give their financial situation neutral assessments -"average, satisfactory," in other words, "like everyone else," avoiding calling their financial situation "bad." It is believed that mountain pride does not allow people to say that they live worse than others. Meanwhile, in focus groups, many described the situation of various population groups as difficult or disastrous. In the Caucasus, it is a shame to admit that you are poor. Even the poorest person, living very modestly, will not allow himself to demonstrate his poverty. This is where the traditional way of life has the greatest impact. Although, the gap is, of course, very serious! (KCR).

People live normally, much better than before. There is simply no demand for normal development. There is no demand for education or development. Nobody asks anything, nobody is interested (Dagestan).

It must be said that self-assessments of their standard of living have changed little in all republics since the last measurement in 2021. At the same time, hopes and optimistic expectations have grown noticeably - in all republics except North Ossetia, the majority of residents hope for a better life in two years (Table 5).

Republic	Definitely yes	Most likely yes	Probably not	Definitely not	I find it difficult to answer
All	15	45	25	5	11
Dagestan	8	35	26	7	24
Ingushetia	38	52	6	1	3
CBD	11	51	31	4	3
KCR	10	50	26	5	10
North Ossetia Alania	4	32	50	8	5
Chechen Republic	24	59	7	1	8

Table 5. Do you think you (your family) will live better in 2 years than now?, %



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This is a clear indicator of the level of optimism/pessimism in the republics - optimists predominate in Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria; Now residents of Dagestan have joined them. Only in North Ossetia are there almost twice as many pessimists as optimists. Optimistic moods rather characterize the psychological mood, the general social well-being of people in the republics, which is largely associated with a positive assessment of their presidents. However, this does not reduce their critical assessment of specific social and economic problems that cause difficulties in life.

Since Dagestan is a subsidized republic, one cannot expect much. We don't have our own economy, we live on subsidies, we can't count on much (Dagestan).

Naturally, in 2-3 years people will live better. This progress is not immediate. It is not done for 2-3 months. We simply cannot notice what positive things have happened to us within one month. There is progress, it is happening. And we will live better, because 3 years ago we lived worse than now! (Dagestan).

In two or three years there will be a very strong rise in the cost of living. And this will certainly affect

the stratification of the population and the standard of living in general (KCR).

Main part

Now we are not talking about people, but about what our government provides. If it changes, maybe something will change. But if the power is not radically changed, it seems to me that nothing will happen in two or three years (SO-A). The most pressing problems in the republic that require solutions from the authorities. As the study showed, in recent years the set of the most pressing problems worrying the population in the republics of the North Caucasus has remained virtually unchanged. The four problems that are far ahead of the rest in their severity in respondents' assessments are unemployment, corruption, poverty and terrorism. Over the past 3 years, a fifth problem has been added to them - the high cost of housing and communal services, identified by the population as one of the most difficult and troubling. A comparison of residents' assessments of the most pressing problems in 2021 and 2023 is shown in Table 6.

Republic	Years	Decrease in unemployment	Fight against corruption	Poverty, low income	Terrorism	Housing and communal services problems, high prices
Deserter	2021	33	18	3	29	2
Dagestan	2023	31	19	8	10	2
The state	2021	38	14	6	2	2
Ingushetia	2023	27	15	15 4		1
CDD	2021	44	13	5	8	2
CBD	2023	31	11 11		14	6
KCD	2021	31	9	12	1	5
KCR	2023	23	7	16	1	13
North Ossetia	2021	32	5	6	3	4
Alania	2023	29	8	10	2	10
Chechen	2021	46	7	3	2	1
Republic	2023	39	9	5	1	8

Table 6. What do you think is the most pressing problem in the republic that requires an immediatesolution from the authorities?, %

Unemployment remains the main and most pressing problem everywhere. The threat of terrorism is perceived less acutely by the population. However, if earlier this was a problem mainly in Dagestan, now, while its severity in Dagestan has decreased (according to population estimates - by 3 times), concern about terrorism in Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria has increased significantly. The survey found out what problem in each republic residents consider to be the main, most pressing one (Table 7).



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Table 7. What do you think is the most pressing problem in the republic that requires an immediatesolution from the authorities?, %

Problems	All	Dagestan	Ingushetia	Kabardino- Balkaria	Karachay- Cherkessia	North Ossetia Alania	Chechen Republic
Reducing unemployment and creating new jobs	30	31	27	31	23	29	39
Fight against corruption	12	19	15	11	7	8	9
Low wages, low income, low standard of living	9	8	4	11	16	10	5
Terrorism, fight against terrorism	7	10	14	14	1	2	1
High prices for housing and communal services, improvement of work	7	2	1	6	13	10	8
Social protection of the population (pensions, benefits, assistance to large families, disabled people, scholarships, etc.)	4	2	2	6	8	6	4
Health situation	4	1	2	2	4	7	14
Education	3	2	3	2	3	2	8
Road condition, traffic situation	3	2	3	1	3	6	1
Fighting crime	2	3	1	2	2	2	1
Ecological situation, state of the environment	2	1	2	1	1	5	2
Fight against rising prices	2	0	1	2	6	3	0
Housing problem, high cost of housing	2	1	0	4	5	2	1
Religious extremism	1	3	1	2	1	0	0

It should be noted that these are assessments of people who were asked in the survey to name one, the most pressing problem in the republic, requiring an immediate solution by the authorities, without mentioning other concerns and threats that may be no less important for a particular person. With a softer formulation of the question, when people could name several of the most troubling problems, the picture of the problem field that fuels dissatisfaction with the authorities and protest sentiments turns out to be more representative (Table 8).



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Table 8. What do you think are the most important problems in the republic that the government should
solve first?, %

Problems	All	Dagestan	Ingushetia	Kabardino- Balkaria	Karachay- Cherkessia	North Ossetia Alania	Chechen Republic
Unemployment, creation of new jobs	43	40	37	43	48	44	47
Corruption, nepotism in power, arbitrariness of officials	35	46	27	46	34	26	24
Income, standard of living of the population	31	28	14	38	52	32	21
The situation in housing and communal services (housing and communal services)	28	15	26	34	33	42	30
Prospects for youth	27	29	15	32	38	27	21
Work of medical institutions	21	24	14	13	17	26	33
Terrorism	19	27	36	27	1	6	8
Housing construction (shortage, high cost of housing)	14	13	10	17	21	10	14
Quality of education in the republic	14	15	17	9	11	11	18
The work of law enforcement agencies, the fight against crime	10	15	13	7	4	12	6
Social protection of the population	9	8	8	10	16	9	6
Road condition	7	8	8	4	7	9	7
Agricultural development	5	6	4	4	3	4	4
Industrial production growth	5	7	3	6	3	4	8
Ecology	5	3	3	2	2	12	7
Construction and equipping of facilities for physical culture and sports	3	2	11	0	2	1	2
Land problem. Registration of property, prevention of seizure and redistribution of land	3	5	4	2	1	1	3
Public transport operation	2	2	3	1	0	1	5
Increasing the attractiveness of the republic for tourism	2	2	5	2	2	1	3

With this formulation of the issue, the population also includes among the most important problems such as the prospects of youth, or rather, the lack of prospects, healthcare, housing problems, education, the work of law enforcement agencies, social protection of the population, problems of industry, agriculture, road construction and others.

When assessing the potential for dissatisfaction with the authorities and protest sentiments, it is important to understand what causes the greatest emotional dissatisfaction and indignation. It would seem that the higher people rate the severity of the problem, the greater their dissatisfaction and the rating of dissatisfaction should coincide with the rating of the severity of the problems. However, for some problems, emotional discontent, which obviously fuels protest sentiments, is noticeably higher than people's assessment of the severity of these problems at the societal level, for the entire republic. The range of such problems often includes problems of different real weight, from the point of view of experts. These include, for example: the threat of terrorism, poor work of law enforcement agencies, social protection of the population, as well



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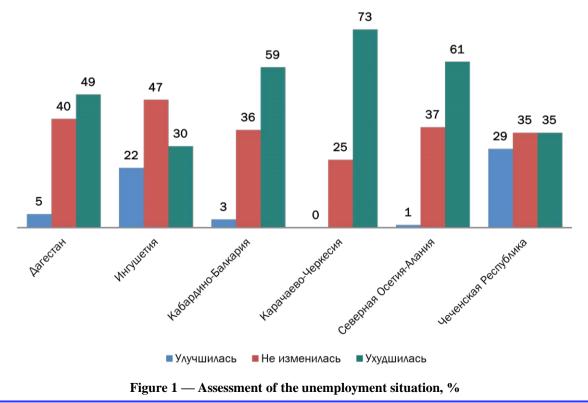
as the condition of roads, environmental problems, the land problem - redistribution of land ownership. According to them, the level of discontent is one and a half times higher than the assessment of the relative importance of the problem for the republic. For example, given the widespread idea that the level of terrorism is decreasing everywhere - the average regional rating of the severity of this problem is 19%, this threat causes emotional dissatisfaction in the republics of the North Caucasus in general among 26% of the population, in Kabardino-Balkaria, where it is considered the most important 27%, it causes "emotional dissatisfaction" in 50% of the population. In general, regarding the problem of terrorism, people's concern and anxiety significantly exceed their assessment of the real danger of terrorism. Issues of interethnic relations are one of the key issues. The second is corruption. Openness of power is also a key problem. And the level of education of the population. You can list more, but these are the main ones (KCR, activists of public organizations). Youth are, first and foremost, the pillar of the future. Education, medicine. Ecology! (SO-A).

The first is employment. One of the main problems. Because when a person has nothing to do, he immediately becomes an easy prey for those people who will find something to do and direct his energy in a direction that is beneficial to them (Dagestan).

The first problem for the UK is countering extremism and terrorism. The fact that today, for example, we are carrying out counter-terrorist actions, killings of law enforcement officials, the journalistic community and others, this is the subject of people's dissatisfaction (Dagestan).

Safety comes first. Because without security we cannot talk about the achievements of culture, economics, sports, politics, and so on. In the background is the development of economic infrastructure and industry. If there is no economy, there will be no culture, no social sphere, nothing! And unemployment - employment of the population (Ingushetia).

Everything cannot be solved or explained by one standard of living. This is important employment, salaries. But there is something else that lies outside the sphere of economics. This is a state idea, this is a spiritual sphere. The strength of social ties, the strength of civil society - this determines a lot (CBD). According to public opinion, unemployment is the main problem in the region. If over 3 years its severity in the comparative rating of problems decreased slightly - from 36% who considered it the most acute in 2021, to 30% who called it the main one in 2023, this was due to an increase in concern about other problems. Comparing the situation with unemployment in recent years, a majority of 51%, in the region as a whole, believe that it has worsened, and only 9% note an improvement, with 37% believing that it has not changed, i.e. remained as high as 3 years ago. Residents of the republics' assessment of changes in the unemployment situation is shown in Figure 1.





	ISRA (India)	= 6.317	SIS (USA)	= 0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
Impact Factor:	ISI (Dubai, UAE	() = 1.582	РИНЦ (Russia	a) = 3.939	PIF (India)	= 1.940
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According to residents, Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria are in the worst situation with unemployment: almost no one sees the situation improving here. The situation in Dagestan is not much better. But even in Chechnya and Ingushetia, where people note positive changes in various areas of life over the past 2-3 years, more people talk about increasing unemployment than about its weakening. Young people have nowhere to go, nowhere to work! I work in a public organization, friends and relatives constantly call me - help me with my work! How are the youth now? All lawyers, all economists! There are not enough engineers! A very difficult question is to reorient the economy so that education is in demand! This is a major problem that is closely related to the economy! (SO-A).

The problematic issue is employment. Unemployment, especially among youth. In villages they live on their parents' pensions. Some leave and look for work in the center. Many people worked in Sochi at these facilities, but soon everything will end there too, our guys will return here. Naturally, these people without work become good prey for certain forces that do not work in the interests of the Russian state (KBR). The main problem, the basic one, is unemployment. Even if you talk to Russian people who left, they say that ours would return if there was a place to work here. This is the beginning of all beginnings. But our federal center (Chechnya) stubbornly refuses to resolve this issue.

Many associate the reason for high unemployment with stagnation in the republic's economy, primarily in industry, with significant differences in estimates across the republics. In Chechnya, a noticeable majority note an improvement in the situation in industry; they are more optimistic about the situation with industry in Ingushetia. In the remaining republics, especially in Karachay-Cherkessia and North Ossetia, the population does not see progress in industrial development (Table 9).

Table 9. Support and development of industrial produc	ction, %
-------------------------------------------------------	----------

Republic	Improved	Hasn't changed	Worsened	I find it difficult to answer
All	16	37	34	14
Dagestan	7	38	27	28
Ingushetia	31	39	27	3
Kabardino-Balkaria	7	44	36	13
Karachay-Cherkessia	2	25	56	17
North Ossetia Alania)	2	38	55	5
Chechen Republic	54	34	9	3

As for large enterprises, none are working. Everything is divided into small workshops in which private traders work and fulfill their small needs for enrichment (Dagestan).

This is a result, a consequence of decay. It goes from there. At the same time, with the collapse of Dagestan, they simply threw it out and left it. Chechnya was blocked, and Dagestan was simply forgotten. All factories stopped, raw materials, mutual settlements, everything was lost. If Dagestan lived according to Russian laws, we would have died out long ago! Dagestan lives by its own laws, with its own efforts! With your grip, helping each other. Some neighbor will give you a kilogram of meat, someone will buy bread! There's something else there. We had days when there was no bread to buy! Not relatives - people from the street helped! (Dagestan).

The Republic could be very advanced. It is unique in its natural resources and climatic conditions. No industry! It needs to be restored. There is no fishing industry, no canning industry. It is not developing, agriculture has actually collapsed. Wool, production, it is depreciated. Or we could have the entire cycle - from wool production to the final product. All the people who worked in this area trade in the markets (Dagestan). People are somewhat more optimistic about the situation in agriculture. Chechnya is also the leader here; most of its residents talk about improving things in this area. Noticeable improvements are noted in Kabardino-Balkaria and Ingushetia. The situation in rural areas in Karachay-Cherkessia and North Ossetia, as well as in Dagestan, is assessed negatively (Table 10).



	ISRA (India)	= 6.317	SIS (USA) =	= 0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
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	JIF	= 1.500	SJIF (Morocco)	= 7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

Republic	Improved	Hasn't changed	Worsened	I find it difficult to answer
All	19	39	30	11
Dagestan	12	41	26	21
Ingushetia	23	48	25	4
Kabardino-Balkaria	27	42	20	10
Karachay-Cherkessia	4	29	51	16
North Ossetia Alania)	5	42	48	6
Chechen Republic	50	33	15	2

Table 10. Support and development of agriculture, %

Agriculture is developing. Now the gardens are grown using Italian technologies, in greenhouses in recent years (CBD). There are breakthroughs in favor of development in agriculture. Last year, more than two thousand head of cattle were imported. And this is a great help for agriculture (KCR). There are some areas that are developing very well. Here is the Levashinsky district. In my opinion, they provide the whole of Russia with their cabbage (Dagestan). No potatoes! No carrots! It's a shame that they brought it to Dagestan from Israel! The entire rural population moves to Makhachkala and sells some small items there. There is no work (Dagestan). The land problem is very big. She doesn't dare. In the 90s, when this problem was raised, that it was necessary to transfer land into private ownership, opponents of these reforms said that the land would fall into the hands of grabbers, and there was little land, and the bulk of the rural population would be left with nothing. This was the main argument. What did we get? Formally, the land is not privately owned, but in fact it ended up in the hands of an absolutely small group of officials on a district or republican scale. And the issue is not resolved. And social tension on this basis is growing every day (CBD). Of particular note is the situation with development and employment in the tourism sector, given the grandiose plans for the North Caucasus Resorts project and the ski cluster in the region. Information about these plans and the construction that has begun is gradually reaching the residents of the republics, and where there is some economic activity in this direction, they note the development of the tourism sector. In particular, in Chechnya a significant majority - 77% - talk about progress in this area. Some growth is noted in Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. Although in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, despite having the most developed ski center in the country, progress has stopped due to constant terrorist attacks and the introduction of a regime of counter-terrorism operations.

In general, the population of the republics does not yet see significant reserves for increasing employment in the field of tourism - only 2-3% name increasing the attractiveness of the republic for tourism as an important task facing the authorities. The tourist complex begins to develop: Arkhyz, Bai, Mahar, etc. And we are drawn into this activity. For example, real estate and tourism services (KCR). Tourism? People are intimidated by the North Caucasus. The Internet and the media play a very bad role in this matter. Tourism was developed on Elbrus during Soviet times, but now it is in absolute decline (KBR). They seem to be trying to develop tourism here. But there were several terrorist actions, and again everything died down. Investors began to disappear. It is clear that they will not invest money where everything has fallen. Now there is hope that in connection with the Olympics, investments will again flow here, in the Elbrus region; the majority of the population hopes that by 2024 there will be no Wahhabism here (KBR). I hope that there will be a leader in Dagestan who will change the situation for the better. And it will be like a little Switzerland here. After all, we have excellent natural resources for this - the sea and the mountains! The same France and Switzerland, where people go to resorts. There is simply no one to take care of all these tourist aspects (Dagestan). The development of tourism is a prospect, this is the future. It will start working in 5, 10 years. This is the case if the situation in the Caucasus (CO-A) stabilizes.

The majority of residents of the republics believe that corruption is one of the main social diseases of society, preventing the solution of many other problems. In popular opinion, there are two approaches to explaining the growth of corruption. According to one, it's all about "high-level" corruption, the theft of money coming in the form of subsidies and transfers to local budgets from Moscow. According to another, the reason is "grassroots" corruption, bribery and nepotism in all spheres of everyday life in the republics; when obtaining work, education, treatment, various



T (T) (ISRA (India) ISI (Dubai, UAE)	= 6.317 = 1.582	SIS (USA) РИНЦ (Russia)		ICV (Poland) PIF (India)	= 6.630 = 1.940
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benefits and compensation. Focus group discussions showed that among the people there is a widespread scenario of "top-level" corruption. It is believed that from one third to half of the money allocated from the federal budget in the form of subsidies and targeted programs is embezzled and "sawed up" in Moscow by corrupt politicians and officials. Then half of the remaining half is appropriated by the local, republican ruling clans, and only the remainder reaches the population. Often, the construction of, for example, a hospital, for which funds were allocated, is replaced by the construction of a shopping center in favor of persons influencing the distribution of funds. "Grassroots" corruption is quite widely known to many residents who have personally encountered it in their lives. This is a payment for getting a job, especially in state or municipal authorities, for career advancement; admission to a university, tests and exams, obtaining a diploma; compensation for a house or apartment destroyed as a result of hostilities; for material assistance during resettlement as a result of resolving territorial conflicts, etc.

If people consider reducing unemployment to be possible at least in principle, thanks to investments in industry, the development of agriculture using new technologies, and the construction of resorts and hotels, then corruption is presented as a destructive, but well-established, habitual norm of life, a departure from which, especially at the top, impossible without political will in the upper echelons of republican and/or federal government. Corruption begins in the Kremlin itself. It all starts from there. I can't wrap my head around it when "Arguments and Facts" write that under Yeltsin, the governor came to Moscow, signed for the amount, and took 60% to the regions. And now Putin and Medvedev leave 60, but 40% reaches the regions! But why do you want us to have order, if in the Kremlin... It's the same with us - it's impossible for a person to get a job based on his working qualities, you either have to pay, or you have to be a nephew. These problems are all over the country, we are not alone. Because we live in Russia, in a wild country! (KCR). Studying at a university is pure corruption. It's one thing to give when you enroll, but another thing to pay every session! (Dagestan). There was a huge tungsten-molybdenum plant in Tyrnyauz. This is the only plant in Balkaria. It was of federal significance. And since 1993 it has remained inactive. Many times we tried to restore it, but it never worked. Of course, we would really like the federal center to create some kind of official, authorized organization here that is not related to corruption. This corruption is corroding the Caucasus! Send people here who are not associated with the so-called kickback! (CBD). Residents of all republics believe that their level of corruption is extremely high. It is rated highest in Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia, less critically in Chechnya and Ingushetia (Table 11).

Republic	Years	High	Average	Short	I find it difficult to answer
Deserter	2021	75	16	4	5
Dagestan	2023	62	26	3	9
The short's	2021	52	39	9	0
Ingushetia	2023	39	43	16	2
65.5	2021	66	24	4	6
CBD	2023	56	35	6	4
KCD	2021	67	22	5	6
KCR	2023	53	29	7	11
Next Occurry Alexia)	2021	52	32	1	15
North Ossetia Alania)	2023	47	36	4	14
Chechen Republic	2021	39	42	7	12
	2023	26	52	19	2

In all republics except Chechnya, the population believes that the level of corruption continues to rise. Only in Chechnya over the past 3 years has the vector of assessment changed: now slightly more residents of the republic are confident that corruption is decreasing than those who still see it increasing. It is noteworthy that the majority of residents of the North Caucasus republics do not believe that their level of corruption is higher than in the rest of Russia. It is difficult to say what these assumptions are based on: local patriotism - we are no worse than other regions, or media information -



	ISRA (India) $= 6$	6.317	SIS (USA)	= 0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
Impact Factor:	ISI (Dubai, UAE) = 1	1.582	РИНЦ (Russia)	= 3.939	PIF (India)	= 1.940
impact ractor:	GIF (Australia) $=$ (0.564	ESJI (KZ)	= 8.771	IBI (India)	= 4.260
	JIF =	1.500	SJIF (Morocco)) = 7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

about the large scale of theft and corruption at the federal level. This probably alleviates some of the people's anger at local corruption. In addition, there are changes, at least in Chechnya - the majority now believe that their level of corruption is lower than in all of Russia (Figure 2). Do you think the level of corruption in the republic is higher, lower, or the same as in all of Russia? (V %).

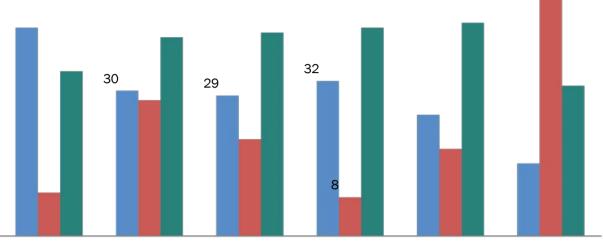


Figure 2 - Comparison of the level of corruption in the republic and in Russia as a whole, %

Over 3 years, the situation from the point of view of personal experience has changed little according to residents, the corruption of life in Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia has decreased slightly, has remained virtually unchanged in Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia, has increased slightly in Karachay-Cherkessia, but the changes are close to the size of the statistical error (Table 12).

In general, more than a third of the population personally find themselves in corruption situations.

unofficial payment or favors from you for their work?, %							
Republic	Yes	No	I find it difficult to answer				
All	37	55	8				
Dagestan	43	43	15				
Ingushetia	29	68	3				

32

45

35

32

Table 12. Over the past year or two, have you personally encountered any official asking or expecting
unofficial payment or favors from you for their work?, %

The moral and psychological background around the corruption situation in the republic is also stable - personal readiness or unwillingness to give a bribe to solve one's problem. Only a quarter of respondents - both now and 3 years ago - claim that they do not and will not give bribes under any circumstances. 17% are ready to give a bribe without hesitation, since it has become the norm in our lives, and another 48% are ready to give a bribe depending on the situation (Table 13).

64

45

58

64



3

10

7

4

CBD

KCR

North Ossetia Alania

Chechen Republic

	ISRA (India)	= 6.317	SIS (USA)	= 0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
Impact Factor:	ISI (Dubai, UAE)) = 1.582	РИНЦ (Russia)) = 3.939	PIF (India)	= 1.940
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Republic	I would give it without hesitation - this has become the norm in our society	Depending on the situation	No, I would not give it under any circumstances	I find it difficult to answer
All	17	48	27	7
Dagestan	20	47	20	14
Ingushetia	22	46	29	2
CBD	16	51	30	2
KCR	18	45	27	30
North Ossetia Alania	14	47	33	6
Chechen Republic	13	56	29	3

Judging by the statements at the focus groups, for many it is the need to participate in corrupt situations, contrary to their own moral standards, that causes feelings of rejection and protest. In addition, people believe that it is the corruption of the authorities and the inability to achieve justice that pushes young people "into the forest", to fight with the authorities. Let's say there is a conflict between two people. It is clearly visible that this is the injured party, this is the criminal. The victim is openly told: "You are right, but in order to confirm that you are right, you must pay so much. Otherwise we will get it from him!" (KCR). Why do young people go to the forests? They feel hopeless! Whatever they undertake, they are faced with corruption, dishonesty of this society! Recently, the rector of the medical

academy was caught. And they published information in the press about what they were doing there. There, the rector himself, or his vice-rector, gives instructions. Those students who did not pass three exams received one hundred thousand each as a bribe! Many of those who go into the forests are looking for an alternative to the social injustice that exists in society (Dagestan). At the same time, residents blame the authorities, ruling circles and authorities for creating and maintaining a climate of corruption in society (Figure 3).

From your point of view, is the government effectively fighting corruption or not effectively, or does the government have no such desire at all? (V %).

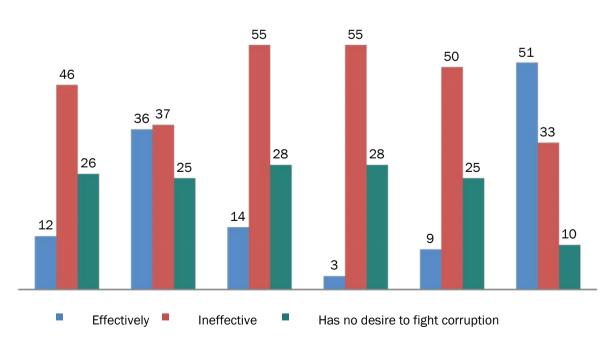


Figure 3 - Effectiveness of the fight against corruption, %



	ISRA (India)	= 6.317	SIS (USA) $= 0$	0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
Impact Factor:	ISI (Dubai, UAE) = 1.582	РИНЦ (Russia) = З	3.939	PIF (India)	= 1.940
impact ractor:	GIF (Australia)	= 0.564	ESJI (KZ) $= 8$	8.771	IBI (India)	= 4.260
	JIF	= 1.500	SJIF (Morocco) = 7	7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

In four republics, half of the population believes that the government is fighting corruption ineffectively, and a quarter believes that the government has no desire to fight corruption at all. Chechnya stands out, whose residents highly appreciate the fight of the republican authorities against corruption; a significant shift in sentiment has occurred over the past three years in Ingushetia, where the assessment of the effectiveness of the government's fight against corruption has tripled. The effectiveness of the fight against corruption in Chechnya was explained in the following way at a focus group: I am very glad that Ramzan Kadyrov is now testing a very simple but effective mechanism to combat bribes in universities. He said that he would send his people everywhere offering bribes, and if anything happened, he would remove the head of the university. They say that now they are afraid to take bribes. Probably, there will be only one year when it is unlikely that at least one teacher will take a bribe (Chechnya). The threat of terrorism, according to people's assessments, in the North Caucasus as a whole is receding; in absolute assessments of the severity of problems, it moved from second to fourth place, after unemployment, corruption and poverty. When posing a question in a sociological questionnaire about the problems that concern people, when it was possible to name several of the most important problems that the authorities should solve, terrorism also came out of the first place.

Over 3 years, the assessment of the severity of the problem of terrorism in Dagestan has halved, and in Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria the situation has changed little (Figure 4). Please tell me, over the past one to two years, the situation has improved, remained unchanged, or worsened in the following areas: countering terrorism (in%)

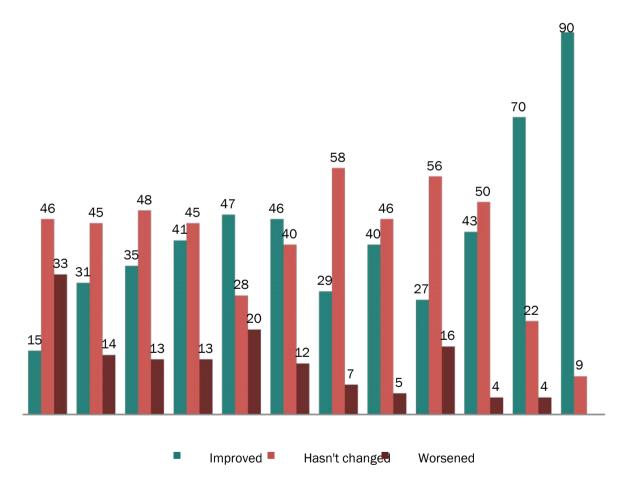


Figure 4 - Results of countering terrorism, %

These assessments are also heard in focus groups. Compared to Dagestan, where there are militants, we have peace. We stop all this. Thanks to the FSB for working like this (SO-A).

We had a period last year or the year before when one policeman was killed every day. Every day! (CBD).

Here there is simply a war going on between bandits and security forces. They don't kill a single civilian (CBD).



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impact ractor:	GIF (Australia)	= 0.564	ESJI (KZ) $=$	= 8.771	IBI (India)	= 4.260
	JIF	= 1.500	SJIF (Morocco) =	= 7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

The word "extremism" does not fit here. These are simply criminal elements who used to be thieves in law and so on - now they have simply risen to a new flag and are walking under it. This slows down the development of the tourism business (CBD).

People celebrate successes in countering terrorism by the authorities and at the same time continue to express concern about the problem itself in their republics. At the same time, many assume that supporting terrorism, or, rather, the state concept of a terrorist threat, is beneficial to some state or other structures. The security forces have lists of all these bandits. Why can't they show them anything? Some people are happy with this, so we are developing all this. (CBD). We now see that despite the fact that there is a fight against terrorist activities and gangs, nevertheless, they arise again and again. It is difficult to say how their activities will turn out. I am afraid that certain forces are interested in the development of such aggressive Muslimization of the Caucasus, Islamization, Wahhabization, which can lead to serious consequences (KCR). If there are no fundamental changes in the country, both in Dagestan and the UK, of course, terrorism and armed resistance will grow (Dagestan). Today the population is being deceived by the state. With the help of television, with the help of everything else. Indeed, today we have very important problems: unemployment, corruption, and, in principle, lack of industrial development. But with all this, today we have a counter-terrorism operation that is spread over the entire North Caucasus. And today all these problems are becoming secondary, because every day on TV we are told about this operation and the threat of terrorism. Already an international threat of terrorism! (CBD). They are not fighting terrorism here now, they are creating the impression that it exists. This is a way to make money (CBD).

As for the problem of terrorism in the North Caucasus, I have always said and will continue to say: first the fight against terrorism appeared here, and then terrorism itself (KBR).

At the same time, people are concerned about their safety not only in connection with the terrorist underground, but also with the arbitrariness of law enforcement agencies, under the pretext of fighting terrorists, carrying out "clean-up operations," detaining, and prosecuting those suspected of supporting the "forest brothers." The level of these concerns can be seen from the answers to the question about how the situation in the field of human safety has changed (Table 14).

Republic	Years	Improved	Hasn't changed	Worsened	I find it difficult to answer
Deserter	2021	4	40	52	4
Dagestan	2023	14	51	25	11
Ingushetia	2021	18	58	20	4
	2023	38	45	15	2
CDD	2021	12	43	40	5
CBD	2023	23	57	19	1
KCR	2021	15	60	21	5
NCK	2023	25	59	9	7
North Operation Alexia	2021	17	63	19	1
North Ossetia Alania	2023	22	65	10	3
Chashan Danuhlia	2021	49	35	9	8
Chechen Republic	2023	80	18	1	1

Table 14. Assessment of the human safety situation, %

Improvement is noted in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Karachay-Cherkessia. A high level of concern is

also noted about the violation of civil rights and freedoms in the republics (Table 15).



	ISRA (India) =	= 6.317	SIS (USA) $=$	0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
Isi (Dubai, U	ISI (Dubai, UAE)	= 1.582	РИНЦ (Russia) =	3.939	PIF (India)	= 1.940
Impact Factor:	GIF (Australia) =	= 0.564	ESJI (KZ) $=$	= 8.771	IBI (India)	= 4.260
	JIF	= 1.500	SJIF (Morocco) =	= 7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

Republic	Years	Improved	Hasn't changed	Worsened	I find it difficult to answer
Dagestan	2021	4	47	41	8
	2023	11	53	19	18
Ingushetia	2021	15	58	23	4
	2023	38	38	23	1
	2021	10	57	27	7
CBD	2023	15	61	22	2
KOD	2021	11	59	24	6
KCR	2023	18	64	10	8
Next Occur Alaria	2021	4	63	16	17
North Ossetia Alania	2023	9	65	16	9
	2021	37	41	11	12
Chechen Republic	2023	58	35	5	2

Table 15. Violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens, %

Thus, reducing the threat of terrorism does not mean that people have nothing to fear: there is a criminal danger, threats to life and property. In addition, according to participants in group discussions, the threat often comes from law enforcement agencies exceeding their authority in the fight against terrorism or participating in conflicts on the side of criminals.

The concept of crime and leadership have merged into one whole. The people live one life, and on the other side of the curtain they live a completely different life: both showdowns and divisions. And the people had absolutely no confidence left in either the federal center or their own official. The people are trying to protect themselves from the police, from the court, and from the official (KCR).

We have no justice, no fairness. No one here trusts judges. Even when it comes to criminal issues, people in the Caucasus do not go to court, knowing that they will not find justice there; they sort things out themselves. I can give an example. Ten people - the victims of the criminal in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, caught him themselves, brought him, and handed him over to the prosecutor. But the prosecutor took the money and released him. People realized that the government was toothless and corrupt. They went, found him in the CBD and killed him. Like this! (KCR).

At the heart of all problems is the violation of human rights. First of all, the right to life and so on. Dignity is violated. And the political right to vote and be elected. This is all at the core. And at the top lies corruption, and thus all this causes indignation (Dagestan).

The greatest dissatisfaction with the situation with the safety of individuals and society is expressed by residents of Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia. The population of Chechnya, along with other positive, optimistic assessments of the situation in the republic, now rates its security noticeably higher (Table 16).

Table 16. Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the situation with ensuring the safety of the
individual and society?, %

Republic	Satisfied	Not satisfied	I find it difficult to answer
All	44	49	7
Dagestan	23	65	12
Ingushetia	53	45	2
CBD	41	58	1
KCR	44	44	12
North Ossetia Alania	41	52	7
Chechen Republic	82	15	3



	ISRA (India)	= 6.317	SIS (USA)	= 0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
Impact Factor:	ISI (Dubai, UAE) = 1.582	РИНЦ (Russia) = 3.939	PIF (India)	= 1.940
impact ractor:	GIF (Australia)	= 0.564	ESJI (KZ)	= 8.771	IBI (India)	= 4.260
	JIF	= 1.500	SJIF (Morocco) = 7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

Low financial status and poverty appear in population surveys as one of the most pressing problems that cause discontent and protest sentiments. It is on a par with corruption and the threat of terrorism, causing the greatest emotional dissatisfaction of people - it was named the most acute in this series by 27% (27% named corruption, 26% - terrorism). At the same time, only about 15% called their financial situation "bad" or "rather bad" (with a range from 4% in Ingushetia to 26% in North Ossetia). This reflects the reluctance of many respondents with low incomes to admit that they are incompetent owners, losers, "worse than others"; the majority describe their financial situation as "average, satisfactory."

Everyone seems to live normally, and at the same time a large percentage are unemployed. Ossetia has a large percentage of unemployed people. Those people who do not receive income, but live off old people's pensions and child benefits; They have no other income (SO-A).

In fact, there are no poor people here, no one dies of hunger! We help each other (Ingushetia).

It should be borne in mind here that many residents of the republics have an additional source of income and food in the form of a personal plot, a farm, their own livestock, a garden, or a vegetable garden. For the population of the North Caucasus republics, this is a "safety net" that does not allow them to slide into poverty, unlike many other regions of Russia.

As the results of the study show, for 45% of respondents the source of family income is wages at the main place of work (respondents could name several sources of income), 10% had one-time extra jobs, 20% received a pension, 4% received a stipend,

10% received social benefits. payments, subsidies, 4% - income from private business, 9% - cash or inkind income from household plots, 13% - financial assistance from relatives or friends, 2% - income from renting out premises or property. Additional income, including from household farming, for many people accounts for more than a third of all family income. This was also noted in focus groups.

I agree that people are dissatisfied with the government and the state. But I can add that the standard of living of our people is higher than in Soviet times. And the standard of living in Dagestan is decided not thanks to the government and laws, but in spite of it (Dagestan).

Other vital needs of people are poorly met housing, healthcare, education, for which the state and authorities are mainly responsible.

Dissatisfied! Because they are absolutely not concerned with the social problems of citizens. There are no places in kindergartens at all, neither for disabled people nor for forced migrants. People complain that they have to pay for kindergarten, for equipment. To the point that in Makhachkala the price is already up to 50 thousand for a place in kindergarten. This is already an unrealistic price! (Dagestan).

The majority of the region's population is dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the housing and communal services sector, while in four republics the dissatisfaction is very acute dissatisfaction is twice as high as satisfaction. Only in Chechnya and Ingushetia are there more satisfied people, but even here the number of those dissatisfied with the situation amounts to between a third and half of the population (Table 17).

Republic	Satisfied	Not satisfied	I find it difficult to answer
All	34	61	5
Dagestan	26	63	10
Ingushetia	52	45	3
CBD	31	67	2
KCR	20	75	5
North Ossetia Alania	20	76	4
Chechen Republic	64	34	2

Table 17. In general, are you satisfied or not satisfied with the situation in the housing and communalservices?, %

At the same time, in all republics, residents note progress in the gasification of settlements and in the development of water supply and sewerage systems. Many residents were positively impressed by the actions of local authorities to develop infrastructure and improve settlements - lighting, landscaping, garbage collection, and improvement of appearance. These positive changes were also noted by focus group participants. Roads are being built. The infrastructure is improving. Due to my specifics, I see real progress. And I hope that we will live better.



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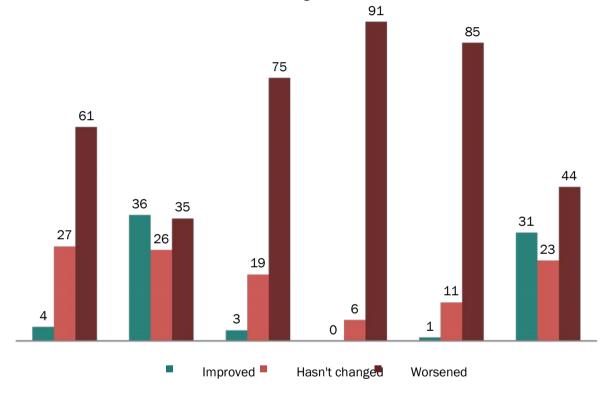
After all, now young people are very actively involved in improvement (KCR).

The only difference in our region, despite the fact that there have been wars, the roads are some of the best in the region. The infrastructure is one of the best, tourism is improving, there are good buildings, the appearance of the city is improving (Chechnya).

If we take my loved ones and relatives, at a purely everyday level the situation in my village has noticeably improved. We are laying gas (KCR).

The main complaint to the authorities in the housing and communal services sector is the non-

stop increase in fees for housing and communal services. Only in Ingushetia and Chechnya did residents somehow not notice this, or perhaps the authorities here slowed down such growth. In other republics, from 61 to 91% note that the cost of housing and communal services has increased. This is one of the problems that evokes feelings of acute protest among the population, however, it is quite in line with the critical sentiments in the rest of Russia (Figure 5).



Cost of housing and communal services,

Figure 5 - Cost of housing and communal services, %

Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria especially stand out in terms of the level of discontent. Housing and communal services tariffs alone are worth it. Local monopolists control prices themselves; they set these tariffs at their own discretion (KBR).

Housing and communal services have already reached their limits! (SO-A).

The main problem is housing and communal services! Because people are outraged by the increase in tariffs! Since Soviet times, electricians have not installed a single pole! And tariffs are rising and rising! And all this ends up in their pockets! (SO-A).

I believe that it is urgent to close this housing and communal services sector for a year and leave people alone!

Communications are not restored, nothing is being built! What should we pay for! The entrance is terrible! There are no repairs, nothing is being done! (SO-A).

As for housing and communal services, I have the opinion that if young people, and not the older generation, paid for utilities, then the war would have started long ago! And the old people just faint, they are pumped out (SO-A).

According to the level of severity of social problems that cause dissatisfaction among the



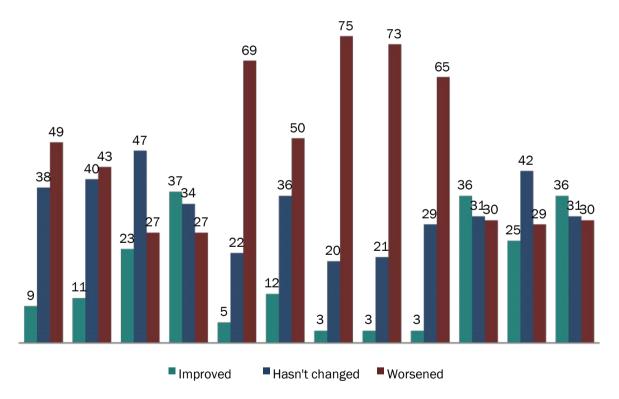
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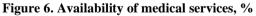
population of the region, the level of medical care is also distinguished (Table 18).

Republica	Improved	Hasn't changed	Worsened	I find it difficult to answer
All	20	46	31	3
Dagestan	10	50	37	3
Ingushetia	41	41	16	2
CBD	18	53	27	1
KCR	14	52	30	4
North Ossetia Alania	9	39	49	3
Chechen Republic	41	36	21	1

Table 18. Quality of medical care, %

It is obvious that the quality of medical care for the majority is associated with the availability of paid medicine, and here in all republics except Chechnya and Ingushetia, the availability of treatment based on its cost has significantly worsened (Figure 6). Please tell me whether the situation has improved, remained the same, or worsened in the area of affordable cost of medical services (in %).





The high cost of medical care and, accordingly, its inaccessibility for ordinary residents have increased significantly, with the exception of Ingushetia and Chechnya, where many note an improvement in the situation. In general, dissatisfaction with the level of medical care remains an acute problem in most republics, fueling dissatisfaction with the activities of the authorities (Table 19).



	ISRA (India) $= 6.31$	5 SIS (USA) = 0.912	ICV (Poland)	= 6.630
Impact Factor:	ISI (Dubai, UAE) = 1.58	2 РИНЦ (Russia) = 3.939	PIF (India)	= 1.940
impact ractor:	GIF (Australia) $= 0.56$	4 ESJI (KZ) = 8.771	IBI (India)	= 4.260
	JIF = 1.50	0 SJIF (Morocco) = 7.184	OAJI (USA)	= 0.350

Table 19. Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the situation in healthcare?, %

Republic	Year	Satisfied	Not satisfied	I find it difficult to answer
Deserter	2021	17	76	7
Dagestan	2023	20	71	10
Ingushetia	2021	37	57	7
	2023	58	39	4
	2021	12	79	9
CBD	2023	36	60	3
KOD	2021	17	78	5
KCR	2023	21	74	5
North Occurring Alaria	2021	19	72	9
North Ossetia Alania	2023	16	76	8
Charles Day 11	2021	34	60	6
Chechen Republic	2023	55	40	5

We are very dissatisfied with our medicine. But the same residents of Grozny, everyone is being treated in our hospitals, and the Ingush too. And they say - you just don't know what kind of medicine we have. Our children would die if they were treated in our hospitals. But we only see the downsides. Apparently, we strive for the best, but it could be worse (SO -A).

Compared to other republics, we have very poor medical care. Patients do not trust him and go to neighboring republics (Ingushetia).

There is a growing understanding in public opinion in the republics of the North Caucasus that the lack of work and prospects for a normal, successful life both at home and when traveling to other regions of Russia carries a charge of mass discontent and protest. North Caucasian youth increasingly believe that Russia has placed them in the position of outsiders, outcasts, alien to the interests, norms and customs of the rest of Russia, and, accordingly, unwanted guests in other regions of the country.

Along with the problems of employment and unemployment, young people in the republics of the North Caucasus are very concerned about the problems of education - a decrease in its quality and an increase in cost. These assessments emerge in group discussions. The common thing is probably receiving a low-quality education, first of all at school, that's the first thing. Because I, as a teacher, want to say that every new course taken at our university is something terrible. They come from school ignoramuses, some even write poorly (KCR).

There must be a growing generation, they must be specialists, they must be prepared. Where do they come from, trained specialists? These are high schools, universities, manufacturing. Where will they come from if there is no education in schools? (KCR). If under Soviet rule our education could be rated at 4–5, now it is a two and a one. Why? 6 universities and 26 different branches. The same teachers teach. How can the same person work in 6-7 universities? What knowledge does it give? He comes and gives a recorded lecture on a floppy disk. Rewrite, get busy! (Dagestan).

No, it's more complicated than that, actually! One of the main problems of our republic and country is the economy. This is where the youth problem comes from. I spent the best years of my life in production. From worker to manager. And today there is nowhere to work! No education? Education in bulk! Under Soviet rule there were 4 universities, today there are 10! Every vocational school already has a law faculty! (SO-A).

Since the late 1980s. In the republics of the North Caucasus, as in other union and national republics of Russia, the ideas of national sovereignty with the possibility of secession from the USSR and the Russian Federation developed. As is known, the collapse of the USSR led to the formation of the CIS from three republics and the creation of 12 independent states. In the North Caucasus, the ideas of separatism, separation from the Russian Federation in the form of independent states or a North Caucasian federation were put forward by various circles in all the republics. These ideas received the greatest development in Chechnya under J. Dudayev, who proclaimed the independence of Ichkeria, which led to a protracted military conflict with thousands of casualties and destruction.

After the liquidation of the separatist governments in Chechnya and its return to the Russian Federation, the ideas of separatism were not officially put forward in any republic, however, there are ideas in the media that among the population there is still a widespread desire for the separation of one or another republic from Russia or the creation



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of a confederation of North Caucasian republics. Our research has shown that these ideas are far from reality.

Of course, residents of the republics have grievances against Russia - for the colonial policy of the Russian Empire, insufficient attention during the Soviet years, Stalin's deportation, lack of understanding of the problems of the republics in recent times, unfair distribution of federal assistance between the republics, negative attitude towards immigrants from the Caucasus in the rest of Russia. However, the majority of the population has no illusions about the relativity of the possibility of the republics existing separately from Russia (Table 20).

Table 20. Do you think our republic will be able to achieve better results in economic, social and spiritual development while being part of Russia or is it better for us to develop separately, creating our own state or federation of Caucasian peoples?, %

Republic	Years	As part of Russia	Independent state	Federation of Caucasian Peoples		it to
Deserter	2021	85	2	3	10	
Dagestan	2023	85	2	2	11	
Ingushetia	2021	67	17	15	1	
	2023	68	17	13	3	
	2021	89	3	4	5	
CBD	2023	89	2	2	8	
KOD	2021	85	6	2	8	
KCR	2023	95	1	2	2	
	2021	98	1	1	1	
North Ossetia Alania	203	94	0	2	4	
Chechen Republic	2021	68	15	8	9	
	2023	84	8	6	2	

There is a massive desire of the population of the republics to remain part of the Russian Federation. Ingushetia stands out, where 30% of the population would prefer to exist as an independent state or as part of the North Caucasus federation. At the same time, in Chechnya, where 3 years ago ideas of separatism were just as widespread, their level has now dropped to 14%.

People understand that without Russia, not a single republic will survive economically due to lack of resources and economic underdevelopment. In addition, the republics' farms have long been part of the all-Russian economic complex and are integrated into the Russian economy. It is also important that Russia plays the role of a unifying force in the North Caucasus, resolving clashes of interests and frequent conflicts between the republics.

We will die without Russia! We don't have production. All the injections we have are a direct tranche from Moscow. Pensions, for example! How can you earn a pension if three cripples work! We have unemployment! (SO-A).

For Russia, the Caucasus is an important strategic unit. Because who is below us? — Eastern countries that are negatively disposed towards Russia. It would be convenient for them - the collapse of the South of Russia! (SO-A) This idea did not last even two years. My categorical opinion is that the fate of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic and its peoples is always connected only with the Russian Federation (KCR).

We are connected by an umbilical cord to Russia, like all the republics of the UK. If in the Soviet Union we produced 2 billion rubles of products, today we produce practically nothing except vodka (SO-A).

History develops in a spiral. And appanage principalities never led to victory. Therefore, if a state is strong, then it is united. Even in Dagestan there are enough sensible people, there are simply too many nationalities there. They understand what this can lead to, because Russia is a deterrent (KCR).

If, without Russia, we immediately start fighting with the Ingush! (SO-A).

There have never been such sentiments in our republic. Such sentiments existed in Chechnya and Ingushetia. This is probably why the federal center feeds these republics. For example, I know for sure that if something ever starts, it will start from those republics. And the funds that pour in there go to support the Chechen army. If something happens, it will be from these peoples. They won't take anything into account! They, of course, will not be able to



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extinguish the entire federation, but they are most prone to separatism (SO-A).

There is no need to talk about any kind of confederation. Again, old conflicts that have reached open confrontation between Ossetians and Ingush, both Kabardians and Balkars are also constantly in a smoldering conflict situation. Karachais and Circassians. At what point this will all flare up, who will take which side and how it will all end is hard to predict! But all this will lead to chaos, to tragedy for people, for the population (SO-A).

Opposite to these ideas of separatism on the part of the residents of the North Caucasus are the ideas, increasingly prevalent among the population of the republics, as well as in the rest of Russia, that Russia itself will sooner or later leave the Caucasus, that this region is a burden for it, a source of terrorism and interethnic tension. These topics were also discussed in focus group discussions.

The people who live in Russia, in the depths, have a negative attitude towards both the Caucasus and the Chechen Republic. It is believed that our republic is allocated more funds in terms of security and economic development than other regions. But more funds are also exported from our republic than from other republics (Chechnya).

The militants will come here and that's it, there will be no protection without the protection of Russia. Militants from the south, from Afghanistan! (SO-A).

Our republic is the only one that is a Christian republic. Naturally, the war will go to capture the CO. And naturally, this will not come from anywhere, but from Iraq, Iran. There will be a religious war, there will be no other war! (SO-A).

I very much doubt that Russia will leave the Caucasus. A holy place is never empty. The Islamic factor will strengthen. The position of such states as Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Arab world, which is not currently in crisis, will strengthen. Naturally, no one discounts the activities of the world policeman represented by the United States, which has been here constantly through certain projects and grant programs. To say that Russia will leave and peace, prosperity and prosperity will come? No way! The Caucasus is located in such a way that the interests of various large states will clash here. We are still seeing this today - the clash of these interests (SO-A).

There are no civil society institutions in Russia. Russia can be united by only one idea - against some enemy. But to engage in a peaceful, systematic process of intercultural, interethnic, building society, this does not exist in Russia. We need an enemy. At this stage, these are persons of Caucasian nationality (Chechnya).

I don't think they need a war here, but they don't need the North Caucasus to prosper. The federal center always needs the UK as a switchman, on whom it can be blamed and given to the military to be devoured. This attitude is in the genes, I believe, of the Russian government, it has always been like this. It's very convenient. This is a powder keg, you can always create a mess here, you can always direct the attention of the average person in the Caucasian direction in order to divert attention from the fact that the country is not governed as it should (Chechnya).

I'll give you a layman's answer. Russia needs the UK for geopolitics. They don't need these lands. But we need borders with Azerbaijan and Georgia. But Dagestanis, Ingush, not a single representative of this people is sure that he is Russian. We do not have the feeling of a Russian. Because everywhere we are insulted and humiliated. And to feel part of the country - Moscow is my capital, no Caucasian has such a feeling. If some intellectual has such a feeling to the core, and he imagines himself as part of a big country, as soon as he is convinced of the opposite! I think they only need this land to strengthen their borders (Chechnya).

So, the study showed that the North Caucasus is still a zone of increased social tension, probably greater than in other regions of Russia. At the same time, its problems are also characteristic of other regions and republics of the country, especially subsidized ones. The exceptions are the problems of unemployment and the terrorist threat. It is the decline of the economy and unemployment, the loss of the region from the past, the Soviet national economic complex of the country that feeds here the mass sentiments of frustration, apathy, feelings of injured national pride, religious fanaticism, and separatism.

Conclusion

The results of the study allow us to draw the following conclusions.

1 The population of the North Caucasus notes some improvement in the situation in their republics. This is partly due to changes in leadership in individual republics and reflects hope for improvement in the future. At the same time, with the exception of Chechnya and Ingushetia, dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in their republic still prevails in the region.

2 With a slight increase in the level of optimism and hopes for the future, the population expresses extreme dissatisfaction and growing protests over unsolvable main problems: mass unemployment, corruption, the threat of terrorism, poverty and the high cost of living. In the last year, dissatisfaction with the rise in prices for housing and communal services has added to this.

3 Fears of terrorism and concern for the lives of loved ones moved from second to fourth place in the ranking of problems, but continue to remain one of the most pressing problems in Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria. At the same time,



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people call the source of the problem not only militants and the armed underground, but also lawlessness on the part of security forces and authorities in general, who support armed confrontation and force young people to join illegal armed groups, "forest brothers."

4 Dissatisfaction with these problems individually is not enough for the emergence of mass protests and acts of civil disobedience, but in general they create a problematic background against which individual incidents, local conflicts, acts of arbitrariness on the part of the authorities can cause outbreaks of mass indignation and protest actions.

5 The inability or unwillingness of the authorities to solve the chronic problems of the North Caucasus is leading to growing dissatisfaction with the authorities in all republics, with the exception of Chechnya.

6 The situation in Chechnya causes an ambivalent assessment of the population. On the one hand, local residents, like residents of neighboring

republics, highly appreciate Chechnya's successes in restoring the economy, in construction, and in the practical eradication of the armed underground. On the other hand, especially in more frank discussions, they express critical views on common problems for the region - prohibitive unemployment, corruption and nepotism in power, lack of rights for ordinary citizens, the understanding that the successes of the republic are mainly caused by abundant financial injections from the federal center as compensation for losses in past wars.

The dissatisfaction of the population of the republics with the authorities, including the federal ones, did not lead to an increase in separatist sentiments. Most residents do not see the existence of the North Caucasian republics outside of Russia, although many believe that in the rest of Russia the North Caucasus is treated as a foreign body, the main source of problems, which is manifested, in particular, in the spread of the call "Stop feeding the Caucasus!"

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