

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW
4th HUMAN RIGHTS FILM SERIES**

RESOURCE PAGE: THE DAMNED AND THE SACRED (*DANS GROZNY DANS*)¹

The Chechens are an indigenous people of the North Caucasian Mountains on the southwestern border of the Russian Federation. Russia conquered the region in the 19th century. While Chechens have since been seeking autonomy, their most recent struggle for independence has lasted more than a decade. The Chechen people have fought for their independence from Russia twice in recent years. The first war, from 1994-1996, killed over 100,000 people and left thousands of orphans before the Russians withdrew. The second war began in 1999 and continues today, leaving tens of thousands dead. Russia claims its use of military force is justified because they are fighting against terrorism; Chechens maintain they are battling for their freedom.

The constant conflict has resulted in devastation within Chechnya. International organizations have had limited access to Chechnya during both wars, but report that there have been egregious human rights abuses committed both by Russian troops and by Chechen fighters.

The following is a list of websites that provide more information about the Chechen people, their culture, and the current human rights situation in Chechnya.

Physicians for Human Rights - <http://www.phrusa.org/>

Physician for Human Rights promotes health by protecting human rights. Since 1986, members have worked to stop torture, disappearances, and political killings by governments and opposition groups. The website includes a comprehensive report on human rights violations in Chechnya.

Human Rights Watch – www.hrw.org

Human Rights Watch is dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world. Their website includes detailed human rights reports on Russia and Chechnya, as well as current news releases.

Chechnya Free.ru - <http://www.chechnyafree.ru/index.php?lng=eng>

This website contains general information on Chechnya's history, traditions, and culture, including information on Chechen children's dance groups.

Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg- <http://www.openweb.ru/smo/smo.htm>

Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg is an organization that works towards raising awareness of human rights violations in the Russian army.

War Child.org- <http://www.warchild.org>

War Child is a network of independent organizations that are working across the world to help children affected by war. The website documents projects that it works on internationally, and includes an article on a Chechen children's dance group.

The American Committee for Peace in Chechnya <http://www.peaceinchechnya.org/index.htm>

ACPC is a private, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting the peaceful resolution of the Russian-Chechen war. The website contains background information as well as current news from Chechnya.

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