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## The Role of Socio-Cultural and Religious Factors in Peace Building the Case of Ingushetia (Russian Federation)

### Abstract

*Ingushetia is one of the states of southern part of the Russian Federation with a population of less than half a million and is predominantly a Muslim state. At this present time, the local ethnic Ingushs strictly follow and live according to a tribal system which they inherited from their ancestors. Throughout their history, Ingushs have demonstrated their own mechanism for reconciliation and the peace building process in cases of tribal conflicts. The local socio-cultural and religious factors have always played an extremely effective role in preserving a harmonious life among various tribes as well as communities in Ingushetia. Interestingly, in most cases, this mechanism has proven to be more efficient and productive than the existing state law. This paper has adopted a descriptive method of analysis. The findings are expected to reveal the major factors which helped Ingushs to preserve their identity, unchanged throughout their history.*

**Key words:** *Ingushetia, reconciliation, peace building process, socio-cultural and religious factors.*

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## I. Introduction

In the Ingush society comprehensive knowledge about ancestry, unconditional obedience for the canons of culture play a significant role in personal as well as in social life of its members. Knowing your family lineage up to your seventh ancestor makes you feel not only proud but it also gives you a sense of true belonging to the original genus of your family in particular and to your own ethnic group in general.

However, there is a difference between having a mere knowledge about the ancestors and living with it with full respect, love and devotion to your family tree, and being ready to die for the sake of protecting its honor. Usually a member of any traditional society is considered as part and parcel element of one indivisible society and never feels "lonely in a crowd" in contrast to the Western capitalists societies. Therefore, this type of culture<sup>1</sup> including its customs and traditions – together with its socio-religious factors have tremendous influence, unlimited power in problem solving, decision making and peace building process in case of conflicts.

The most important element of culture that helps people to structure their worldview about the reality is their ethos, which refers to apprehended beliefs within a cultural group that guides social interactions, such as independence vs interdependence; individual right vs honor and protection of family; egalitarianism vs authoritarianism; control and dominance vs harmony and defense.<sup>2</sup> Culture may also be described as a broad sense of belongingness and shared values derived from group membership, a common history, tradition and language.<sup>3</sup> It also focuses on shared behavior, symbols, values and beliefs.<sup>4</sup> Cultural identity of ethnicity "requires the self-consciousness recognition by a group of individuals

of commonalities that emerge through their conformity to similar ways of acting and being".<sup>5</sup>

For indigenous people like Ingushs, to preserve their culture, traditions and customs is easy to some extent. On the other hand it becomes extremely complicated compared with a major and big numbered nations. It is easy in a sense that any ethnos which consists of a small number of people can maintain their traditional institutions from foreign influences, and therefore it is easier to maintain control over a small area, especially if the people belong to the single ethnic group and follow the same religion. However, it becomes complicated when it comes to facing and responding any overt aggression of those neighbors who have always been more in numbers and military might. In all of recorded history and reconstructable prehistory the Chechen and Ingush (and for that matter most North Caucasians) have never undertaken battle except in defense.

The Russian conquest of the Caucasus was difficult and bloody, and the Chechens and Ingush with their lowlands territory and access to the central pass were prime targets and were among the most tenacious defenders. Russia destroyed lowlands villages and deported or slaughtered civilian population, eventually forcing the people to flee from the plain land and seek refuge in the highlands of mountain areas. Numerous refugees emigrated or were deported to various Muslim countries of the Middle East, and to this day there are Chechen populations in Jordan and Turkey. The recent history shows us an example of brutal aggression of huge Soviet Army in February 1944 which ended deporting the whole Ingush nation together with Chechens and some other North Caucasian Muslim ethnic groups to Kazakhstan and Siberia.

However, the history also recorded that neither the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, nor the repression of the 1930s, nor the exile in 1944 was able to destroy the spirit of Ingush people. The strong affiliation with their socio-cultural and religious way of life helped Ingushs to preserve successfully their identity throughout the centuries and to face any challenges that would jeopardize their further existence. And yet there can be no community without any form of disputes and conflicts among its members and Ingush community is not an exceptional case.

Issue of *vendetta*<sup>6</sup> has always been one of the sensitive issues in the life of Ingushs. No matter how severe might be punishment of the state law for the victim's relative who avenges the murderer nothing would stop him from taking his revenge. Though, Ingushs as Muslims, do admit that Islam should prevail over any element of culture or custom that is not in line with teachings of Islam there is still need for a complex work to solve the problem of *vendetta* which in many cases goes beyond a human reason. At the same time we admit the fact that Islam has no objection to any culture, customs or traditions which do

<sup>1</sup> Mark Granham, "Material culture and Roman identity," in *Cultural Identity in the*

*Roman Empire*, (New York: Routledge Press, 1988), 159.

<sup>2</sup> From Latin *Vindicta*, A blood feud in which the family of a murdered person seeks vengeance on the murderer or the murderer's family.

The concept of *culture* can be explained in "four clusters of meanings: first, culture as a cognitive category, a state of mind (with an ideal goal implied), which is the proper concern of the arts and ethics; second, culture as the level of collective social development, with this sphere of concern designated as culture and society; third, culture as the arts, where a restricted sphere of self-conscious expression is designated and may be reserved for particular groups, with their own self-images; and fourth, culture as the way of life of people, the sphere of complex practical activity, or praxis" that denotes "sets of ideas embedded within routine practice and familiar institutions, and read them as implicated in the reports of self which we make, or in self-identity," p. vi. Preson, *Political/Cultural Identity: Citizens and Nations in a Global Era*, (London, California - New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997), 38-39.

<sup>3</sup> Larry V. Diller, *Political/Cultural Diversity: A Primer for the Human Services* (U.S.A.: Thomas Brooks/Cole, 3rd edition, 2007), 61-65.

<sup>4</sup> Samir Stehli, *The influence of Islam on Albanian culture*, Islam in Asia 1, (2011), 390.

<sup>5</sup> Kameta Liebkind, *New Identities in Europe: Immigrant Ancestry and Ethnic Identity of Youth*, (England: Gower Publishing Company Ltd, 1989), 21.

Chechen and Ingush have lived, the only traditionally Chechen-Ingush lands outside of it are the Kist land in Georgia.

*Inguish ethinos*

## III. Ingushetia and its Background

### *Ingushs and religion*

## Demography

*murdaḥ* (= *Qaḍīrī*).

Meik, Minwalla, Chapter 47, Number 47.1.8.

<sup>5</sup> Joanna Nichols, *The Ingush (with notes on the Chechen): Background information*, (California: Berkeley, 1997), accessed April 12, 2014, [http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~ingush/ingush\\_people.html](http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~ingush/ingush_people.html)

in few months was what Imam Shamyl<sup>9</sup> couldn't do<sup>10</sup> with his sword<sup>11</sup>. Since that time up to date Islam has penetrated the genus of Ingushs to the extent that they do not imagine their socio-cultural life without religion of Islam.

Therefore, in the Northern Caucasus in general and Ingushetia in particular almost every socio-cultural, political and ideological issue has an Islamic component. The Muslim faith has become inherent part of the regional ethnic identity, permeating the mentality and behavior of peoples living in region. The northeastern part of the Caucasus, including Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, has a stronger religious tradition, while the northwestern Caucasus, primarily the Adigei and Turke people, did not embrace Islam with the same fervor.<sup>12</sup>

### Ingush and ancestors' land

A strong sense of rootedness in the family tree and the ethnicity still remains resilient in the present days of Ingush society. In principle every individual in Ingush society should be fully aware of his father's land. The importance of this becomes necessary in case if any dispute or conflict arises about territories, be it between neighbors in a village or between the Ingush land and the bordering neighbor state. People who have respect for their ancestors and are aware of the places where they dwelled will also have a strong respect for their own cultural and religious identity.

Land for Ingushs has always been as sacred as parents and religion. Some even say that Ingush may decline from *vendetta* and forgive his sworn enemy who killed his family member but it is impossible that he will part with one iota of his land in any circumstances. In case of unjust usurpation,<sup>13</sup> of the land from Ingush by anyone, be it an individual or even government the hatred towards the usurper and full commitment to restore the justice by killing the usurper is inherited from generation to generation. And in case of government the person in charge who gave an order to occupy or confiscate the land will be the target of the victim.

<sup>9</sup> Imam Shamyl (1797 – 1871) a political and religious leader of the Muslim tribes of the Northern Caucasus. He was a leader of anti-Russian resistance in the Caucasian War and was the third Imam of the Caucasian Imamate that lasted from 1834 till 1859.

<sup>10</sup> Imam Shamyl, with his army of 20,000 men, attacked Ingushs to subjugate them.

However, fierce resistance of Ingushs forced Imam Shamyl and his men to retreat collecting their dead and wounded comrades. *Gomzhine Ingushitih*, accessed on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014, <http://ingushnews.ru>

<sup>11</sup> N.D. Kodoev, *istoriya Ingushskogo Naroda*, (Maga: Ingushetia: Sredak, 2002), 166.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen R. Bowers, *et al.*, "Islam in Ingushetia and Chechnya," *Faculty Publications and Preconferences*, 29: 4, (2004): 395.

<sup>13</sup> "All Russian governments – Czars, Soviets... used various means to remove Chechen and Ingush population from economically important areas and to encourage settlement there by Russians and Russian Cossacks..." and "... a sizable portion of the Ingush uplands was transferred to North Ossetia in 1944, prior to 1992 Ingush-Ossetian conflict where some 60,000 Ingush lived in North Ossetia. *Johanno Nicholas, The Ingush (with notes on the Chechen): Background information*.

Interestingly, strong affection to the land and readiness to commit even a homicide due to the dispute over the land is found among Albanians as well. According to the report made by The Committee Nationwide Reconciliation: "The largest number of conflicts and 20-ennities are created due to land disputes where over 50% of families in rural areas and 25% in cities are involved. These conflicts have brought and continue to bring tragic murders"<sup>14</sup>. One of the possibilities of being firmly attached to the soil is that throughout the history, Ingushs had been mostly living in mountain areas, which had little fertile and flat land that would serve agricultural purpose. Though, nowadays most of the Ingushs dwell in plain territories with enough land to live, the culturally inherited and deeply rooted affection for the plain land and fertile soil still dominates their mind.

### Customs and social organization

Chechen-Ingush society has always been egalitarian, unstratified and classless. Traditionally there was no formal political organization and no political or economic ranking. Clans differed in size but not in prestige. Each clan was headed by a respected elder. Clans and villages were autonomous. Only in response to extreme external threats such as (in historical times) the Russian invasion of the Caucasus did any society-wide leadership emerge; it was exclusively Russian military and always temporary. Clans are important even in modern urban life. Strict clan exogamy is universally observed. An individual bears to all members of a clan the same social relationship that he or she bears to a relative in that clan; for instance, a man shows to all female members of his mother's clan the same deference and formality that he would show to his mother's older sister. Even urban residents generally know and pass on to their children a good deal of information about their clan's and family's provenience, the location of their clan towers, and the highland village to which they trace their origin.

Traditionally, an Ingush or Chechen man is expected to know the names and birthplaces or origins of his paternal ancestors going back seven generations. Some women can also trace their ancestors in this way, and some people can trace their maternal ancestors as well. This tradition, which is not uniquely Chechen-Ingush but generally North Caucasian, means, incidentally, that there can be no genuine large-scale territorial disputes in the North Caucasus, since all parties know whose ancestors lived on what land. What is often depicted as a territorial dispute between the Ingush and the Ossetians is more properly a land grab, and both sides know whose ancestral territory the contested land is.

Ingush and Chechen ethnic identity and social structure rest on principles of respect and deference to one's elders, formal and dignified relations between clans, and courteous and formal public behavior. A man, for instance, shows great respect (marked by formal

<sup>14</sup> *Annual Analysis of the work of the committee of nationwide reconciliation*, accessed April, 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014,

<http://www.pjntm.com>

posture, measured speech, and rising or standing if the other is not seated) in the presence of elders in general and elder kin in particular, including even his older brothers or father. He does not smoke or drink in the presence of elder kin.

Kinship and clan structure are patriarchal, but women have full social and professional equality and prospects for financial independence and educational achievement equivalent to those of men. Though strongly traditional in behavior and customs, the Chechen and Ingush are sophisticated and well-educated participants in the modern world. Academics, writers, artists, and intellectuals in general are well versed in the cultures of both the European and the Islamic worlds, and the Chechen and Ingush regard both of these heritages as their own, together with indigenous Caucasian artistic and intellectual traditions.

### III. Complexity of Vendetta: The Cases of Ingushs and Albanians

Vendetta is still preserved in Russia mainly among peoples of the North Caucasus: Dagestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya and others. However killings in the name of *vendetta*, are found not only in the regions of the Russian Federation, but also the territories of CIS countries like Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tatarstan, Georgia, Abkhazia, Azerbaijan. Vendetta in Ingush language is called "pha"<sup>15</sup> and this custom of blood feud has been known in the past of Ingushs and strongly preserved up to date. Vendetta was originally a mechanism for responding to the violation of social institutions that prevented many incidents. When Islam reached the North Caucasus in XVI-XVII centuries the elders of tribes and clans agreed to add elements of Islamic theology to the existing rules of *Adat*.<sup>16</sup>

Some Balkan countries, like Albania, have also been known to have their history strongly attached to the practice of vendetta. The tribesmen of northern Albania recognized no law but the Code of *Leke Dukagjini*<sup>17</sup> – *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit*<sup>18</sup>, which is, according to some traditions, linked with the Prince Leke himself.<sup>19</sup> The code regulates a variety of subjects, including blood vengeance. Also, the Canon (in Albanian – *Kanun*) embodied

both civil and penal regulations. Even today, many Albanian highlanders regard the Canon – *Kanun*<sup>20</sup> as a supreme law of the land.<sup>21</sup>

A person in Ingush society is not considered as a completely independent element but rather as a "part" of the "whole".<sup>22</sup> In other words, if a person committed a crime all the members of his clan or tribe will be held accountable for his act. Throughout thousands of years this custom served as State Institute of regulating the relationship between the members of the community – served in preventing and punishing criminals. It helped to a certain extent to maintain public order, social justice and equality in society by preventing the spread of tyranny and anarchy.

Vendetta is a special form of self-defense among clans and tribes. It gives them feeling of not being weaker than the murderer's clan. Therefore, the clan of the victim has right to cause similar harm to the murderer or to anyone of his clan who might be equally matching with the victim in terms of social status. In other words, any adult man of the murderer's clan might be a target for vendetta. The avenging clan is not concerned whether the murder happened intentionally or accidentally or whether the victim was wealthy or poor mountaineer. Slap on the face has always been considered among Ingushs as extremely insulting therefore only killing the offender would calm the conscience of the victim. Vendetta has no time limit. There are cases in Ingush history when vendetta lasted for 100-150 years and each of the warring parties lost around 20 souls while revenging against each other. Vendetta would end only when the victim's clan takes revenge and kills the murderer or by forgiveness as a gesture of goodwill or through conciliation and receiving a certain amount as blood money.

Similar way of ending the vendetta is found in Albanian culture: there are several ways that a blood feud may end, including payment of money, agreement that the responsible party will move away, the offer of a daughter for marriage, or forgiveness without any compensation.<sup>23</sup>

In ancient time, when Ingushs used to live in war towers there was another way of termination of vendetta. If a murderer was able to get into the family house "ghala"<sup>24</sup> of the victim and hold the chain of a hearth that used to hang in the middle of "ghala". Some Ingushs are still proud of this *Adat* saying that: "*Custom of 'pha' (vendetta) paradoxically is extremely useful thing in the present North Caucasian context. That is because it makes a*

<sup>15</sup> *Kromyia mesi i Ingushetii*, accessed on 17/04/2014, [http://www.vendetta.ru/vendetta\\_011.html](http://www.vendetta.ru/vendetta_011.html)

<sup>16</sup> From Arabic: 'adat – custom, tradition.

<sup>17</sup> Gjeçovi Shijetani, *The Code of Leke Dukagjini*, trans. Leonard Fox (New York, 1989), 35.

<sup>18</sup> A. Sh.K. Gjeçov, *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit*, Shkoder, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Lisden: E.J. Brill, vol. 1, 1979), 652. "Arnavutluk".

<sup>19</sup> Edwin E. Jacques, *The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, (North Caroline & London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1995), 176.

<sup>20</sup> Kanun: is the Albanian name for the Code of Leke Dukagjini, or as they use it Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit.

<sup>21</sup> Shedu, *The influence of Islam on Albanian culture*, 395.

<sup>22</sup> Albogucheva M.S.-G., B a b i c h I.L., *Kromyia mesi sovremennoi Ingushetii*, *Etnograficheskoe obozreniye*, (Moscow: Nauka, 2010), 137.

<sup>23</sup> Albanian Means by which reconciliation groups begin working on a case, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, accessed on April 27, 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4d10f572.html>

<sup>24</sup> A tall tower, made of huge rocks which served as a house and a fortress in case of aggression from external enemy or fear of vendetta.

person to think hundred times before he uses his dagger, or pistol".<sup>25</sup> However, the consequences of ruthless vendetta in most of the cases have been tremendously disastrous for it may lead to unstoppable mutual killings until one of the warring parties ceases to exist.

#### *Vendetta and the status of state law*

It is a well-known fact that a state law is almost unable to change the mindset of people whose culture, customs and traditions – no matter how humane or inhumane they might be – dominate their lifestyle. From the time immemorial, vendetta has been part and parcel of Ingush people throughout their history. Neither the brutal state law of Czar Russia nor the severe law of Soviet Union nor the contemporary legislature of the Russian Federation has been able to eliminate this custom. In case of homicide on the basis of blood feuds the "Article 105 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation provides punishment of imprisonment for a term of 8 to 20 years with restraint of liberty for a term of one to two years, or life imprisonment or the death penalty".<sup>26</sup> Paradoxically, an avenger while being fully aware of the consequences for intentional homicide is still overwhelmed with the firm and unshakable decision to take the revenge.

Interestingly, the same description can be applied to the nature of Albanians though the Albanian legislature makes it clear how severe is the punishment for the homicide committed due to blood feud: "Article 78 of the 1995 Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania, which was amended on 24 January 2001, states the following: Premeditated homicide is punished by fifteen to twenty five years of imprisonment. Homicide committed for interest, retaliation or blood feud is punished by not less than twenty five years or life imprisonment (Albania 27 Jan. 1995). Article 83/a states that serious threat of revenge or blood feud to a person or minor [causing them] to stay isolated is punished by fine or up to three years of imprisonment".<sup>27</sup>

And yet, according to "The National Reconciliation Committee, an Albanian nonprofit organization that works to eliminate the practice of blood feuds, estimates that 20,000 people have been ensnared by blood feuds since they resurfaced after the collapse of Communism in 1991, with 9,500 people killed and nearly 1,000 children deprived of schooling because they are locked indoors".<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Krovnyaya mest u Ingushei, accessed on April 17, 2014, [http://www.vendetta.su/vendetta\\_011.html](http://www.vendetta.su/vendetta_011.html)

<sup>26</sup> Codes and laws of Russian Federation, accessed on April 26, 2014, <http://www.zakonrf.info/uk/105/>

<sup>27</sup> Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland, (2009), Albania: Blood feuds in Albania, accessed on April 27, 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/cgi>

<sup>28</sup> Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland, accessed on April 27, 2014, [http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/country/ireland\\_refugee\\_DC/albania/Children](http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/country/ireland_refugee_DC/albania/Children)

These numbers are stunning and definitely some kind of solutions must be found without delay. The worst part of it is that the process of reconciliation and peace building process was abandoned which made the situation even worse. The report says: "...despite the extraordinary results of the expedition that works with no interruptions and without the support of donors or the Albanian government, the number of killings is on the increase because of the number of conflicts gripping the Albanian society. The noticeable lack of justice, the malfunction of state institution and the abandonment of the reconciliation process has made the situation worse".<sup>29</sup>

Solutions should be found immediately and for that very precise, well-structured and a collective work must be done by the Albanian government, NGOs, religious scholars as well as by influential individuals. Perhaps government of Albania should show its firm commitment and cooperate even more with any international NGOs which have good experience in solving intertribal disputes and cases of blood feuds.

#### **IV. The Role of Socio-Cultural and Religious Factors for Peace Building Process: The Case of Ingushetia**

Since the time immemorial the local *adat* on vendetta has shown no little mercy to the offender and seldom cases of forgiveness or reconciliation for blood money. What could have been the possible reasons for the families of murdered person not to be satisfied with the criminal penalties of the then Czar Russia, and followed by the strict law of Communist Russia, and finally under the Criminal Code of state law? Why did they find satisfaction in application of at the local *adat*, i.e. taking revenge?; revenge which by its nature has always been brutal and remorseless towards anybody who would lay hand on the honor and dignity of the family.

Being as one of the Ingush community, the author sees the main reason behind this strict affiliation to the vendetta custom is that even if an offender goes under trial and serves some years in prison it still does not really cause the same pain and tragedy to the family members of the offender. In other words, it is about getting justice by making the relatives of the offender to realize how it feels like to lose someone of your family rather than being blood thirsty beasts. Even after conversion to Islam many elements of the local *adat* used to be given priority over the true and merciful rulings of Islam especially in cases of vendetta. This was the actual situation up until late 1980's.

However, several serious factors contributed a significant change in making a turning point to reduce the deeply rooted vendetta cases. One of the factors, of course, was the collapse of USSR which gave these conservative communities chances to discover more about the outside world and get exposed to variety of cultures. Another factor, undoubtedly,

<sup>29</sup> Annual Analysis of the work of the committee of nationwide reconciliation, (2012), accessed on April 18, 2014, <http://www.pajtuni.com>



was the Islamization process and penetration of the real teachings of Islam from which they had been denied until then. "More than 1,000 Ingush receive a religious education each year, either in Ingushetia or abroad."<sup>30</sup> Upon realizing the reward of God for forgiving the offender most of the people, being Muslims, showed a remarkable shift from stagnant culture to more flexible and forgiving approach in cases of vendetta. Therefore, the current statistics show that the vendetta cases presently are not more than 2% while 60 % - of intertribal conflicts are solved out of goodwill, for the sake of Allah without demand for any "blood money".

But in order to convince the victim's family to decline from revenge and forgive even for the sake of Allah is not an easy job and yet it is not impossible. On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014, one of the local websites of Ingushetia released the news on the five year work of the Conciliation Commission done from 2009. The result is overwhelming: 60 clans (tribes) declined from vendetta. This data was presented during the meeting of the head of Ingushetia, Yunus -Bek Yevkarov, with the reconciliation committee members. Head of state recommended committee members to involve in conflict resolution more and more religious scholars and leaders who have a resource impact on their relatives and those of the same clans. "You should explain to people about the reward that awaits them for forgiving the offender for the sake of Allah. We cannot afford to allow blood feud to be passed from generation to generation."<sup>31</sup>

Having the head of Ingushetia involved in reconciliation and peace building process gives extremely significant signal to ordinary people that government cares about their social and cultural problems and is trying to work in a harmony together with religious scholars, influential figures as well as leaders of different clans and tribes. Never the less, there is still a lot to be done by reconciliation committee simply because many old cases of vendetta still remain unsolved never mind the newly appearing ones.

#### *Methods of conflict resolution and peace building process*

Once the family members of the offender learn about the tragedy they take immediate steps for conflict resolution and reconciliation. They must show continuous attempts of approaching the members of the victim's family by sending the mediators i.e. the members of the reconciliation committee which consists of religious scholars, leaders of different clans and tribes and respected individuals. This may last for months, years and even decades.

<sup>30</sup> Sigheon R. Bowers, *Islam in Ingushetia and Chechnya*, 397.

<sup>31</sup> V. Ingusheti's 2009 gods 60 tepov odkazali se krevnoi msti, accessed on April 28, 2014, [http://ingusheti.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=11146:---2009-60----&catid=5:2009-01-28-06-44-03&Itemid=7](http://ingusheti.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11146:---2009-60----&catid=5:2009-01-28-06-44-03&Itemid=7) (A three minute documentary video clip will be played on one of the cases of reconciliation and peace building process).

The resolution of conflict mostly depends on two main reasons: one is to what extent elements of brutality was involved in the case of murder. If the victim was killing by accident the chances of reconciliation are very high in contrast to the situation where a victim was intentionally and brutally murdered. Second is to what extent neighbors and relatives will appreciate or criticize acceptance of reconciliation and forgiveness of the offender. In other words, sometimes the family of the victim would really love to end the conflict and openly declare that they forgive the offender but the fear of the fact that people might perceive it as a sign of weakness they continue to stay firm with their right for vendetta. Yes, there are some categories of people who will never forgive the blood, although they will not take revenge as well. Their purpose in this case is to make the relatives of the offender to live in constant fear. This is also a kind of revenge for some people.

The committee consists of representatives from all localities of Ingushetia. Members of the Conciliation Commission conduct the difficult and painstaking work over the years, until they achieve a positive result. A significant portion of these people have many years of experience, and so they are attracted to working with blood feud when they want to get a positive result. Every family in situations of blood feuds, has the right to choose who they trust in the process of reconciliation. The main role of conciliation commissions is of course nothing more but to be helpful in peace building process. They, in no way, push on the victim's family to accept the reconciliation deal. It should be noted that none of the paternal relatives of the offender can be included in the reconciliation committee. That is because they represent the direct family tree of the offender.

However, relatives of the maternal side might be included among the committee because, though they are relatives to with the offender, but they come from different family tree. This proves the fact that Ingushs never arrange marriage ties with anyone from their own paternal side even if they are not closely related to each other. That is because any female from paternal side is considered as your own sister.

The offender's family should learn about the intentions of the injured party whether they will allow the relatives of the offender to attend the funeral. This might be possible in accidental cases only but not in intentional offense. And in case if the victim's family do not hold any enmity against the offender then the next day, early in the morning a huge delegation representing the offender's side will attend the funeral ceremony bringing along a sacrificial animal (cow or bull). The act of sacrificing the animal evinces the utmost respect for the victim's family and admission of guilt.

#### **V. Conclusion**

This humble research suggests that Ingush and Albanian societies share many similarities in culture, customs and traditions. The similarities were found in issues like vendetta, family honor and affiliation for the father's land and other. It was stated that

throughout the history no state law was able to eliminate completely custom of vendetta neither in Ingush nor Albanian societies. It can be concluded that the more these societies have access to the outside world and a better standards of living the more there is a possibility of bringing the change into these extremely conservative societies. These societies should realize that their deeply rooted customs cause, in many cases, more damage than benefit. Regarding Ingush society, we found that after collapse of USSR and correct understanding of Islam people showed willingness to end intertribal conflicts some of which lasted from generation to generation. For a believer, knowing that fact that God will reward him for forgiving the offender makes it easier for him to end the conflict. It is extremely important to realize that hatred begets hatred, killings lead to more killings and therefore only by forgiving each other and giving a chance for peace building process there will be a significant development of that community in particular and of that country in general. We have seen a good example of peace building process in which both the conciliation committee and the head of Ingushetia together have done a remarkable and God pleasing job to reduce the number vendetta cases. Therefore, we strongly encourage the Albanian government to resume the conciliation and peace building process among thousands of families who desperately wait for anyone to help them.

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