



Bombed-out building in the capital city of Grozny, Chechnya, 2007



Children making the most of their youth surrounded by rubble, Grozny, 2007



Russian tanks patrolling in the Caucasus, 2007



The International Student Organization of Lewiston-Auburn (ISOLA) is made up of academic and community members in the State of Maine, USA. We seek to promote solidarity and communication between the world's people. In the development of pluralistic societies, we see great beauty and promise for the future. ISOLA seeks to build bridges between local, regional, and international communities through co-operative work. One of our efforts is the American-Caucasus Solidarity Group.

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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE
Lewiston-Auburn College

American-Caucasus Solidarity Group



*Tell the whole world
which is sacrificing Chechnya
that for the world
Chechnya is burning...
The world is revealed in
Chechnya. We learn the truth
about the Russians' attitude
toward the Chechens, the
Russians attitude to each other,
and the Chechens attitude to
each other. What's more, the rest
of the world reveals its true
colors in its silence about the
war.*

—Apti Bisultanov
Chechen poet

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The Caucasus

The Caucasus Mountains, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, are a unique crossroads between Europe and Asia.



Some of the earliest human remains have been found in the Caucasus. Over 30 million people who speak 40 different languages inhabit the region's valleys and plains. Ancient and modern civilizations have tried to claim this area: Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Byzantines, Ottomans, and Russians. Today several regions in the Caucasus form part of the Russian Federation and Turkey, while others are independent nations, such as Armenia and Georgia. However, the Caucasus has experienced a devastating series of tragedies over the last two decades, from civil war and displacement to ethnic discrimination.



While the rugged Caucasus Mountains have traditionally served as a sanctuary to shelter people from attacks in the past, such protection does not exist in this age of modern warfare.

Who We Are

We are citizens in the United States and Canada: parents, children, business people, union members, farmers, artisans, laborers, homemakers, students, teachers, and members of civic organizations. Our American and Caucasus Solidarity Group (ACSG) has joined an active effort to help people in the Caucasus re-establish their families in a more stable existence. We are sending winter clothing, as well as helping to establish a brick factory for rebuilding houses and trade. We also are sending books to the region's bombed-out public libraries, schools, and universities.



Grozny, Chechnya, 2007

In the fall of 2006 teachers and students at the University of Southern Maine welcomed European academics who spoke on "Chechnya: Russia's Iraq." On International Human Rights Day (December 9) the Maine activists organized a teach-in on the Chechen War and sent boxes of winter clothing to Chechen refugees. In spring 2007 writers in northern New England collected books of poetry, held a reading at Gulf of Maine Books, and shipped the literature to libraries in Nazran, Ingushetia. Other projects are underway.

What You Can Do

There is something important that you can do right away. You can make up a small box of warm down or fiberfill clothing and blankets, and send them to the following address:

Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Forced Refugees, 386103, Russia, Republic of Ingushetia, Nazran, ulitsa Mutaliev, 24.

Internet: www.mhg-sk.narod.ru

Donations for the Committee in the Caucasus are also needed. Checks can be made out to ISOLA/University of Southern Maine and can be deducted as a tax-free donation. Thank you for all you can do to help.



Clothing from Maine being distributed in the Caucasus, 2007

You may contact us through one of our project coordinators in North America: Dr. Barry Rodrigue, University of Southern Maine, 51 Westminster Street, Lewiston, Maine 04240 (USA). He can answer questions, connect you with other coordinators, and put you on our mailing list for more information (e-mail addresses will be helpful).