

# *Ruthless fanaticism*

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## **Attacks on Dagestan, Russia**

By Guillermo Alvarado

At least 20 dead and dozens injured are the result of a series of violent attacks against Christian churches, synagogues and a police checkpoint in the Russian republic of Dagestan, located in the North Caucasus, indicated the Anti-Terrorism Investigative Committee of that nation.

Since the 1990s, this area has been subject to strong tensions between different ethnic groups and extremist religious groups, which on many occasions triggered unfortunate events where innocent people lost their lives.

This is one of the 24 republics that make up the Russian Federation, which emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and which has an area of 50 thousand square kilometers and its population is 3.2 million, of which 96 percent They practice the Muslim religion.

According to official data, about 30 ethnic groups live there, to the extent that the country has 15 official languages, including Russian, and borders Chechnya, whose last two wars significantly influenced

internal insecurity, although the presence of drug trafficking gangs and organized crime.

This weekend's attacks occurred in the cities of Makhachkala and Derbent and in the latter the terrorists beheaded a 66-year-old Orthodox priest, in addition to causing damage to two churches.

At the time of the attack, the Russian Orthodox were celebrating the religious holiday of Pentecost, which reminded us of another similar event that occurred last February during Maslenitsa, equivalent to the Western carnival.

For his part, the representative of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, Boruch Gorin, reported that the Derbent synagogue and the Jewish temple of Makhachkala were set on fire by unknown assailants, who also attacked a police checkpoint with bullets.

The president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, remains constantly informed about the situation and the course of the investigations that, in principle, point to some foreign group as responsible, without mentioning any specifically for now.

The leader of the Dagestan government, Sergei Melikov, sent a message through social networks to reassure the population.

“Unknown people tried to destabilize society,” he said, adding that the Dagestanis will not give them the pleasure of panic. In any case, there is concern about the increase in these types of events in particularly volatile areas of an increasingly dangerous and unstable planet.

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