

Bio Terror Bible

EXPOSING THE COMING BIO-TERROR PANDEMIC

BIOTERRORBIBLE.COM: Despite the number of high-profile bio-terror plots and patsies, the historical record indicates that 99% of all bio-terror plots, attacks, “tests”, “accidents” and drills are conducted by the government who has the means, the motive and the opportunity.

Title: Moscow Theater Hostage Crisis

Date: 2012

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Abstract: The Moscow theater hostage crisis, also known as the 2002 [Nord-Ost](#) siege, was the seizure of the crowded Dubrovka Theater on 23 October 2002 by some 40 to 50 armed [Chechens](#) who claimed allegiance to the [Islamist militant separatist movement in Chechnya](#). They took 850 hostages and demanded the withdrawal of [Russian](#) forces from [Chechnya](#) and an end to the [Second Chechen War](#). The siege was officially led by [Movsar Barayev](#). After a two-and-a-half day siege, Russian [Spetsnaz](#) forces pumped an [unknown chemical agent](#) (thought to be fentanyl, or [3-methylfentanyl](#)), into the building's [ventilation](#) system and raided it.

39 of the attackers were killed by Russian forces, along with at least 129 of the hostages (including nine foreigners). All but a few of the hostages who died during the siege were killed by the toxic substance pumped into the theater to subdue the militants. The use of the gas was widely condemned as heavy handed, but Moscow insisted it had little room for manoeuvre — faced with the prospect of 50 heavily armed rebels prepared to kill themselves and their hostages. Physicians in Moscow condemned the refusal to disclose the identity of the gas that prevented them from saving more lives. However, some reports said the drug [naloxone](#) was successfully used to save some hostages. Roughly 170 people died in all.

Initial Siege

The hostages were seized on October 23 at the House of Culture (DK) of State Ball-Bearing Plant Number 1 in the [Dubrovka](#) area of Moscow about four kilometres south-east of the [Moscow Kremlin](#). During Act II of a sold-out performance of [Nord-Ost](#) a little after 9:00 PM, some 40-50 heavily armed and masked men and women drove in a bus to the theater and entered the main hall firing [assault rifles](#) in the air.

The black-and camouflage-clad [Chechens](#) took approximately 850-900 people hostage, including members of the audience and performers, among them an [MVD](#) general. The reaction of spectators inside the theater to the news that the theater was under terrorist attack was not uniform: some people remained calm, some reacted hysterically, while others fainted. Some performers who had been resting backstage escaped through an open window and called police; in all, some 90 people managed to flee the building or hide.

The militant leader told the hostages that the attackers (who identified themselves as a [suicide squad](#) from "the 29th Division") had no grudge against foreign nationals (about 75 in number from 14 countries, including [Australia](#), [Germany](#), [Netherlands](#), [Ukraine](#), [United Kingdom](#) and the [United States](#)) and promised to release anyone who showed a foreign [passport](#). The Russian [negotiators](#), however, refused to accept this offer and instead insisted that everybody be released, without any distinction between foreigners and Russians.

Demands

The gunmen were led by Movsar Barayev, nephew of slain Chechen rebel [militia](#) commander [Arbi Barayev](#), and threatened to kill the hostages unless Russian forces were immediately and

unconditionally withdrawn from Chechnya. They said the [deadline](#) was one week, after which they would start killing the hostages.

A [videotaped](#) statement was acquired by the media in which the gunmen declared their willingness to die for their cause. The statement contained the following text:

"Every nation has the right to their fate. Russia has taken away this right from the Chechens and today we want to reclaim these rights, which Allah has given us, in the same way he has given it to other nations. Allah has given us the right of freedom and the right to choose our destiny. And the Russian occupiers have flooded our land with our children's blood. And we have longed for a just solution. People are unaware of the innocent who are dying in Chechnya: the sheikhs, the women, the children and the weak ones. And therefore, we have chosen this approach. This approach is for the freedom of the Chechen people and there is no difference in where we die, and therefore we have decided to die here, in Moscow. And we will take with us the lives of hundreds of sinners. If we die, others will come and follow us—our brothers and sisters who are willing to sacrifice their lives, in Allah's way, to liberate their nation. Our nationalists have died but people have said that they, the nationalists, are terrorists and criminals. But the truth is Russia is the true criminal."

According to the Kremlin's aide [Sergei Yastrzhembsky](#), "when they were told that the withdrawal of troops was unrealistic within the short period, that it was a very long process, the terrorists put forward the demand to withdraw Russian troops from anywhere in the Republic of Chechnya without specifying which area it was". The hostage-takers demanded termination of the use of [artillery](#) and [air forces](#) in Chechnya starting the next day (Russian forces ceased using heavy weapons until September 28), a halt to the notorious [zachistka](#) ("mopping-up") operations, and that [President of Russia Vladimir Putin](#) should publicly declare that he was striving to stop the war in Chechnya. By the time of the hostage-taking, the conflict in the embattled republic was killing an average of three federal troops daily.

Cell phone conversations between the hostages trapped in the building and their family members revealed that the hostage-takers had [grenades](#), [mines](#) and [improvised explosive devices](#) strapped to their bodies, and had deployed more explosives throughout the theater. A majority of these explosives (including all those worn by the female fighters) were later found to be [military dummies](#). The remaining ones had no detonators or the batteries were taken out. Russian negotiators and special forces were unable to be certain at the time, but prior to the siege while the explosives were being prepared, an FSB agent who had infiltrated the Chechen Jihadist shipping network had sabotaged many of the devices with drained batteries and insufficient accelerator or booster charges for the main charges to detonate.^{[[citation needed](#)]} The militants used Arabic names among themselves, and the female terrorists wore Arab-style [burqa](#) clothes which are highly unusual in the [North Caucasus](#) region.

A spokesman for the Chechen separatist leadership said he had no information about who the attackers were and condemned attacks on civilians. The pro-Moscow Islamic leader of Chechnya also condemned the attack.

All hostages were kept in the [auditorium](#) and the [orchestra](#) pit was used as a [lavatory](#). The situation in the hall was nervous and it frequently changed depending on the mood of the hostage-takers, who were following reports in the [mass media](#). Any kind of [misinformation](#) caused hopelessness among the hostages and new aggression among their captors, who would threaten to shoot hostages and blow up the building; however, no major disasters took place during the siege. The gunmen had let members of the audience make phone calls. One hostage used her mobile phone to plead with authorities not to storm the auditorium, as truckloads of police and soldiers accompanied by [armored vehicles](#) surrounded the building.

First Night - 23 October

The attackers released some 150 to 200 people, including children, [pregnant](#) women, [Muslims](#), some foreign-born theater-goers and people requiring health treatment in the hours after they invaded. Two women managed to escape (one of them was injured during the escape). The terrorists said they were ready to kill 10 hostages for any of their number killed if the security forces intervened.

Olga Romanova

Unprovoked, at 1:30am, a young woman, Olga Romanova (26), entered the theatre, crossing the police cordon by herself. She entered the theatre and began urging the hostages to stand up to their captors. There was considerable confusion in the auditorium. The guerrillas believed she was a [Federal Security Service](#) (FSB) agent and she was shot and killed several seconds later. Olga's body was later removed from the building by a Russian medical team, incorrectly reported by the Moscow police as the body of the first hostage who was killed while trying to escape. Romanova was described as 'strong-willed', and lived near the theatre. It is unknown how she crossed the police lines.

Day Two - 24 October

The Russian government offered the hostage-takers the opportunity to leave for any third country. The suborned hostages made an appeal, possibly under orders or duress, to Putin to cease hostilities in Chechnya and asked him to refrain from assaulting the building. Because of the crisis, Putin canceled an overseas trip that would have included meetings with [U.S. President George W. Bush](#) and other world leaders.

Well-known public and political figures such as [Aslambek Aslakhonov](#), [Irina Khakamada](#), [Ruslan Khasbulatov](#), [Iosif Kobzon](#), [Boris Nemtsov](#) and [Grigory Yavlinsky](#)^[24] took part in negotiations with the hostage-takers. Ex-President of the [Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev](#) also announced his willingness to act as an intermediary in the course of negotiations. Militants also demanded that representatives of the [International Red Cross](#) and [Médecins Sans Frontières](#) come to the theater to lead negotiations. FSB [Colonel](#) Konstantin Vasilyev attempted to enter the patio of the TC, but was shot at while approaching the building and forced to retreat.

According to the FSB, 39 hostages were set free by the terrorists on 24 October 2002, but they repeated via one of the hostages an earlier threat to start shooting their captives if Russia failed to take their demands seriously. Negotiations on the release of non-Russian nationals were conducted by various [embassies](#) and the Chechens promised to release all foreign hostages. The kidnappers claimed they were ready to release 50 Russian hostages if [Akhmad Kadyrov](#), head of Chechnya's pro-Moscow administration, would come to the theater, but Kadyrov did not respond, and the release did not take place.

A hot water pipe had burst overnight and was flooding the ground floor. The hostage-takers called the flooding a "[provocation](#)" and no agreement had been reached on having the pipe repaired, the FSB spokesman said. It later turned out that the [sewer system](#) was utilized by the Russian special forces for listening purposes.

Day Three - 25 October

Over the course of the next day, the following people took part in negotiations with the militants: journalists [Anna Politkovskaya](#),^[26] [Sergei Govorukhin](#) and [Mark Franchetti](#) and such public figures as [Yevgeny Primakov](#), [Ruslan Aushev](#) and again Aslambek Aslakhonov. The terrorists demanded negotiation with an official representative of Vladimir Putin. Relatives of the hostages staged anti-war demonstrations outside the theater and in central Moscow.

The guerrillas agreed to release 75 foreign citizens in the presence of diplomatic representatives of their states. Russian authorities reportedly insisted that the hostages not be separated into foreign and Russian categories. 15 Russian citizens were released, including eight children (aged 7 to 13). After a meeting with Putin, the FSB head [Nikolai Patrushev](#) offered to spare the lives of the Chechens if they released the remaining hostages unharmed.

A group of Russian doctors including Dr. [Leonid Roshal](#), head of the Medical Centre for Catastrophes, entered the theater to bring medicine for the hostages and said the terrorists were not beating or threatening their captives. He said most of the hostages were calm and that only "two or three" of the hostages were hysterical. Some hot food, warm clothes and medicine had also been taken in by the Red Cross.

[NTV](#) channel journalists recorded an interview with Movsar Barayev, in which he sent a message to the Russian government:

We have nothing to lose. We have already covered 2,000 kilometres by coming here. There is no way back... We have come to die. Our motto is freedom and [paradise](#). We already have freedom as we've come to Moscow. Now we want to be in paradise.

He also said the group had come to Moscow not to kill the hostages or to fight with Russia's elite troops, as they had had enough fighting in Chechnya over the years: "We came here with a specific aim — to put an end to the war and that is it."

At 9:55 p.m., four hostages (citizens of [Azerbaijan](#)) were released, bringing the total number of hostages that were set free on this day to 19.

Gennady Vlach

After dusk, a man identified as Gennady Vlach ran across the square and managed to gain entry into the theater. He said that his son was among the hostages, but his son did not seem to be present and the man was led away and shot by the Chechens. There is considerable confusion surrounding this incident, and in addition, Vlach's body was cremated before it was identified.

Denis Gribkov

Around midnight, a gunfire incident took place as Denis Gribkov, a 30 year-old male hostage, ran over the backs of theater seats toward the female insurgents who were sitting next to a large improvised explosive device. A male hostage-taker shot at him and missed, but stray bullets hit and severely wounded Tamara Starkova and fatally wounded Pavel Zakharov, who were evacuated from the building soon after. Gribkov was removed from the auditorium and later found dead from gunshot wounds.

Morning of 26 October

During the night, [Akhmed Zakayev](#), a Chechen envoy and associate of the separatist President [Aslan Maskhadov](#), appealed to the extremists and asked them to "refrain from rash steps". The hostage takers told the BBC that a special representative of President Putin planned to come to the theater for talks the next day. Two members of the [Spetsnaz Alpha Group](#) moving around in the [no-man's land](#) were seriously wounded by a grenade fired from the building by the terrorists, which was blamed by the Moscow police chief [Vladimir Pronin](#) on the media [news leak](#).

According to an officer in the Russian special forces cited by [The Guardian](#), the leak was controlled: "We leaked the information that the storming would take place at three in the morning. The [Chechen](#) fighters were on their guard. They began shooting, but there was no raid. Then there was the natural reaction — a relaxation. And at 5 a.m. we stormed the place."

Special Forces Raid

Early Saturday morning, 26 October, forces from Russia's [Spetsnaz](#) (Special Forces, literally "special purpose") from the FSB ([Alpha Group](#) and [Vympel](#)), with the assistance of the [Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs](#) (MVD) [SOBR](#) unit, surrounded and stormed the theater, first through the [gay club](#) Central Station that had opened a month prior in the underground level of the building; all were heavily armed and masked. According to the November 2002 [Kommersant](#) report, the gay club housed the commandos' and special services' "headquarters" and had been equipped with "its own ventilation system (the club's special pride)".

Deputy [Interior Minister Vladimir Vasilyev](#) stated that the raid was prompted by a panic among the captives due to the execution of two female hostages. The raid was planned shortly after the hostages were initially seized and the shooting cited as a proximate cause had occurred about three hours before the operation began.

Chemical Attack

Main article: [Moscow hostage crisis chemical agent](#)

Early in the morning before dawn, at around 5:00 a.m. Moscow time, the [searchlights](#) that had been illuminating the main entrance to the theater went out.

Inside, although many hostages at first took the gas to be smoke from a fire, it soon became apparent to gunmen and hostages alike that a mysterious gas had been pumped into the building. Different

reports said it came either through the specially-created hole in the wall, that it was pumped through the theater's ventilation system, or that it emerged from beneath the stage. It is thought that the security services pumped an [aerosol anaesthetic](#), later conjectured to be weaponized [fentanyl](#), into the theater through the [air conditioning](#) system. The discovery caused panic in the auditorium. Hostage Anna Andrianova, a correspondent for [Moskovskaya Pravda](#), called [Echo of Moscow](#) radio studio and told on-air in a [live broadcast](#) interview that the government forces had begun an operation by pumping gas into the hall:

It seems to us that the Russians have started something. Please, give us a chance. If you can do anything, please do! ... I don't know which gas it is. But I see [the Chechens'] reactions. They don't want our deaths, and our officials want none of us to leave alive! I don't know. We see it, we feel it, we are breathing through our clothes. ... It began from outside. That's what our government has decided — that no one should leave from here alive."

Assault

The Chechens, some of whom were equipped with [gas masks](#), responded with firing blindly at the Russian positions outside. After thirty minutes, when the gas had taken effect, a physical assault on the building commenced. The combined forces entered through numerous building openings, including the roof, the basement, and finally the front door.

When the shooting began, the terrorists told their hostages to lean forward in the theater seats and cover their heads behind the seats. Hostages reported that some people in the audience fell asleep, and some of the gunmen put on [respirators](#). As the terrorists and hostages alike began to fall unconscious, several of the female terrorists made a dash for the balcony but passed out before they reached the stairs. They were later found shot dead. Two of the [Alpha Group](#) assaulters were also overcome by the gas, while the [SOBR](#) men were "floored". Even a vice-[mayor](#) of Moscow had to be treated for gas poisoning.

After nearly one and a half hours of sporadic gun battles, the Russian special forces blew open the doors to the main hall and poured into the auditorium. In a fierce firefight, the federals gunned down the guerrillas, both those still awake and those who had succumbed to the gas.

According to the Russian government, fighting between the troops and the still-conscious Chechen fighters continued in other parts of the building for another 30 minutes to one hour. Initial reports stated that three terrorists were captured alive (the [BBC](#) reported that a "handful of surviving fighters were led away in [handcuffs](#)") and two of them managed to escape. Later, the government claimed that all hostage-takers had been killed in the storming.

Because the real action was invisible to the public, the operation was immediately (even as the rescue action was going on) re-enacted in the same building in order to be shown on Russian television. Alpha team troops said that "this is our first successful operation for years". [Moskovskij Komsomolets](#) cited a Russian special forces operative saying that "if it were a usual storming, we'd have had 150 casualties among our men, added to the hostages."

Evacuation

At 7:00 a.m., rescuers began carrying the bodies of hostages out of the building. Bodies were laid in rows on the [foyer](#) and the pavement at the main entrance to the TC, unprotected from falling rain and snow. None of the bodies witnessed by The Guardian correspondent had bullet wounds or showed signs of bleeding, but "their faces were waxy, white and drawn, their eyes open and blank." Shortly, the entire space was filled with bodies of the dead and those unconscious from the gas but still alive.

Few [ambulances](#) were standing by and ordinary city buses were brought in. Medical workers were expecting to treat victims of explosions and gunfire but not a secret chemical agent. The drug [naloxone](#) counteracts the chemical agent's effects, but would have to have been administered by rescue workers immediately. Some reports said the drug was used to save some hostages.

The bodies of dead hostages were stowed in two buses which were parked at the TC. Nevertheless, initial reports said nothing about casualties among the hostages. The crisis HQ representatives went to the college hall, where relatives of the hostages had been waiting, and told them that allegedly there were no fatalities among the hostages. The first official report of fatalities among the hostages

came at about 9:00 a.m. (despite the death of five children which had been already reported by medical personnel, the official statement claimed there were no children among the dead).

At 1:00 p.m., Vasilyev announced at a press conference a "definitive" death toll of 67 hostages, who he said were killed by Chechens, but again said no children nor foreigners were among those killed. Armed guards were posted at the hospitals where victims were taken and doctors were ordered not to release any of the theater [patients](#) in case militants had concealed themselves among the hostages. The survivors were cut off from any communication with the outside world and their relatives were not allowed inside the hospitals.[\[citation needed\]](#)

The hostages' family members panicked as the government refused to release any information about which hospitals their loved ones had been taken to, or even whether their relatives were among the dead. The official number of the dead rose to 90, including 25 children, while it was still claimed that the final attack was provoked by the terrorists executing their captives. Later the same day, the official death toll among hostages had risen to at least 118 and the officials had not specified exactly what killed them. By 28 October, of the 646 former hostages who remained hospitalized, 150 were still in [intensive care](#) and 45 were in critical condition.

Seventy-three hostages (including six minors) were rendered no medical aid. There were several Chechens among the hostages and it is believed that some of them were not treated because of their Chechen names. In addition, money and other valuables belonging to the victims vanished; official reports stated that the valuables were stolen by an FSB officer who was later killed in a car crash. The Russian authorities initially maintained that none of the deaths among the hostages occurred through poisoning. They spoke of health problems that were exacerbated by the three day ordeal with very little food or water, or indeed, medical attention. The office of the Kremlin's human rights commissioner [Sergei Mironov](#) said: "Even if it is proven that some people died from the gas, it should not change the public attitude. Storming the building was the only way to handle that situation, and the casualties were minimal."

Casualties

At least 33 rebels and 129 hostages died during the raid or in the following days. Doctor Andrei Seltsovsky, Moscow's health committee chairman, announced that all but one of the hostages killed in the raid had died of the effects of the unknown gas rather than from gunshot wounds. The cause of death listed for all hostages was declared to be "terrorism", claiming they died from [heart attacks](#) or other physical ailments. Among the fatalities, 17 were Nord-Ost cast members, including two child actors. Of the foreign nationals, three were from Ukraine, one was American, and the others were citizens of [Austria](#), [Armenia](#), Belarus, Kazakhstan and the [Netherlands](#). About 700 surviving hostages were poisoned by gas, and some of them received injuries leading to [disabilities](#) of the second and third class (by the Russian/ex-Soviet disability classification system; indicate medium- and maximum-severity and debilitation). Several Russian special forces operatives were also poisoned by the gas during the operation. According to court testimony from Prof. A. Vorobiev, Director of the Russian Academic Germology Center, most, if not all, of the deaths were caused by suffocation when hostages collapsed on chairs with heads falling back or were transported and left lying on their backs by rescue workers; in such a position, tongue prolapse causes blockage of breathing venues. Thus, some of the casualties can be attributed to accident, but at least some to unprofessional rescue efforts.[\[citation needed\]](#) The terrorists were reportedly all shot to death while unconscious by the police during the first wave of assault on the building, which was evidenced by gunshot wounds in their heads, seen in initial unedited footage of the crisis.[\[citation needed\]](#)

Some estimates have put the civilian death toll at more than 200, with 204 names on one list. Some former hostages and relatives of the victims claim that the [death toll](#) from the chemical agent is being kept secret.

Responsibility

The Chechen radical militant groups the [Special Purpose Islamic Regiment](#) (SPIR), the [International Islamic Peacekeeping Brigade](#) (IIPB) and the [Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs](#) took part in the operation. In 2003, the [United States](#) designated the three groups as terrorist organizations, describing them as violent, responsible for numerous acts of terrorism and with links to the [al-Qaeda](#) network. The same U.S. statement also reaffirmed [Washington](#)'s support for a political settlement to the Chechen conflict and urged Russia to pursue

such a solution.

Military commander [Shamil Basayev](#) posted a statement on his website claiming ultimate responsibility for the incident, resigning all official positions within the Chechen government and promising new attacks. He also apologized to Chechnya's elected President and separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov for not informing him of the planned raid and asked him for forgiveness. Basayev defended the hostage-taking for giving "all Russians a first-hand insight into all the charms of the war unleashed by Russia and take it back to where it originated from" and said that his next "main goal will be destroying the enemy and exacting maximum damage" and "the next time, those who come won't make any demands, won't take hostages." A series of suicide bombings aimed at civilian targets in Russia followed in 2003 and 2004.

The Russian government claimed that [wiretapped](#) phone conversations prove that Maskhadov knew of the plans in advance, which he denied. Aslan Maskhadov and his representatives in the West condemned the attack which they said had nothing to do with official policy. Maskhadov said he felt responsible for those "who resorted to self-sacrifice in despair", but also said the "barbaric and inhumane policies" of the Russian leadership were ultimately to blame and criticised the storming of the theatre. He offered to start unconditional peace talks with the Russian government to find a political solution to the conflict in Chechnya.

While the siege was seen as a [public relations](#) disaster for Maskhadov, his more radical Islamic field commanders have correspondingly benefited. Some commentators have suggested that [Movladi Udugov](#) was in charge from behind the scenes. Russian military expert [Pavel Felgenhauer](#) has suggested that the aim of the extremist leaders seemed to have been to provoke the Russian government forces "to kill ethnic Russians in Moscow on a large scale", which happened. According to the report by Russian investigators, [Zura Barayeva](#), the widow of Arbi Barayev, led the female members of the group, while a man known as Yasir, identified by his documents as Idris Alkhazurov, was said to be the group's "ideologist" believed to be trained in [Saudi Arabia](#). Russian officials said Chechen militants received financing from groups based in [Turkey](#) and that they intercepted telephone calls from the captors to unidentified embassies in Moscow, as well as to Turkey and unidentified [Arab states](#). There was also one foreign (Arab) fighter among the Chechens.

Aftermath

After the raid, Moscow Mayor [Yuri Luzhkov](#) said that "the operation was carried out brilliantly by special forces"; he claimed he had wanted a negotiated end to the crisis, but the final attack was made necessary by the reported killing of hostages. The Russian presidential special envoy for [human rights](#) in Chechnya, [Abdul-Khakim Sultygov](#), said the bloody outcome was "a good lesson to the terrorists and their accomplices."

Deputy Interior Minister Vasilyev launched a Moscow-wide operation to catch anyone who may have helped the militants, while his boss, Interior Minister [Boris Gryzlov](#), urged people to be [vigilant](#) and to report anyone acting suspiciously to police. On 29 October, Vasilyev said he only had the authority to state that special chemical agents had been used and that some 30 suspected militants and their collaborators, including several civil servants and security officers, had been arrested around the theater and in other parts of the city in what Gryzlov called an "unprecedented operation" to identify what he described as a vast terrorist network in Moscow and the surrounding region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin defended the scale and violence of the assault in a televised address later on the morning of 26 October, stating that the government had "achieved the near impossible, saving hundreds, hundreds of people" and that the rescue "proved it is impossible to bring Russia to its knees". Putin thanked the special forces as well as the Russian citizens for their "bravery" and the [international community](#) for the support given against the "common enemy". He also asked forgiveness for not being able to save more of the hostages, and declared Monday a [national day of mourning](#) for those who died. He vowed to continue fighting "[international terrorism](#)".

On 29 October, Putin released another televised statement, saying: "Russia will respond with measures that are adequate to the threat to the Russian Federation, striking on all the places where the terrorists themselves, the organizers of these crimes and their ideological and financial inspirers are. I stress, wherever they may be located." It was commonly assumed Putin was threatening the former Soviet Republic of [Georgia](#). Putin's comments came as British [Prime Minister Tony Blair](#)

phoned him to congratulate him on the ending of the siege.

President Putin was unhappy with the coverage of the hostage crisis by [NTV](#), the last nationwide TV channel effectively independent of the government. In January 2003 the management of NTV was replaced, resulting in a profound effect on its editorial policy.

Long-Term Consequences

The attacks prompted Putin's government to tighten Russia's grip on Chechnya. On 28 October, two days after the crisis, he announced that unspecified "measures adequate to the threat" would henceforth be taken in response to terrorist activity, with reports of 30 fighters killed near the Chechen capital [Grozny](#). The [Russian Ministry of Defence](#) canceled plans to reduce the 80,000 troop presence in the tiny breakaway republic.

In early November, [Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov](#) announced Russian troops had launched large-scale operations against separatists throughout Chechnya. The actions of the military caused a new wave of [refugees](#), according to the pro-Moscow Chechen official and the hostage crisis negotiator Aslanbek Aslakhonov.

On 29 May 2008, the [European Court of Human Rights](#) (ECHR) unanimously condemned Russia for enforced disappearances in five cases from Chechnya, including the disappearance of two young women in [Ulus-Kert](#) (the prosecutor's office initially stated to media that Aminat Dugayeva and Kurbika Zinabdiyeva had been arrested on suspicion of involvement with the Moscow siege).

President Maskhadov's unconditional offer for peace talks with Russia was dismissed, as Russian [Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov](#) compared such calls with the suggestion that Europe should conduct such talks with the former al-Qaeda leader [Osama bin Laden](#). Russia also accused Akhmed Zakayev of involvement in the attack. When he visited [Denmark](#) for a peace congress in October 2002 (the [World Chechen Congress](#) event in [Copenhagen](#)), the Russians demanded his arrest and [extradition](#); Zakayev was held for over a month, but was released after Danish authorities stated they were not convinced that sufficient evidence had been provided. The Kremlin also accused the Danish authorities of "solidarity with terrorists" by allowing the meeting of about 100 Chechens, Russian human rights activists and lawmakers from Russia and other European countries to gather and discuss ways to end the fighting.

In early November, the Russian [Duma](#) approved a broad array of anti-terrorism [legislation](#) ranging from far-reaching restrictions on media coverage of terrorism-related incidents to secret burials for slain terrorists (one lawmaker proposed wrapping terrorists' corpses in pigskin and another suggested "carting them around the city with their legs dangling"). The new media law severely restricted the media's reporting of anti-terrorist operations, banning publication or broadcast of "any statement that hinders an operation to break such a siege, or attempts to justify the aims of the hostage-takers". These new policies prompted renewed fears in Russia that Putin was systematically taking control of all Russian media.^[80] [Sergei Yushenkov](#), whose [Liberal Russia](#) party voted against the change, was quoted by [Reuters](#) as saying: "On a wave of emotion, we have in fact legitimised [censorship](#) and practically banned [criticism](#) of the authorities in [emergency](#) situations." Coverage of Chechnya had already been severely restricted, needing the cooperation of both the Russian military and the Moscow-backed Chechen administration (see [Russian government censorship of Chechnya coverage](#)). A law by which corpses of people convicted or accused of terrorism would not be released to their families, but disposed of in secret was approved, applying to the bodies of the militants killed in the Moscow crisis, and later applying even to President Maskhadov, who was killed in 2005.

In 2003, [Human Rights Watch](#) reported Chechens in Moscow were subjected to increased police [harassment](#) after the hostage crisis. Moscow's Chechens swelled in numbers from about 20,000 in the Soviet period to an estimated 80,000 in 2002.

Many in the Russian press and in the international media warned that the death of so many hostages in the special forces' rescue operation would severely damage President Putin's popularity. However, shortly after the siege had ended, the Russian president was enjoying record public approval ratings—in December 2002, 83% of Russians reportedly declared themselves satisfied with Putin's rule and his handling of the siege.

Investigation

The official investigation that the Moscow City Prosecutor's Office has been carrying out for three and a half years failed to provide positive information on the gas agent that killed hostages, possible antidote to that agent, the number of hostages released by the operation, the number of militants who had seized the theater (hostages claimed that they saw more than 50 militants, whereas only 40 hostage takers were in the building according to the official version), and the names of officials who had made the decision about the assault. On 1 June 2007, news came that the official investigation had been suspended. The reason provided was that the "culprit had not been located".

The same month, Tatiana Karpova, co-chair of the [Nord-Ost Organization](#) of former hostages and families of the dead, demanded a new criminal investigation. She claimed the authorities failed to meet their obligations related to right to life. She claimed to have proof that "69 of the injured were given no medical care" and that "80 percent of the surviving hostages are potential future invalids, including [possible] future (occurrence of) [cancers](#), (and there is a possibility that) women who were subjected to the gas attack (could) give birth to [defective](#) babies". In July 2007, relatives of those who died in the hostage-taking urged the Office of the [Prosecutor General of Russia](#) to investigate whether senior officials were responsible for the deaths.

Claims of FSB Involvement

The Duma refused to consider a proposal by the [liberal democratic Union of Right Forces](#) party to form an investigative commission charged with probing the government's actions in the theater siege.

An independent investigation of the event was undertaken by Russian politicians Sergei Yushenkov, [Sergei Kovalev](#), journalist [Anna Politkovskaya](#), [Hoover Institute](#) scholar [John B. Dunlop](#), and former FSB officers [Aleksander Litvinenko](#) and [Mikhail Trepashkin](#). According to their version, FSB knew about the terrorist group's arrival in Moscow and directed them to the theater through their [agent provocateur Khanpasha Terkibayev](#) ("Abu Bakar"), whose name was in list of hostage takers and who left the theater alive. In April 2003 Litvinenko gave information about Terkibayev ("the Terkibayev file") to Sergei Yushenkov when he visited [London](#). Yushenkov passed this file to Politkovskaya and she was able to interview Terkibayev in person. A few days later, Yushenkov was assassinated by gunfire in Moscow. Terkibayev was later killed in an apparent car crash in Chechnya.

In June 2003, Litvinenko stated in an interview with the Australian television programme [Dateline](#), that two of the Chechen militants involved in the siege—whom he named "[Abdul](#) the Bloody" and "Abu Bakar"—were working for the FSB, and that the agency manipulated the terrorists into staging the attack. Litvinenko said: "[w]hen they tried to find [Abdul the Bloody and Abu Bakar] among the rotting corpses of dead terrorists, they weren't there. The FSB got its agents out. So the FSB agents among Chechens organized the whole thing on FSB orders, and those agents were released". "Abu Bakar" (presumably Terkibayev) was also described as FSB agent and actual organizer of the theater siege by [Anna Politkovskaya](#), [Alexander Khinshtein](#) and other journalists.

Moscow Lawsuit and the European Court Complaint

After the siege, 61 former hostages started seeking [compensation](#) for physical and emotional suffering totalling almost \$60m from Moscow city authorities (according to Russia's then-new anti-terrorism law, the region where an act of terror occurs should pay compensation for moral and material damages). Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov's office denounced the suits, saying it could not be held responsible as "the Chechen issue and its consequences are not within the jurisdiction of the Moscow authorities in any way." The Moscow administration earlier agreed to pay 50,000 roubles (\$1,570) in compensation to each former hostage and 100,000 roubles (\$3,140) to relatives of those killed. In all but one of the cases, Moscow city courts rejected the compensation claims.

In July 2003, 80 plaintiffs from Russia, Ukraine, the Netherlands and Kazakhstan turned to the European Court for Human Rights, claiming that their right to life had been violated by Russia authorities' handling of the standoff. In April 2007, Igor Trunov, the claimants' advocate, reported that the ECHR had finally begun hearings into a complaint filed in 2003 by the victims against the Russian government. Trunov added that not only Russian citizens, but also those from Ukraine, the Netherlands and Kazakhstan, filed complaints in the [Strasbourg](#) Court. The plaintiffs demand €50,000 each in compensation for the violation of their human rights. The case was accepted by the court in December 2007.

On July 8, 2008, [The Moscow Times](#) reported that the hearings at the European Court for Human Rights will be closed to the public at the request of Russian authorities as, according to Igor Trunov, they "have promised full disclosure on how they handled the crisis", including "the makeup of the knockout gas used in the storming of the theater by commandos."

The Chemical Agent Mystery

Main article: [Moscow hostage crisis chemical agent](#)

It was reported that efforts to treat victims were complicated because the Russian government refused to inform doctors what type of gas had been used. In the records of the official investigation, the agent is referred to as a "gaseous substance". In other cases it is referred to as an "unidentified chemical substance". Based on the gas' effects and examinations of victims, it appears to have been an FSB-made aerosol version of [3-methylfentanyl](#), an artificial, powerful [opium](#)-like substance. Government officials still treat its contents as a [state secret](#).

The Russian Federation, as a member-state of the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#), undertook "never and under no circumstances to carry out any activities prohibited to member-states of this Convention" to develop, to accumulate, to stockpile and to use chemical weapons that can cause death, temporary incapacitation, or permanent harm to humans or animals. The Convention obliges the states to fulfill the conditions of toxic chemicals' use that allow to exclude or considerably reduce the degree of injury and gravity of consequences. However, during the special operation in Dubrovka this provision was disregarded, i.e. neither the type, nor the quantity of the chemical agent helped to attain the set purpose—to neutralize the terrorists so as to rescue the hostages. (The Convention allows the use of some chemical agents like [tear gas](#) for "law enforcement including domestic [riot control](#)", but requires that "riot control agents" have effects that "disappear within a short time following termination of exposure.")

International Reaction

[United Nations](#) In unanimously adopting [Resolution 1440](#) (2002), the [United Nations Security Council](#) condemned the "heinous" act and demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The Council also demanded immediate and unconditional release of all hostages of that terrorist act and expressed the deepest sympathy and condolences to the people and the government of the Russian Federation and to the victims of the terrorist attack and their families. In addition, the Council urged all states to cooperate with the Russian Federation authorities in their efforts to find and bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of that terrorist attack.

[Iraq](#) In a statement read on Iraqi state television, former Iraqi President [Saddam Hussein](#) said the hostage-taking would eventually benefit the United States and [Israel](#) in undermining [Islam](#): "It's not wise for the Chechens to lose the sympathy of Russia and the Russian people. The [tyrant](#) of our era is [Zionism](#) and America, and not Russia, [China](#) or [India](#)."

[United Kingdom](#) British Prime Minister Tony Blair publicly backed the Russian action, arguing the Russian authorities had needed to act when the Chechens "started to kill the hostages." In his speech for the [Parliament](#), Blair linked the Moscow siege to the wider war on terrorism and such events as the [2002 Bali bombings](#).

[United States](#) U.S. President George W. Bush felt "very strongly that the people to blame here are the terrorists. The people who caused this tragedy to take place are terrorists who took hostages and endangered the lives of others," the [White House](#)'s spokesman, [Ari Fleischer](#), told reporters aboard [Air Force One](#).

In Popular Culture

A documentary by the [BBC's Horizon](#) in 2004 investigated the gas that was pumped into the theater.

In 2003, HBO broadcast *Terror In Moscow*, a documentary directed by Dan Reed. Interviews with hostages and footage taken inside and outside of the theater during the crisis are shown in the documentary.

In September 2006, *In Your Hands*, a play based on the events of the Moscow theatre siege, written by [Natalia Pelevine](#), opened in London at the [New End Theatre](#). In April 2008 Pelevine said that

Russian authorities have banned the play following its Russian debut in the city of [Makhachkala](#), the capital of [Dagestan](#) near Chechnya. Another play, We Declare You a Terrorist by Tim J. Lord, about the incident premiered at the 2009 [Summer Play Festival](#).

The crisis was also featured as a 45-minute episode of [Situation Critical](#) (a [National Geographic Channel docudrama](#) television series), which contained actual video footage from the crisis along with a reenactment ([Wikipedia, 2012](#)).

Title: Moscow Hostage Crisis Chemical Agent

Date: 2012

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Abstract: The chemical agent used in the [Moscow theatre hostage crisis](#) has never been definitively revealed by the [Russian](#) authorities, though many possible identities have been speculated. An [incapacitating agent](#) of some kind was used by the Russian authorities in order to subdue the [Chechen terrorists](#) who had taken control of a crowded theatre.

It was reported that efforts to treat victims were complicated because the Russian government refused to inform doctors what type of gas had been used. In the records of the official investigation of the terrorist act, the agent is referred to as a certain "gaseous substance", in other cases it is referred to as an "unidentified chemical substance" (conclusions of forensic examination commission, Volumes 30-33 of the criminal case).

At the time, the gas was surmised to be some sort of surgical [anesthetic](#) or [chemical weapon](#). Immediately after the siege, Western media speculated widely as to the identity of the substance that was used to end the siege, and chemicals such as the [tranquilizer diazepam](#) (Valium), the [anticholinergic BZ](#), the highly potent [oripavine](#)-derived Bentley-series opioid [etorphine](#), another highly potent opioid, such as a [fentanyl](#) or an analogue thereof, such as [3-methylfentanyl](#), and the [anaesthetic halothane](#) were proposed. Foreign embassies in Moscow issued official requests for more information on the gas to aid in treatment, but were publicly ignored. While still refusing to identify the gas, on October 28, 2002 the Russian government informed the [U.S. Embassy](#) of some of the gas's effects. Based on this information and examinations of victims, doctors concluded the gas was a [morphine](#) derivative. The Russian media reported the drug was [Kolokol-1](#), either [mefentanyl](#) or [α-methylfentanyl](#) dissolved in a [halothane](#) base.

Two days after the incident, on October 30, 2002, Russia responded to increasing domestic and international pressure with a statement on the unknown gas by Health Minister [Yuri Shevchenko](#). He identified it as a [fentanyl](#) derivative, an extremely powerful [opioid](#). Boris Grebenyuk, the All-Russia Disaster Relief Service chief, said the services used trimethyl phentanylum ([3-methylfentanyl](#), a fentanyl analog that is about 1000 times more potent than morphine, which was manufactured and abused in the former USSR); [New Scientist](#) pointed out that 3-methylfentanyl is not a gas but an [aerosol](#). The research made by American scientists into fentanyl derivatives shows that their lethality level surpasses the efficiency of traditional lethal methods: the lethality degree of the [chemical weapons](#) used in [World War I](#) was 7%, while in the Dubrovka theater it exceeded 15%.

A German [toxicology](#) professor who examined several German hostages said that their blood and urine contained [halothane](#), a once-common inhalation anaesthetic which is now seldom used in Western countries, and that it was likely the gas had additional components. No other unusual chemical substances have been detected. However, halothane has a strong odor (although often defined as "pleasant" by comparison with other [anesthetic gases](#)). Thus, by the time the whole theatre area would be filled with halothane to a [concentration](#) compatible with loss of consciousness (0.5% - 3%), it is likely that terrorists inside would have realized they were being attacked. Additionally, recovery of consciousness is rapid after the flow of gas is interrupted, unlike with high-dose fentanyl administration. Therefore, although halothane might have been a component in the aerosol, it was probably not a major component, or perhaps it was a [metabolite](#) of another drug.

Writing in the Moscow daily [Komsomolskaya Pravda](#), Viktor Baranets, a former Russian Defense Ministry official, stated that the Ministry of the Interior knew that any normal [riot control agent](#), such as [pepper spray](#) or [tear gas](#), would allow the terrorists time to harm the hostages. They decided to use the strongest agent available. The paper identified the material as a [KGB](#)-developed "psycho-

chemical gas" known as [Kolokol-1](#), and reported that "the gas had such an influence on [Chechen siege leader Movsar] [Barayev](#) that he couldn't get up from [his] desk". Russian doctors who helped hostages in the first minutes after the siege used a common [antidote](#) to fentanyl, [naloxone](#), by injection. But the effects of the fentanyl derivative's application, which can cause [chronic diseases](#), grew acute for the hostages, who had stayed in a closed space without water and food for several days.

Prof. Thomas Zilker and Dr. Mark Wheelis, interviewed in the [BBC](#)'s "Horizon" documentary series, dispute that the gas could have been based on fentanyl.

Prof. Thomas Zilker: It seems to be different from fentanyl, [carfentanil](#) and [sufentanil](#) but it has to be, it has to have the potency of carfentanil at least because otherwise it wouldn't work in these circumstance. So the Russians obviously have designed a new fentanyl which we can not detect in the west.

Dr. Mark Wheelis: The fact that the Russians did it and got away with a lethality of less than twenty percent suggests to me that very likely there may have been a novel agent with a higher safety margin than normal fentanyl.

Although the exact nature of the active chemical has not been verified, the Russian language newspaper [Gazeta](#) claimed that the chemical used had been [3-methylfentanyl](#), attributing this information to "experts from the Moscow State University chemistry department" ([Wikipedia, 2012](#)).

Title: US National Academies Withholds Key Information On The Moscow Theater Tragedy

Date: October 30, 2002

Source: [Sunshine Project](#)

Abstract: The US National Academies of Science holds key unclassified US military research documents that shed light on the Moscow theater tragedy; but is refusing to release them despite repeated, urgent requests. (A selected bibliography of the documents is included at the end of this release.)

Said the Sunshine Project's Edward Hammond "*The world has an urgent need to better understand what happened in Moscow and what other countries, including the US, are doing with these kinds of weapons. The National Academies ongoing refusal to release the documents is very troubling.*" Hammond adds "*NAS has critical information for understanding the chemical agents used in Moscow; but is refusing to release it because it wants to avoid embarrassing the Pentagon, which denies that this type of research exists in the United States.*"

The documents are a series of papers written in 1994 by US Army chemical warfare experts on so-called "calmative" chemical weapons. The set of reports includes a paper on synthetic opiate weapons of the class reported to have killed more than 100 people in the Moscow theater. In 2001, these documents were deposited at the National Academies by the US Marine Corps, which asked NAS to evaluate this kind of weapon. The documents are deposited in a public archive which, according to US law, should be available for inspection by journalists and members of the public.

The US Army documents describe research and testing of chemical agents at Edgewood Research and Development Center at Aberdeen Proving Grounds north of Baltimore, Maryland. In addition, NAS is withholding documents from the US Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate (JNLWD), a Pentagon agency exploring calmative chemical weapons. These include the report of a "non-lethal" weapons policy seminar held in 2001 between US and United Kingdom officials, in which they discussed military operations with chemical weapons like those used in the theater.

The Sunshine Project has been seeking the release of this information since well before the Moscow tragedy. It began its investigation a year and half ago, and first asked NAS for the documents in March.

NAS is trying to defuse the situation by forestalling release until November 5th, US election day, when it hopes that nobody will notice. NAS must place public interest and law before its desire to ingratiate

itself with the Pentagon. *"Anything less,"* says Hammond *"would call into question the Academies role as an independent scientific advisor an chemical and biological weapons issues"* ([Sunshine Project, 2002](#)).