

10 Killed in Shootout in Dagestan

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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MAKHACHKALA — Four suspected militants, three policemen and three mountain guides were killed in a shootout in the restive North Caucasus republic of Dagestan, local police said Wednesday.

The shootout occurred Tuesday during a random patrol of a woody and mountainous area some 50 kilometers south of the republic's capital, Makhachkala.

The guides are helping police to secure the areas adjacent to Makhachkala, where the rough terrain provides hideouts for Islamist insurgents.

Separately, security officers defused a bomb Wednesday near Khasavyurt, a town some 90 kilometers west of Makhachkala, the National Anti-Terrorism Committee said in a statement. The 24-kilogram bomb was found attached to a manhole cover by workers doing road repairs late Tuesday, the committee said.

Predominantly Muslim, Dagestan is plagued by bombings and shootings that mainly target

police, state officials and moderate clerics.

The violence is largely blamed on an Islamist insurgency rooted in post-Soviet separatist wars in Chechnya, a neighboring North Caucasus province where attacks are now less frequent than in Dagestan.

President Vladimir Putin has staked his reputation on hosting a safe and successful Winter Olympics in February in Sochi, a city near the North Caucasus. He said last month that security in the region was improving too slowly.

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