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„Association of impunity and traumatic reactions in torture survivors and human rights activists in North Caucasus“

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Preface

During the last decades the problem of torture and other ill-treatment in the name of counter-terrorism has been becoming ever more topical. International agreements and treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Genocide and the Convention against Torture are violated with impunity, meaning that state parties to these agreements are reneging on their international obligations.

The importance of the problem is reflected in the growing body of research concerning different aspects of impunity and mental health. Among them are the following themes: the role played in psychological disturbances by beliefs about trust and justice (Başoğlu et al., 2005; Foa et al., 1999; Şalçoğlu, 2004); the therapeutic effect of reparation and retributive justice (Carmichael et al., 1996; Hamber, 2001; Roth-Arriaza, 1995); the psychological impact of impunity on the individual and society levels (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Becker & Castillo, 1990; Dri et al., 2009; Lira, 1995; Lykes, 1994; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008; Zur, 1994); the transmission of the psychological effects of impunity to succeeding generations (Beckerman, 2000; Dri et al., 2009); the effect of participating in trials or truth-commissions on the psychological and emotional suffering of survivors (Aldana, 2006; Brouneus, 2008; Herman, 2003; Laplante & Theidon, 2007; Mendeloff, 2009; O’Connell, 2005). A significant number of publications deal with the impact of impunity on the aggravation of psychological conditions and the impediment it presents to healing processes among survivors (Agger & Jensen, 1995; Backer, 2001; Başoğlu et al., 2005; Lira, 1995; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008; van Willigen, 1992). This multifaceted problem is being studied from various perspectives and relies on the interaction of different sciences - moral, legal, political, historical, military, philosophical (Dri, 2009; Greenberg, 2005; Parry, 2010; Roth et al., 2005; Silove, 1999 etc.).

Nowadays impunity is understood as a threat to the psychological well-being both of victims and of society in general, its norms and values (Baeza, 2000, p.28). Yet despite the growing literature on legal and psychological aspects of torture, the problem of impunity and its role in the traumatization of torture survivors of the fight against terrorism is not taken into account in the abundant theories and models of traumatisation, nor in the exploration of the link between human rights and psychological well-being, nor in the psychological assistance to torture survivors.
Traditionally the majority of research on impunity refers to the situation in Latin America (the so called “dirty wars” there) (Agger and Jensen, 1996; Baeza, 2000, 2001; Becker, 2001, 2003; Edelman et al., 1998; Kordon and Edelman, 1988; Lagos, 1994; Lira, 1995; McSherry, 1992; Sveaass and Lavik, 2000; Zur, 1994 etc.). I approach this problem based on material from the North Caucasus. Many torture victims in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia (Russian North Caucasus) do not choose to remain silent about what happened with them, but have to, because of fear of reprisals against themselves, members of their families and/or close friends. It is fundamental not to limit the topic of justice to those who suffered. Official and public procedures condemning those who organized and/or executed crimes are necessary. Impunity can be considered as one of the key factors of indirect secondary traumatism among family members, not only through its psychological effect, but also because it places them in actual danger. For example, the relatives of militants (their brothers, cousins) are often abducted and tortured today in Ingushetia and Chechnya (Memorial, 2010). Unauthorized arrests and abductions, incarceration in secret prisons, temporary enforced disappearances often accompanied by torture: these and other traumatic events first became constituent parts of the tragic war policy in Chechnya, and later in the fight against terrorism in the neighboring North Caucasian republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan. There is no official statistics for forced abduction and torture in Chechnya. But according to Human Rights Center Memorial’s data they are compatible with those for Big Terror in the USSR in the 1930s (Baisaev & Grushkin, 2003).

The main interest of researchers dealing with this region has been focused on the question of the psychological consequences of war itself. The mental health of the population which survived the war (Hargreaves et al., 2007; Idrisov, 2010) and the perception of terrorist threat by the inhabitants of the Chechen Republic (Bykhovets, 2007) are topics - impunity and torture survivors – which, although urgent these days, have barely been investigated by scholars. There is practically no psychological research on impunity in the region despite the body of literature produced by sociologists, historians, political scientists (Dunlop, 1999; Gammer 2008; Gilligan, 2009; Kramer, 2004/2005; Wood 2007), ethnographers (Chesnov, 1999; Raubisko, 2011; Sokirianskaia, 2008; Tishkov, 2004), journalists, and human rights activists (Cherkasov, 2012; Dmitrievsky, 2008; Mnatsakanyan, 2007; Yashurkaev, 1995). I expect that profound exploration of the influence of impunity on torture survivors will provide insights into the social mechanisms of both traumatization and recovery. This research may open a space for both further research in this subject area, as well as for the development of psychological assistance programs for torture survivors and HR activists.
Part 1. Literature review

1.1 Impunity. Conceptual framework and models

1.1.1 Definition of impunity

The word “impunity” entered English in the first half of the sixteenth century. It derived from Middle French impunité and Latin impunitatem “omission of punishment.” The Latin was formed from im- “not” and poena “punishment.” It is related to such words as “subpoena,” “penalty” and “penal,” all of which derive from poena. In contemporary dictionaries it is defined as “exemption from punishment” and “immunity from detrimental effects, as of an action” (Oxford dictionary).

Researchers have studies various aspects of this phenomenon, which can be understood in a variety of ways:

As an act per se, impunity can represent a violation of human rights and of basic psychological and moral norms. (Dri at el., 2009)

As a causal factor, impunity implies the possibility of repetition of the violation (Darehshori & Evenson, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2009; Rodley, 2000)

As a perpetuating factor of the status quo, through oblivion and de-memorizing as the means of creating a culture of impunity (Afflitto, 2000; Fisher, 2002; McSherry, 1992; Opotow, 2001; Rauchfuss and Schmolze, 2008; Tyner, 2009)

As a power strategy of the State, linked with the mechanisms of certain types of power structure. (Afflito, 2000; McSherry & Molina, 1992; Penrose, 1999).

As a deficit, a lack of measures designed to provide redress for survivors (Joint Committee on Human Rights, House of Lords, 2008-2009; Rodley, 2000).

Thus, there is a range of definitions of impunity, beginning with a deficit, a lack which should be filled in, to a voluntary act, a strategy, or a causal factor. Each definition implies its own perspective on dealing with the concept.

I would like to refer to the amended Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity, submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 2005, which defines impunity as: “the impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account – whether in criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings – since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to their being accused, arrested, tried and, if found guilty, sentenced to appropriate penalties, and to making reparations to their victims”
(UN Commission on Human Rights, 2005). It arises from a failure by States to meet their obligations to investigate violations, punish perpetrators, defend victims and take other steps to prevent a recurrence of violations. This failure of the State leads to ruptures in basic legislation and its implementation which shatter its legitimacy.

The suffering of torture survivors is thus compounded by the fact that they not only are the victims of torture, but also of injustice. On the personal level, impunity grants perpetrators the freedom from responsibility for their crimes, and on the State level, as McSherry notes, “acts of repression and abuse of power by the state against its citizens are shielded from judgment or accountability before national law” (McSherry, 1992, p.470). As for the survivors, their human rights are marginalized; they fail to learn the identities of perpetrators, obtain adequate investigation and punishment, and any compensation, rehabilitation, or restitution (Kitwe Mulunda, 2006).

The concept of impunity has entered different domains, where it refers to slightly different categories. I will mention briefly some of these.

1.1.2 The problem of impunity in the interdisciplinary context

According to Joinet (1996) impunity became part of the human rights discourse through four stages:

- The 70ies. In some Latin American countries, suffering then under dictatorship, the problem of amnesty for political prisoners became an important issue.

- The 80ies. Anxiously declining Latin America’s dictatorships applied amnesty but “transformed” it to include an “insurance on impunity” for themselves. Victims, on their side, “built up their organizational capacity to ensure that ‘justice was done’“.

- The end of the cold war. In a transition period to democracy and regulations of internal armed conflict through peace agreements, “the former oppressors’ desire for everything to be forgotten and the victims’ quest for justice” intensified the problem of impunity.

- After that phase, it became common notion within the international community to understand and accept the importance of opposition to impunity. “The Inter-American Court of Human Rights, for example, in a ground-breaking ruling, found that amnesty for the perpetrators of serious human rights violations was incompatible with the right of every individual to a fair hearing before an impartial and independent court.”
In 1984, the General Assembly of UN adopted the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and it entered into force in 1987. It became one of the most important international instruments. “The most innovative aspect of the Convention is the obligation of States to combat impunity of perpetrators of torture by enacting torture as a crime under its domestic law with appropriate penalties and by assuming the responsibility of establishing various types of jurisdiction, including for the first time in a human rights treaty the obligation of universal jurisdiction” (Nowak & McArthur, 2008. p. vi). Thus, developing the concept of impunity within the human rights law led to the fact, that the States were finally obliged to criminalize gross human rights violations.

In 1996, Prof. Louis Joinet delivered reports for the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the UN Commission on Human Rights and developed a “Set of principles for the protection and promotion of human rights through action to combat impunity”, providing the basic analysis of impunity and at the same time an important contribution in the campaign against it (Orentlicher, 2007). The document was approved by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1997. In 2005, the UN Commission on Human Rights accepted the set of principles, as revised by Prof. Diane Orentlicher.

According to Joinet, “impunity means the impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of human rights violations to account - whether in criminal, civil, administrative proceedings - since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to them being accused, arrested, tried and, if found guilty, convicted” (Joinet, 1996). Joinet emphasizes that impunity covers “all the measures and practices whereby, on the one hand, states fail in their obligations to investigate, try and sentence those responsible for violations of human rights and, on the other hand, impede the enjoyment by victims and their families of the right to know the truth and have their rights restored”. (Joinet, 1995)

The last version of the set of principles (2005) widened the scope of impunity, meaning “crimes under international law, genocide, crimes against humanity, and other violations of internationally protected human rights that are crimes under international law and/or which international law requires States to penalize, such as torture, enforced disappearance, extrajudicial execution, and slavery” (UN Commission on Human Rights, 2005), while in Joinet’s version (1996) violations covered “war crimes, crimes against humanity, including genocide, and grave breaches of international humanitarian law”.

Thereby, international human rights law considers the State responsible for the creation of conditions for the implementation of mechanisms for the protection of the rights and
freedoms. These conditions include the legal obligation to prevent, thoroughly investigate and penalize every facet of a violation of the law protecting human rights, to re-establish the transgressed rights, and repair the harm caused by their violation.

Providing such an environment requires the existence of a legal framework and of a power structure which can meet the above-mentioned commitments at all levels of power. Impunity, by definition, is opposed to these functions, and operates at the discretion, and for the convenience and benefit, of a particular group in power, but not under the legality of a social and institutional mandate. Debilitation of the law occurs in two ways: *de facto* - manipulation of the state’s judicial machinery to ignore the crime; *de jure* – adoptions of the formal legal means exempting those concerned from legal liability, for example, through an amnesty (Rodley, 2000).

The rhetoric of human rights literature on impunity is focused on the phenomenon of illegitimacy and its consequences, such as: 1) the suspension of law and juridical systems in the society, 2) the suspension of the presumption of innocence, 3) the freedom from responsibility for the perpetrators. Thus the consequences are analyzed from the perspectives of the perpetrator, the victim, and the legal regulation of their relations.

- **The suspension of law and legal and juridical systems in the society.** The UN Working Group’s on Enforced Disappearances experience over the past ten years has confirmed the age-old adage that impunity breeds contempt for the law (McSherry, 1992, p.478). A major mechanism of impunity can be identified as a weak judiciary and the lack of prosecution (Afflitto, 1998; Afflitto, 2000; McSherry and Molina, 1992). Impunity can occur before, during, or after judicial processes, and characterizes certain type of interaction between law and power, between implicit and explicit law, and certain types of implementation of the law (Opotow, 2001; Penrose, 1999). Courts and lawyers are not independent from the State, which has at its disposal an arsenal of regulations, such as amnesty. The Dictionary of the *Real Academia* defines “impunity” as the lack of punishment and “amnesty” as one of the mechanisms “most often used to establish impunity, related to amnesia, a medical term used to denote the loss of memory, oblivion” (Baeza, 2000). Amnesty in many cases becomes an enforcible “reconciliation,” leaving perpetrators without investigation and accountability in court. “Reciprocal amnesty” is one of the types criticized by lawyers for “for its equation of individual crimes against the state (which the state can pardon) with state crimes against its citizens (the state cannot pardon itself)” (McSherry, 1992). In April 2001 Deputy Mitrofanov of the Russian State Duma proposed a draft calling for a reciprocal amnesty for the particular day on which Russian Colonel Budanov committed his crime (Budanov was arrested for the rape and brutal murder of a young Chechen woman)
First, the „selective“ aim of this measure was obvious. Secondly, the conditions of amnesty were not equal for both sides of the conflict. Budanov’s case was significant for Chechnya, and amnesty for Budanov – or even the attempt to grant him amnesty – was considered by the entire population an indirect but strong message that the State gave carte blanche for any crime against the civilian population, even if the crime was terrible.

To implement a court decision, the State must pay the compensation, investigate the committed crime, and persecute the perpetrators. The Russian Government does pay money, but ignores the second part of its obligations. According to Russian human rights activist Oleg Orlov, Russian authorities’ reparation payments to ECtHR plaintiffs is a de facto „tax on impunity“ (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

- **Victims.** Survivors of massive violations of human rights are marginalized. *Presumption of innocence* - Conditions of legality imply there must be a way of being innocent; however, it is impossible to be innocent (and hence immune from becoming a victim of official violence) if there is no way of avoiding transgression, or if one is bound to be charged with offences one did not commit (Walter, 1984).

In other words, in the terror process, no one is safe, as the category “transgression” has, in reality, been abolished; innocence is irrelevant. Testimony and evidence are supplanted by surveillance, abduction, and interrogation under torture (Zur, 1994).

- **Perpetrators.** *Freedom from responsibility for perpetrators* – Impunity serves to authorize the crime and protect the criminal (Baeza, 2000). With impunity, violators of the law are not held responsible for their crimes.

**Political literature** on impunity mostly concerns the time of Dirty Wars in Latin America and the theory of National Security doctrines. In the political and social sciences impunity is regarded as an indirect manifestation of the level of democratic development of the society: the higher impunity, the lower the development of civil society. In some sense the concept of impunity marks and reveals the points of contradiction between the level of democracy, oriented to safeguard the cardinal rights of a citizen, and the level of National Security, shielded by the State’s well-being, when acts of impunity - for illegal detention, torture, disappearance and assassination – are effected in the name of security. The problem of impunity arises in political discourse with respect to political structure, which supports and is strongly focused on National Security doctrine (Mares, 2007; McSherry, 1992; Nelson-Pallmeyer, 1992; Pion-Berlin, 1988; Rouquie, 1987). The State justifies many unjust actions through rhetorical and vague claims to having a “higher purpose” and protecting “national security.” Nelson-
Pallmeyer identified seven characteristics of a National Security State, among which are the suspicion of real democracy, which is viewed as a threat to stability; obsession with enemies; restrictions of the public debate and the limitations placed on popular participation through secrecy or intimidation, etc. (Nelson-Pallmeyer, 1992).

McSherry suggests another characteristic feature of such a political structure: the role played by military forces. Military officials occupy the positions of highest authority and dominate the political system through terror and an intact clandestine counterinsurgency apparatus (McSherry, 1992, p. 464). A famous *guarantee against accountability* places them above the law, making them a State within the State which operates according to quite different laws and principles. The boundaries between these different worlds tend to become ever more rigid, and a double standard of justice ever more present. Citizens become resigned to the fact that justice is beyond their reach and dangerous to demand, and the military become increasingly sure of their sense of power and convinced by the new rationalizations they develop for their terrorist methods (McSherry, 1992, p. 470).

Thus in political science literature the problem of impunity is closely connected with the investigation of certain political structures as well as of a special type of relationship between state and society. Together with the social sciences, political sciences focus on such social relationships as debilitation of the links, ties and relations between a citizen and society, and its regulation via justice and law. Scientists speculate on the corrosive effect of cynicism and disrespect for civilian government and law, the climate of fear and a pervasive sense of injustice and helplessness which mark interpersonal relations in such a society (Agger & Jensen, 1996). It is not by chance that in the social sciences the *sense* of impunity, together with the sense of fear, helplessness, and insecurity, becomes an important concept, a subjective measure and mark of the threat posed to democracy and human rights.

Interestingly enough, when the United Nations Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights Through Action to Combat Impunity connected impunity with the *failure* of the State to meet certain obligations to its citizens, impunity in the works of political scientists was viewed mostly through the prism of structural characteristics. It is not just a failure, but rather characterizes a special construction and a special apparatus which provide freedom from responsibility and maintain a certain social structure. The State does not fulfill its obligations and is perceived as a violator. In much the same way, in human rights literature impunity is viewed “as a cause and a voluntary act”. (Dri et al., 2009).
If political researchers dwell mostly on the structural characteristics of power and state, social scientists view impunity first of all as a social phenomenon which affects society as a whole (Dri, 2009; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008). Thus, social scientists also talk about moral impunity (Beckerman, 2000, Dri et al., 2009) (the absence of moral punishment for a crime) and historical impunity (Dri et al., 2009), “de-ideologizing” reality (Baro, 1983) (symbolic erasure of a crime committed by representatives of the State through an “official” truth: institutionalized myths and discourses which are denials and/or misrepresentations of the facts). Vanese Dri and her colleagues (2009) emphasize the following social manifestations of historical impunity: concealment and distortion of facts by the State and the internalization of “official truth”; the prevalence of the ideological discourse of the perpetrators; the denial of a fair hearing to affected persons; the relegation to oblivion of the victims; crystallization through all the agents of socialization, which is the vehicle by which they achieve invisibility.

Many aspects of impunity are discussed in sociological, political, and philosophic literature on authoritarian societies with their total surveillance, control, and deliberate confusion by the State and the obedience and fear of its citizens (Foucault, 1985; Mariss, 1992; Sveaas & Lavik, 2000). On the level of society, impunity creates an atmosphere of mistrust, fear, and lack of confidence. Scientists speak of a culture of impunity in which a general atmosphere of secrecy and denial may develop, not only among the holders of power but also among those in a subordinate position. Victims of State abuse form a stratum of second-class citizens. There is a systematic disregard of values and norms, creating an unsafe and unpredictable context which induces a strong sense of lack of control and powerlessness in individuals for the sake of the values of security.

The idea of a democratic society, with law and justice at the core of it, together with the set of international human rights conventions which emerged after the Second World War, led to the establishment of norms and standards about how an ideal state must be structured and function, and what kind of obligations it must have towards its citizens. This approach facilitates the detection of human rights violations and in fact makes them obvious. With the development of these standards and principles, as well as its legal manifestations within international conventions, the concept of impunity was developed in an interdisciplinary setting, and was considered to be a factor that impeded and corrupted the formation of a democratic State, fostering attitudes and structures antithetical to democracy (McSherry, 1992; Rouquie 1987) and social peace (Opotow, 2002).

When the political and human rights sphere refer to impunity in the framework of democracy, its values and institutions, a central psychological notion is the traumatization and recovery of survivors.
1.1.3. Impunity. Psychological approach

Following some American researchers (Dri et al., 2009) I find that “a theoretical approach to impunity from a psychological perspective may give a viewpoint that is not accessible to or, worse yet, not translatable to other areas, thus compromising its specificity compared to other social, human and health disciplines”. As abovementioned scholars I based my thesis on “the issue of impunity exercised by the State, particularly political repression in cases of crimes against humanity” (p.177) and torture in particular.

The impetus for examining the impact of impunity on the mental health of the survivors of severe human rights violations was given by the “dirty wars” in Latin America, and so the majority of the research is connected with these countries (Agger and Jensen, 1996; Baeza, 2000, 2001; Becker, 2001; Edelman et al., 1998; Kordon & Edelman, 1988; Lagos, 1994; Lira, 1995; Zur, 1994). In the course of time studies appeared about South Africa (Allan & Allan, 2000; Hamber, 2001; Kaminer et al., 2001), Rwanda (Pham et al., 2004), the countries of former Yugoslavia (Başoğlu et. al., 2005), and refugees in Europe (Blackwell, 2005; Kinzie & Jaranson, 2001; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008).

Guided by a general definition of impunity focused on the lack of redress, psychologists began to adduce additional factors which influence the psychic state of individuals. In many cases these theories are concerned with the impact impunity has on negative psychological reactions and traumatization.

Some authors concentrate mostly on certain characteristics of a traumatic situation. Thus M. Başoğlu states that impunity as such does not bring about traumatization, but rather becomes crucial only in the context of threat (Başoğlu et al., 2005; Başoğlu & Şalcioğlu, 2011). He investigated the role of threat on a sample of 1358 survivors of war in former Yugoslavia, showing its role in traumatization.

E. Lira and colleagues dwell on the impact of chronic fear as related to the context of impunity. Normally fear is an emotion that arises in order to cope with a specific external or internal danger. In the case of impunity it becomes a permanent component of everyday personal and social life (Becker et al., 1990; Lira & Castillo, 1991). Chronic stress and fear lead to feelings of worthlessness and disempowerment, and even to cognitive distortions which blur the distinction between fantasy and reality (Sveaass & Lavik, 2000).
At the same time, there are approaches which analyze impunity in the light of specific psychological (behavioral and mental) actions committed by an individual. Paz Rojas Baeza considers impunity to be an important factor in personal development, related to the denial of truth and the concealment of responsibility, which interfere with the very basis of the reception of the exterior world and are an essential element in the construction of processes of learning, knowing, and imagining (Baeza, 2000) as well as of all interpersonal relations. Impunity, with its lack of certainty, ambiguity, and contradictions, distorts reality, shattering the foundations of the world and its values, our conceptions of what is good or bad, correct or incorrect, of what we can rely on and what is in or out of our control. Major fundamental notions become deformed. “Sick” actions are deemed “good” and “healthy” by those in power. The basic order of things needs to be reconstructed (Agger & Jensen, 1996).

Baeza (2000) as well as J. Zur (1994), R.M. Fields (1996), Agger and Jensen (1996) and other researchers conclude that impunity creates a deficit of the fundamental human need of constructing the meaning of social events and personal life: “Killing with impunity was psychologically shattering not only because of the interference with the assessment of reality but also because people had to construe meaning all over again. Attempts to construct meaning were frustrated not only through the absence of a language with which to make sense of the situation and the distorting effects of employing neologisms, but also because existing concepts, and the vocabulary and grammar used to express them, were distorted through the state’s use of rhetoric and the pervasive use of euphemisms. The state’s use of euphemisms to hide reality as a part of the cover-up is, in fact, a form of violence, if on the symbolic level” (Zur 1994, p. 16). The psychological impact of traumatic events depends on the subjective meaning which survivors attribute to the event (Bracken et al., 1995; Parker et al., 1992; Yüksel, 1991;Withuis, 2001). Impediment of the process of the construction of meaning makes people more vulnerable to stress.

The denial of reality, at first imposed by the State, subsequently also becomes a psychological defense which protects the individual from profound anxiety. Yet it has its price. The denial of events and the perception of lack of justice may lead either to apathy and loss of belief in self-agency or to aggression and the wish to exact retribution. The latter is seen as at least one way of confirming and making public some of the wrongdoing perpetrated by others (Sveaass & Lavik, 2000). Depersonalization augments with the misinterpretation of reality, with its denial, suspiciousness, frustration, aggressive acts, depression, anxiety, guilt feelings, and apathy. Sveaass and Lavik remark that in authoritarian societies submission, self-control, and self-censure will develop. Confusion and lack of predictability is created to the point that people start doubting their own
judgments and reasoning. In societies with organized violence, there is a breakdown of belief systems and meaning, of independent and possibly opposing ideas (Sveaass & Lavik, 2000).

Another conflict which an individual faces as a result of impunity is characterized by the desire to hide and forget, on the one hand, and to restore justice and support the truth, on the other (Baeza, 2000). Thus, both the inter-personal and intra-personal turn out to be distorted through a variety of mechanisms and in various ways. This factor plays an important role in the social context of impunity, as it leads to deformations of both the individual and the social fabric (Becker, 2003).

In fact we are talking about the distorted social reality of impunity, when the functions of law are abolished by the State and victims and perpetrators swap places, whereby the State marginalizes the victims and protects the perpetrators. The absence of “condemned violence” produces a “new morality” which destroys the social fabric through the establishment of new values and symbols which accompany impunity. It “intervenes in the structuring of the way of being, thinking and feeling, as well as in the formation of ethical and evaluative codes, which is to say that impunity produces subjectivity. We are also witnesses to the very grave consequences that it produces within the social body and we must stress the action of impunity as a second traumatic stimulus that affects open wounds (...) extending its effects onto succeeding generations” (Beckerman, 2000, p.194).

1.1.3.1. Subjective aspect of perceiving impunity

One of the important components of the psychological approach based on the subjective aspect of perceiving impunity – phenomenological impunity – is the way that impunity is reflected in the inner world of a person and the impact of this reflection on the psyche. The entire spectrum of the psychological realm of a person is possibly subject to this process, including emotional, volitional, cognitive processes, behavior, etc. In the context of traumatization researchers often emphasize two dominant areas in this spectrum - cognitive and emotional processes.

The cognitive component is manifested in the specifics of cognitive processing and in the significance of perceived information filtered through emotional and cognitive structures (Tarabrina, 2009); forming an anticipatory idea of impunity may be the trigger that determines the intensity of experiencing it.

Traumatic stress reactions may be produced by damaging effects on a survivor’s sense of meaning (Hobfoll et al., 2007), the impossibility of finding an appropriate
explanation for a stressful event (Başoğlu et al., 2005; Başoğlu & Şalcıoğlu, 2011; Ursano et al., 1992), and challenges to basic assumptions about the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world (Janoff-Bulman 1992).

The emotional component of the experience of impunity can be both conscious and unconscious. According to Tarabrina (2009), the perception of the outside world and its assessment, based on its subjective importance, is directly related to emotional involvement.

Başoğlu (2005) emphasizes the strong emotional reactions to perceived impunity for perpetrators, including rage, anger, distress, demoralization, the loss of meaning in life, a sense of injustice, the desire for revenge, pessimism, helplessness, fear, and the loss of control over life. Humans respond with aggression, hostility, and anger to threats, and the impossibility of acting on these emotions produces feeling of helplessness. As for beliefs in God and in the benevolence of people, as well as desire for vengeance – these may be regarded as attempts to obtain a sense of control over uncontrollable, traumatic events (Başoğlu et al., 2005).

At the same time, survivors often cannot accept their own “aggressive potential” and do not feel capable of “canalizing it into rage,” as traumatic experience may lead to the loss of these capabilities. Thus many of them, instead of developing anger against the perpetrators, may turn it against themselves (Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008).

Thus, survivors of human rights violations are subject to psychiatric problems, as well as to changes in their basic assumptions and beliefs. It is worth pointing out that these psychological responses tend to continue in a situation of ongoing threat but may be reduced with introduction of safety (Başoğlu at el., 2005; Hobfoll et al., 2007; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008). Furthermore, loss of control for fear of ongoing danger or threats is more associated with PTSD and depression than are responses to perceived impunity, changed beliefs about justice and the benevolence of the world, loss of faith in people, fatalistic thinking, etc. (Başoğlu at el., 2005; Şalcıoğlu, 2004), although survivors tend to develop more negative beliefs about the world, the self and others, which may contribute to a feeling of helplessness as a psychological response (Başoğlu at el., 2005; Foa et al., 1999). Based on this, one can suggest an association between the level of perceived impunity and the level of traumatization.

In an attempt to reduce fear survivors may appeal or resort to fatalistic or religious beliefs (an increase in faith in God) (Valentine & Feinauer, 1993). Başoğlu considers increase in faith as a cognitive coping process (Başoğlu & Şalcıoğlu, 2011). He refers to the Arabic word “Tawakkul,” which denotes the acceptance of events by resigning
oneself to God’s will, helping to accept helplessness in uncontrollable conditions, which are widely spread in the Islamic world.

1.1.3.2. Impunity and distorted reality

Summing up different aspects of impunity as a factor in the distortion of reality, I would like to introduce the following scheme.

**Fig. 1: Impunity as a factor of distortion of reality.**

When the crime is confirmed but impunity persists, the outer world is profoundly altered. The proof of reality does not exist in the knowledge system. The field of perception is charged with aggression and terror. Classic psychopathology has described the confusion of perception, illusion, and hallucination as provoked by the very working of the brain. In persons who have lived through the violence-aggression of detention, torture, and the death or disappearance of those close to them, the scenarios enacted and the acts of the torturers have been described as “unreal,” hallucinatory, “like living a delirium.” In such cases, it is brutal chaos “outside” which had provoked an internal process of destruction and the abnormality of perception. Thus the perception, the “record” of what happens “outside” becomes dissociated and incomprehensible, from the very beginning and throughout the process of the trauma, which in turn is transformed into a constant by impunity. All the information that comes from the outside is true, but incomprehensible, or comprehensible but unreal. Psychic
representations become perverted, fragmented, and sometimes unreal, despite their inexorable reality.

Researchers suggest that when impunity exists, the trauma persists and, in time, is capable of producing mechanisms of intra-psychic and inter-subjective perturbation that can induce mental confusion equal to or more severe than that provoked by the torture itself. The inhibition of the thought process and a transition to the area where orders of not-knowing are learned can become pervasive psychological mechanisms (Zur, 1994).

The whole range of mechanisms aimed at protecting the individual from uncertainty, anxiety, and distortions come into play in the human psyche in order to free it from an enormous burden and act as substitutes for the facts of social and inner life (memory, perception, personal knowledge) which are denied. The activation of primitive defense mechanisms and the denial of basic inner processes connected with memory as a core process of identity formation and maintenance disrupt psychological functioning and the integration of traumatic experience, and thus impede rehabilitation.

1.1.3.3. Social mechanisms for the restoration of distorted reality

Taking into consideration that an unjust social order of impunity is based on a system of lies and injustice, the renewal of reality can be made possible through mechanisms of restoration of the law and the disclosure of truth (Deutch, 2009; Physicians for Human Rights 2008; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008). Among the main mechanisms for the disclosure of truth one can name “truth commissions” and criminal tribunals, and the media (Becker, 2001; Sveaass & Lavik, 2000; Theissen, 2008). These mechanisms help to return the broken social order in which victims can once again be considered victims and perpetrators perpetrators. Mainly, there are three elements of truth which must be fully discovered: the time, place and nature of violent actions; the identity of the victims and the injuries inflicted upon them; the identity of the perpetrators who executed the actions and/or gave the orders (Sveaass & Lavik, 2000).

Researchers in the field are convinced that the revelation of the identity of the perpetrators could be the most difficult, and yet the most important, component of the reconciliation process. The disclosure of the truth through media also has its difficulties. On the one hand, media may be opposed to social denial and play a very important role in the restoration of the system “victim – perpetrator.” But under a dictatorship the local media has little chance to be independent, and the main role is shifted to international media, which usually do not maintain constant interests and turn their attention only to cases of sensational “hot news,” not often the case when it comes from forgotten
conflicts. Therefore, in the event that the media or truth commissions and criminal tribunals have no realistic possibilities to disclose the truth, human rights activists assume this function.

In reacting against the inaction of the State people create their own alternatives through new social movements and NGO’s, drawing on international human rights organizations. In this way, they attempt to reclaim a certain level of agency. By forming alliances with other civil societies or social movements on the national or international level people are seeking viable options to State/ Governmental policies and practices (Courville & Piper, 2004) with respect to restoring reality: punishment for perpetrators and compensation for victims. Gilligan notes about the Chechen HR activists: “The truth was that human rights activism was precisely where Chechen civilians could exert personal power. It proved to be one of the only ways to recover the dignity Chechen society had been so crudely deprived of. Growing to become one of the most important methods of expressing discontent, it reanimated the idea of justice for Chechen civilians. Documenting human rights violations became an organizing principle around which fears, anger, and disillusionment could coalesce and find new direction in a search for authenticity and truth” (Gilligan, 2010, p.162). International human rights institutions can only impact the situation in an “alliance” with local and international human rights NGO’s, whereby these NGO’s “serve” as moderators between the victims and the international human rights bodies.

Victims appeal to human rights organizations in order to 1) restore the system “victim–perpetrator,” in which the victim receives compensation (reparation) and the perpetrator his or her punishment; 2) place pressure on the State to restore the rule of law, shattered by impunity; 3) represent the Law for the people (if domestic law doesn’t function, people look for protection in a Law above the State); 4) implement real jurisdiction, which is the most positive feature of human rights (appealing to the EChHR, using UN mechanisms, etc.); 5) achieve monetary compensation for survivors using the international courts (e.g. the EChHR), as where impunity reigns it is nearly impossible to achieve reparation from the State; 6) disclose the truth.

The importance of international attention for victims is understandable. Only the attention to their suffering from international institutions brings the final existence of justice to them – “there is no justice in my country, but abroad it still exists.” Giving testimony to international experts restores victims their right to be active fighters for their dignity. It even has an existential meaning: “I am heard, I do exist.” So, this active role may lead to an empowerment of the survivors, who regain self-determination and self-confidence (Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008).
This is also a crucial issue for human rights activists, for whom the cooperation with the international community is one of the principal mechanisms in the fight against impunity. Both practically and morally, solidarity with international organizations is essential for the local human rights activists who deal with impunity and live within it.

In practice, the functioning of this cooperation faces many difficulties. In cases when international institutions are not independent, they may shirk their obligations (by ignoring or denying them). As Opotow says, “Collusion also extends to bystander countries that benefit economically or strategically from a despotic, brutal, but useful status quo” (Opotow, 2002). This „collusion” leads to double standards and often to the disappointment of victims.

Institutions like the ECtHR, on the contrary, are independent and their role hard to overestimate. But even when the ECtHR makes a positive decision this most often brings only partial satisfaction to the victims, as the guilty State pays the compensation due (according to the court decision), but ignores the other part of the decision and does not conduct any real investigation nor bring those responsible to justice (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Perpetrators therefore once again avoid punishment. So on the level of domestic justice impunity can be considered as "a license to commit crime" (Baeza, 2000), while on the level of international justice it “is transformed” into a “tax” on crime (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

There is one more "hidden danger" in this relationship: the division into „they“ and „we“ (Shevtsova, 2010). One Russian political scientist gave a vivid example of this: „At a conference (…) in Berlin, I witnessed another example of this divide. When I started to raise the question of democratic standards in Western-Russian relations, I was interrupted by another Western attendee. ‘You irritate us,’ he said. ‘International relations are not about values; they are about power!’ If he is right, Russian liberals will have to reconsider their expectations about the Western opinion-leaders they have long counted on for moral support and understanding” (Shevtsova, 2010). Western leaders, i.e. “the West” are the “we” with all democratic values and Russia (in this case) is the “they”: for “them” democratic values are not so necessary. This moral relativism often facilitates a “we”-“they” relationship via stereotypes and clichés. „True, when some Western leaders come to Moscow they make a point of meeting human rights activists or the moderate opposition. They ask us how they can help us. We explain that they should raise the question of human rights and democracy when talking to Russian leaders, says Arseny Roginski of the human rights group Memorial. But after that, usually nothing happens” (Shevtsova, 2010).
1.1.4. Conclusions

The notion of impunity is actively present in different domains - human rights, political science, social science, journalism, psychology etc. Each proposes its perspective and particular focus of interest. Yet, the discourse around impunity is generally marked by a mixture of descriptive and explanatory approaches, being to a great extent interdisciplinary in nature and strongly moral in direction.

Practically all approaches in the context of democracy are focused on the phenomenon of impunity as shattered legitimacy and its consequences: the political sciences examine this phenomena through the prism of certain political structures (e.g. the doctrine of National Security), social sciences as a social phenomena which influences society and interpersonal relations, psychology in the context of psychic reality and subjectivity, especially with respect to the problems of traumatization and recovery.

In this chapter I have presented human rights in political, social, and psychological perspectives, and on this basis I have proposed a scheme of impunity as a factor of reality distortion. This scheme to some extent involves all disciplines and in some ways is synergetic, for it combines representations of the State structure, of the role of law, social reality and the tissue of human interactions, the level of participation of international and local human rights organizations, and the psychological impact which impunity produces on the psychic reality of an individual. By distorting reality, impunity shatters the very foundations of the world and its values, disturbing the fundamental notions of good and bad, leading to deformations of both individual and the social fabric. So impunity promotes a distorted social reality, with a „new morality,” new values, symbols, and social fabric, creating in this way a secondary traumatic stimulus. The reconstruction of reality would be possible through the restoration of law and the disclosure of truth, a function which society delegates to the HR movement.

At the same time, the subjective aspect of impunity – its reflection in the psyche of the individual - may lead to strong emotional reactions associated with traumatization.

In the next chapter I will concentrate on a local context typical of the North Caucasus, and on social and historic aspects of impunity in this region. I intend the following chapter to clarify the background and factual reality of the context of impunity which was formed in the region.
1.2. Social and Historical Aspects of Impunity in the Process of Traumatization in the North Caucasus

Impunity as one of the social factors influencing the traumatization process depends on many other factors, among them the political, historical and cultural relationships established between the state and the individual. In this respect the North Caucasus region has its own specifics, and knowing them may help to improve the understanding of how impunity is perceived by the people in the North Caucasus.

1.2.1 Chechens and Ingush: Traditions and Mentality

Chechens and Ingush are two closely related ethnic groups with mutually understandable languages. The two groups have similar traditions and call themselves Vainaikh ("our people") (Dunlop, 1998). Some scholars are inclined to believe that it is, in principle, one people (nation). The divergence took place during the Russian-Caucasian War (1818-1864), when the territory inhabited by Ingush people was cut off from the Chechen side by Russian fortifications (Chesnov, 1999).

Chechen and Ingush societies are very patriarchal with strong family and clan ties. Every man considers it necessary to trace his family history back to seven generations (Łukasiewicz, 2011). The life of people here is based on the principle that an individual’s achievements or deeds are and have to be judged by society. National customs and traditions are cultivated (Gammer, 2006, Luzbetac, 1951). About persons who are perceived as having lost contacts with their “roots” it will be said that “their morals are too relaxed, their way of thinking is too rational, they are “cowards,” atheists (...). All this is considered as a regression from ‘Chechenness’” (Malek, 2008, p.33).

National traditions and the Soviet system sometimes contradicted each other and de facto coexisted in two parallel worlds (Łukasiewicz, 2011). Normally, peoples’ life was regulated by customary law, the adat, an unwritten set of rules for the daily life of the teip (clan) and its members (Jaimoukha, 2005; Wilhelmsen, 2005). Whereas the adat remained accepted and internalized by the people, State law, imposed by official authority, was perceived as something alien. For example, the adat strictly forbids any kind of whistle-blowing and supports the tradition of blood revenge (Arutjunov, 2003). During the Soviet time the adat „lent itself” to the official law. In the event that a person convicted of murder by an official court was released after serving time in prison, the relatives of the slain man still declared blood revenge. Often, however, this declaration ended in a long and costly reconciliation procedure.
Among the “group beliefs” providing the cognitive basis viewed by the nation (group members) as uniting them and differentiating them from out-groups (Bar-Tal, 1998), honor and freedom have been the highest values for the people of Chechnya and Ingushetia (Adger-Adayev, 2004; Łukasiewicz, 2011). To “lose face” or to behave improperly out of fear is perceived as a kind of “dishonor” not only for the person himself, but also for his entire family (Malek, 2008). It is possible that this attitude is somehow idealized, but that does not make it less essential. Smith (1991) stated that social ideas, images of ethnically significant phenomena, may not always coincide with everyday life, but are nevertheless approved as a social reality in the communication process and play an important symbolic role in intergroup differentiation.

1.2.2. Religion

Traditionally, Chechens and Ingush are Muslims (they converted to Sufi Islam, a form of Sunni Islam). In the atheist Soviet Union they could not protect their mosques – of 806 mosques in Chechnya in 1913 only three remained in 1985 (Dunlop, 1998, p.33) - but did manage to preserve their religiosity (Gammer, 2006; Łukasiewicz, 2011). Islam, as it is practiced nowadays, is interdependent with ancient traditions and customs that discover its reflection in society’s values, attitudes, and beliefs (Wilhelmsen, 2005).

A person believing in God must live and take care of himself and his relatives and must not anger the Most High. Those sentiments are alive in the society and they are reflected in national proverbs that are not just stable word combinations but truly effective social guidelines and moral and religious foundations.

"Dala din chuna so reza vu" (I accept everything that God sends me); "Dala yogyazgyya ma gyoil sona" (may God not be angry with me); "Dala dika vu“ (God is merciful); "Dala kera dya della asa iza“ (I submit it to God’s judgment); "Dala kerakh du iza“ (everything is in God’s hands) (Musaeva, 2009).

As a consequence, one of the most commonly adopted attitudes is the “downward comparison.” In that connection one recalls the story of a woman whose brother had disappeared:

“I was returning from the next mass burial ground. I had not found my brother there and I was traveling by bus and crying. A woman who sat beside me asked what had happened. I told her. She sympathized and then said: ‘My three children and my mother were killed in a bombing.’ And I thought that God was kind to me” (Musaeva, 2009, p.589)
For people in Chechnya and Ingushetia, their religiosity is a powerful factor of survival in the ordeals of life. “Everything is from God. If it is God’s will we’ll survive, if God wants so we’ll die. Neither the authority nor the enemy can destroy and break us.” An excerpt from Sultan Yashurkaev’s book provides another good illustration of this attitude. The author quotes a story narrated by a neighbor with whom he survived the bombardments of Grozny during the First Chechen War:

In his youth Saparbi was imprisoned. He was sentenced to ten years. Together with some other boys he looted a shop and also committed some other things. He said they had done all that because of hunger and desire. He was the only Chechen at the camp and his nickname was Tame Beast. He was a refuser at the camp, that is, he refused to work. He would pierce a vein in his leg with a sewing needle and inject some milk there (when he happened to get at least a drop of that precious liquid).

As a result, the leg would swell and he did not have to go to cut timber. They would keep him in the solitary punishment chamber for a long time, only in his underwear. There was a real frost in that incarceration cell with snow flowing from beneath. Then, another Chechen arrived at the camp. He was over thirty. He said: “Saparbi, don’t despair, their court is not a court. We will serve as much time as God has sentenced us to. Do not damage your health and do not mutilate yourself, but just go to work.” And Saparbi went to work and could not live without work anymore. Two years after Stalin’s death he was released. He served five years and two months (Yashurkaev, 1999).

1.2.3. Chechnya. From War to State Terror

The second war in Chechnya recalls the „Dirty Wars“ in Latin America. They have a lot in common, and the differences are mainly connected to geopolitical changes in history. The „Dirty Wars“ in Latin America were the result of the Cold War. The war in Chechnya was a „response“ to the global war on terror (or its product). In both cases, „noble“ aims were declared that in reality turned out to be nothing else than State terror against its own population using the same methods of intimidation. As Emma Gilligan (2010) characterizes it, „the Russian government’s immediate aim was to enforce the subservience of the Chechen population by sustaining an atmosphere of fear within the territory. The Russian armed forces terrorized Chechen civilians in the hope of wearing down the material and psychological support case of the separatist movement. A principal objective of the Russian government was the subjugation of the population and the elimination of Chechnya’s intellectual and political elite. The intent, it appears, was
not to destroy the entire Chechen population but to exert control through fear and the military tactics of periodic summary executions, enforced disappearances, rape, torture, detainment, and humiliation. This, as one Chechen civilian claimed, was „worse than a war“ (Gilligan 2010, p. 5).

The first Chechen war (December 1994 – August 1996) ended with the signing of a peace agreement by Russian and Chechen authorities, the so-called Khasavyurt Accord. With the withdrawal of Russian troops the time of “quasi-independence” started. But the “honeymoon” of the time without war did not last long. Chechnya fell into a period of war-lordism (Kramer, 2004), with a collapse of the economy, the inability to pay out wages and social allowances, poverty, devastation, rampages of crime, human abductions and trafficking, and the authorities’ impotence to effectively fight this deplorable situation. The hostile environment around Chechnya superimposed itself on the difficult relations inside the Republic: because of the human abductions, the world denied sympathy to Chechnya (Musaeva, 2009).

In 1999 the Russian government launched a second war, justifying this as a reaction to a raid into the neighboring republic of Dagestan by a group of radical Chechen Islamists and to a series of explosions that hit apartment blocks in Moscow and Southern Russia (Williams, 2001). Then Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin commanded Russian troops to re-establish control over the troubled republic using “all available means” (Putin, 1999). „All available means“ included, among other things, the bombing of Grozny, including all its residential areas using weapons of mass destruction (Point-U missiles with cluster warheads equipped with pellet bombs). According to Amnesty International, only one day of bombing, at the very beginning of the war on 21 October 1999, of the center of Grozny (central market, mosque and a maternity hospital, caused the death of 137 civilians, including 12 mothers and 15 babies in the hospital, and over 400 injured (Sané, 1999)

As a result, civilians rushed to leave the republic. But they found that they were “no longer civilians.” Due to restrictions imposed by General Shamanov, who led the Russian 58th Army in Chechnya's western sector, already on 25 September the administrative borders with the neighboring republics were blocked for all residents of Chechnya. But President of Ingushetia Ruslan Aushev refused to carry out the order and let into Ingushetia the stream of refugees from Chechnya. Having a population of about 300,000, Ingushetia received about 200,000 refugees1 (International Crisis Group, 2012). Thus, Ingushetia shared the humanitarian “side” of the war in Chechnya

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1 We call them „refugees“ though their official status was IDP's (internal displaced people).
Apparently, the original plan was that neither the population nor any information about what was going on inside Chechnya was supposed to reach out of the republic (Hilligan, 2010). Chechnya was closed for independent journalists and human rights activists. Only through refugees information began to leak out. But for the ordinary people in Russia the main resource of information was TV, which was not free anymore and which broadcast about the war in pure propaganda style (Gakaev, 2002). In such a situation the news played for the people in Chechnya the same role as a barometer forecast for climbers captured by a snowstorm. Little depends on it and they try to find out what to expect from the outside world, an end of violence, support, or new aggression.

But if in the first war (Yeltzin’s time) there were different opinions and protest against the war in Chechnya, with Putin was all this ended. Almost full censorship – both physical and legislative - was introduced in the media (Cherkasov, 2007; Cornell, 2003). In spite of the fact that from the very first days of the war independent journalists and human rights NGO’s could manage to publish information about the real situation there, the official news - which was the only available news in Chechnya and Ingushetia - reported the opposite. So the informational war was won from the very beginning (Cherkasov, 2003; Khasbulatov, 2002; Sakwa, 2004).

There is the opinion that the war was mainly caused by the military, which could not accept the Chechen’s „victory“ in the first war. And for them the new war was some kind of chance for revenge. „We almost won this war (meaning the first war), but politicians have stolen the victory from us (...)“ “Now that peacekeepers, journalists, and human rights activists cannot prevent the military from fulfilling its duties, victory will be achieved more rapidly or has already been achieved” (Cherkasov 2007, p.47)

Chechens were dehumanized, in a racially bigoted manner, and depicted as “terrorists,” “bandits,” “wild people,” „blacks,” “cockroaches,” or „bedbugs” (Sakwa, 2004). In fact, not knowing whom among them was a fighter, the Russian military perceived the whole population as fighters or their supporters (Brodsky, 2004).

Since the start of the Second War in October 1999 one and the same phrase has been voiced in interviews about the violence. When people tried to resist arbitrariness and reminded authorities about the law, the reply was always, "What law?! You are a Chechen!” (Musaeva, 2009, p. 583) This attitude was even publicly verbalized by General Shamanov, who said in an interview that “he viewed his image as a cruel general (referring to his cruelty toward local people in Chechnya) as a compliment and stated that he believed the wives and children of rebel fighters were also bandits who needed to be destroyed” (Smirnov, 2007).
The commander of the Russian military forces in the Northern Caucasus, Lieutenant General Viktor Kazantzev, commanded the closing of the borders for all Chechen males between the ages of ten and sixty. A system of filtration camps was organized in Chechnya, which was both cruel and unlawful. The filtration camp Chernokozovo became synonymous with atrocities and torture (Human Rights Watch, 2000). It was among the first and most “famous” filtration camps. Soon, the practice spread all over the republic. The usage of filtration camps (which, practically, were illegal detention centers) was an integral part of the clean-up operations which became a common and tragic part of the Chechen war. If an operation did not result in any dead, kidnapped, or vanished people, it was considered a “soft” one, even when there were cases of torture, beating, insults, humiliation, and extortion (Gilligan, 2010; Mnatsakanyan, 2007).

“Hard” clean-up operations were real nightmares for civilians. After the surrounding of a village by soldiers and armored vehicles, the behavior of the military was literally atrocious. They set about beating and shooting the inhabitants and plundering their houses. To avoid detention or death, the residents had to pay up to few hundred dollars. Detained people (usually men) were brought to a filtration station where they were subjected to cruel torture. Some of them were released, some bought out by relatives. But some were killed or simply disappeared (Baisaev & Grushkin, 2003, 2008). „Far from seeking to rectify these abuses, the commanding officers frequently condoned them or turned a blind eye“ (Kramer, 2004/2005). Along with the clean-up operations, disappearances became the enduring hallmark of the war. Human Rights Watch (2004) stated that the practice of disappearances reached such a scale that it constituted a crime against humanity (under the definition of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court). According to the Memorial Human Rights Center, around 5,000 people disappeared during the second Chechen war, adding that their monitoring only covered one third of the territory of the republic. The local government in Chechnya spoke of about 3,000 disappearances (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

1.2.4. Complete impunity²

In a situation in which state-backed forces commit crimes and one’s own government cannot fulfill its obligation to protect its citizens and to find the perpetrators, it even plays the contrary role of establishing a system guaranteeing to perpetrators the absence of accountability. In Chechnya, only very few cases were

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² After his visiting Chechnya (2004) Then Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Alvaro Gil Robles characterized the situation in Chechnya as “complete impunity.”.
It is important to note that already in summer of 2000, the Prosecutor’s offices officially functioned in all regions of the republic, which led to a more ambivalent situation for victims, obliging them to play their role in “pretending” to have democracy and rights (Baisaev & Grushkin, 2003). Nevertheless, in cases of disappearances people tried to use the law, as it was their last and only recourse to find the missing person (Gilligan, 2010; Orlov & Cherkasov, 2012). To a lesser extent, but also often, people were ready to write to the Prosecutor’s office in cases of summary executions. In torture cases, however, people rarely turned to the Prosecutor’s office. If a person was illegally detained, kidnapped, tortured, and then released, and didn’t disappear, the story was considered have a “happy ending.” A vivid example is the appeal to the Prosecutor after the brutal mass clean-up operation in the village Sernovodsk (2001), which became publicly known, because it is located near the border with Ingushetia and had been relatively stable before (later this district ceased being stable or safe). During this operation, the residents of the village were brutally tortured, and two persons disappeared. The victims of the clean-up operation submitted 175 complaints to the Prosecutor’s office. Later, “some of the complaints were renounced” as a result of intimidation (Baisaev & Grushkin, 2008).

According to the Public Prosecutor of Chechnya in February 2003, the office was conducting 1,163 criminal investigations into the abductions of approximately 1,700 persons in Chechnya. Two years later, in February 2005, Taus Jabrailov (then State Council Chairman in Chechnya) said that the prosecutor’s office had opened 1,814 criminal cases into the abductions of 2,540 people that occurred between 1999 and 2005 (Human Rights Watch, 2005). Only in three criminal cases concerning disappearances were perpetrators sentenced (Orlov & Cherkasov, 2012).

The opening of a criminal case gave some kind of hope to the victims, which later turned out to be a ruthless “litigation” for them. Investigators refused to conduct any form of investigation and made no efforts to find the perpetrators. In cases when victims had information which could contribute to an investigation (e.g. the license plate number of the car in which a person had been abducted, or the name of an officer in the unit responsible for the disappearance), the information was often ignored. Most of the criminal cases opened were suspended or closed after a few months, “due to the impossibility of establishing the identity of the perpetrators” (Domac, 2010; Leach, 2008; Orlov & Cherkasov, 2012; PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, 2004).
According to the Human Rights Center Memorial, four-fifths of all cases opened by the prosecutor's office were closed or suspended (Memorial, 2001).

One more established „system of irresponsibility“ is the handing-over of cases from the civilian procuracy to the military prosecutor with the intention and result of „sticking“ the case between the two offices (Memorial, 2003). The saddest thing is that the victims keep visiting these offices for years, as this is the only place for them „connected“ with the „huge and powerful machine of violence“ which has taken away their relatives. It goes without saying that such a situation generates an unprincipled system of corruption in which some “go-betweens” extort money from relatives of the missing, and the relatives pay, in many cases even a few times (Baisaev & Grushkin, 2003).

At the same time the Russian judicial system easily „investigated“ and passed sentence upon the other side of the conflict, the Chechen fighters. According to numerous human rights reports, these criminal cases were often fabricated, and the use of torture for obtaining (often false) information became a common and widespread practice. This situation was reflected in a statement of the European Committee against Torture (European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, 2007).

1.2.5. The „Chechenization“ of the Conflict

In 2004, the Kremlin began the gradual “Chechenization” of the conflict. On the one hand, there still was the established power division between the centers in Moscow and Chechnya, on the other hand a lot of power was given over to the pro-Moscow Chechen authorities in Grozny, including the de facto control of law-enforcement personnel (Gilligan, 2010; International Crisis Group, 2012). In particular, they were given the task of hunting down the rebel fighters. „The conflict, originally a Russian-Chechen war, added a new, inter-Chechen, dimension. The task of achieving a true stabilization became substantially more complex“ (Lokshina 2007, p.83). At the same time, the Chechens-against-Chechens situation helped Putin to „be spared much of the unwelcome, albeit half-hearted international condemnation of the inhuman treatment of Chechen civilians by Russian troops“ (Russel 2006, p. 945).

The pro-Moscow Chechen government changed their tactics. No more mass clean-up operations were needed. Their hunt became more selective and targeted, which led to a decrease in the number of illegal detentions and disappearances, and the life of people not directly involved in the conflict became a little safer (Dmitrievsky, 2009; International Crisis Group, 2012). Somehow it resulted in the transformation of the war
situation into a *State-terror special regime* established in one particular part of Russia (Memorial, 2009).

The turning point in the history of the conflict was the story of the ‘surrender’ of Magomed Khambiev – then Minister of Defense of the separatist Chechen government. In March 2004, forty of Khambiev’s family members – including both close and distant relatives - were illegally arrested, kidnapped in different areas across Chechnya. Among them were also women. Khambiev was forced to surrender. Gilligan (2010) describes this case as having caused a massive blow to the morale of the Chechen separatist movement. One could argue that it was “a blow to the morale of the whole Chechen population” and a strong message to them – it was the end of the era of collective punishment (as conducted during the time of the rule of the Russian forces) and the beginning of a new era of the alleged “responsibility” of the relatives of fighters. Since then, the hostage-taking of relatives by law enforcement personnel (or other power structures) became a “normal” practice. Taking into account that Chechen society has strong and deep family structures (Łukasiewicz, 2011), this practice quickly brought results. There was no longer open solidarity among the people. If earlier any illegal detention in a village led to public protest actions of the villagers, now everyone remained sitting at home, afraid to show compassion. Understanding the “the social texture of Chechen society, he (Ramzan Kadyrov, the head of the pro-Moscow forces in Chechnya) established a more effective, but not less brutal, structure than the Russian armed forces. The political culture changed irrevocably” (Gilligan 2010, p.83). Fear and suspicion pervaded the entire society and deeply undermined the national identity (Lokshina, 2007; Raubisko, 2011).

After the tragedy in Beslan, then Russian Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov attempted to legalize the lawlessness, suggesting that the Russian Duma should adopt a new law allowing “counter hostage-taking” – detaining rebel fighters’ relatives in order to force the fighters to surrender”(Caucasian Knot News, 2005). Later, Ustinov retracted his suggestion, but nevertheless it became one more message to the Chechens that they are outside the law in their own country, without any protection. With its Chechenization, the conflict was radicalized (Cornel, 2003). Since March 2005, after the killing of the president of separatist Chechnya (Ichkeria) Aslan Maskhadov, who was politically and religiously a moderate leader, the war in Chechnya stopped being a war for independence. In October 2007, the new head of the rebels, Doku Umarov, declared the „Caucasian Emirate“ and himself the „Emir of the Caucasian Emirate“. He declared „all titles used by nonbelievers to divide Muslims, including any ethnic and territorial divisions of the Caucasus, unlawful“ (Chronology of Russian and Chechen Relations 2007, p.29)
1.2.6. International Organizations and the Human Rights Crisis in the North Caucasus

In the framework of intergovernmental organizations with a mandate to express concerns, request further information and make recommendations regarding the human rights situation in a given country, one cannot claim that there was a general effortlessness vis-à-vis war crimes and other grave human rights violations committed in the North Caucasus during the second Chechen war, but one can see that, relative to the cause, the reactions were very few.

Within the UN system, the UN Human Rights Commission adopted resolutions in 2000 and 2001 entitled “Situation in the Republic of Chechnya of the Russian Federation” (Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2000, 2001), expressing its grave concerns about “reports indicating disproportionate and indiscriminate use of Russian military force,” and in particular about “forced disappearances, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, torture, arbitrary detentions, ad hoc detention locations and continued abuses and harassment at checkpoints by Russian State agents in the Republic of Chechnya” (Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2001). Russia was asked to allow a presence of the OSCE in Chechnya, as well as visits of the relevant UN Special Rapporteurs. After 2002, such draft resolutions did not get majority votes any longer.

At the beginning of 2006, Moscow first agreed to let the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture visit Russia, including Chechnya, but later did not agree on the standard terms “with respect to carrying out unannounced visits, and holding private interviews with detainees” (United Nations Press Release, 2006). Likewise, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, and Arbitrary Executions also did not receive the necessary invitation to visit and report on Chechnya. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, could visit the North Caucasus in 2006, and expressed afterwards that she was deeply shocked by accounts of torture and kidnappings in Chechnya (BBC News, 2006).

The OSCE tried to have an OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya and to get as wide a mandate as possible. This Assistance Group had been founded in April 1995, and its mandate had also been “to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the establishment of facts concerning their violation” and to “promote the peaceful resolution of the crisis ... and pursue dialogue and negotiations” (OSCE). It withdrew from Grozny to Moscow in December 1998 due to security concerns. In June 2001, after long negotiations, it could redeploy in Chechnya, but only in Znamenskoye (in the northwestern border area of the republic) and with a limited mandate. Moscow
did not allow them to contribute to a political solution. At the end of 2002 it had to leave Russia altogether.

The Russian Federation had become a member of the Council of Europe (CoE) in the beginning of 1996, and this despite the fact that it did not meet the formal accession criteria of being a democratic state governed by the rule of law and respecting human rights (Melzer, 2012). Already on 4 November 1999, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE (PACE) reacted to the beginning of the second Chechen War with a special meeting of its Standing Committee and asked Russia “to avoid military raids against the civil population” (Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1201, 1999). At the end of 1999, a delegation visited the North Caucasus, held talks with the Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, and recommended immediate negotiations and a ceasefire. PACE repeated its demand to solve the conflict peacefully and with political means. After all this was ignored by the Russian Federation, and ever more news about grave human rights violations against the civil population emerged, in April 2000 PACE rejected the accreditation of the Russian deputies, in effect taking away their voting power for several months. It insisted “that the Russian Federation fulfil its obligations arising from the Statute of the Council of Europe and international humanitarian law” (Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1456, 2000), and the co-member states were asked to make an interstate complaint against Russia before the EctHR (as had been done vis-à-vis Turkey in 1980). However, other CoE bodies, such as the Committee of Ministers in May 2000, foiled this critical approach.

Monitoring happened particularly through the PACE Political Affairs Committee and the PACE Legal Affairs Committee, which both issued several thorough and critical reports and resolutions. For example the PACE resolution 1323 of 2 April 2003 called on “member states of the Council of Europe to pursue all avenues of accountability with regard to the Russian Federation without further delay, including interstate complaints before the European Court of Human Rights and the exercise of universal jurisdiction for the most serious crimes committed in the Chechen Republic” and considered that, “if the efforts to bring to justice those responsible for human rights abuses are not intensified, and the climate of impunity... prevails, the international community should consider setting up an ad hoc tribunal to try war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Chechen Republic” (Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1323, 2003).

The Secretary General of the CoE, Walter Schwimmer, sent two letters to the Russian Foreign Minister asking for “explanations concerning the manner in which the Convention is currently being implemented in Chechnya, and the risks of violation which may result,” asking specifically which measures the Russian government and its
administration would undertake to prevent human rights violations and to punish those that occurred. This was the first time a Secretary General of the Council of Europe had exercised this right with regard to an individual country (Council of Europe, 1999). Finally, three staff members of the CoE were allowed to work within the office of the Russian Human Rights Envoy to Chechnya, Vladimir Kalamanov. They worked there between June 2000 and April 2003, when Russia abruptly withdrew its security guarantee.

The CoE Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited Chechnya nine times between 2000 and 2006, a very high number, not reached in any other region. It issued three public statements on Chechnya, „action it will only take if a state fails to cooperate or refuses to improve the situation in the light of the Committee's recommendations“ (Leach, 2008). In 2007, it reported on the Russian authorities’ consistent refusal to engage with the CPT on core issues.

Beginning in January 2000, the CoE Human Rights Commissioner, Alvaro Gil-Robles, visited Chechnya altogether six times, which is more than to any other region, and also his successor, Thomas Hammarberg, continued with visits. After each visit he made recommendations to the Russian authorities.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stopped its program of visiting prisons in the North Caucasus in September 2004 because the Russian authorities had begun to refuse them the right to meet in private with prisoners.

1.2.7. The European Court on Human Rights (ECtHR)

Among the unexpected dimensions of the situation for the Russian government, the judicial „involvement“ in the war in Chechnya of the European Court on Human Rights was one of the more important ones. The Kremlin was prepared for the second Chechen war, considering the mistakes of the first one. But in the period between the wars Russia joined the Council of Europe (in 1998), which changed the situation in some respects (Orlov & Cherkasov, 2012). Researchers and lawyers agree that, given the situation of impunity in Chechnya itself, the ECtHR in Strasbourg was one of the most important legal recourses for the people in Chechnya (Gilligan, 2010; Dmitrievsky, 2008; Cherkasov, 2012). And this despite the fact that this was (and still is) dangerous for applicants and their relatives (IHF, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, 2004), and that the procedure itself requires patience from the applicants. Although the first Chechen complaints were filed with the Court in the first half of 2000, the first decision was handed down only in 2005 (Leach, 2008).
The ECtHR has so far examined 184 complaints from residents of the North Caucasus, of which 164 concerned inhabitants of the Chechen Republic. 77% concerned cases of disappearances, only a few concerned torture (Orlov & Cherkasov, 2012). In all these cases, the rulings of the Court were only partly fulfilled by the Russian Federation. Russia did pay the ordered compensation, but it did not investigate the cases, even when the perpetrators were detectable. For example, in February 2000, Russian forces killed 56 local people in the suburb of Grozny, Novye Aldi. In 2007, the ECtHR established the guilt of the Russian State. There was a lot of evidence that the massacre was committed by the OMON detachment of Saint Petersburg. Nevertheless, while the State paid off the compensation imposed by the Court, it did not take a step towards a real investigation and bringing the perpetrators to justice (Memorial, 2010).

1.2.8. Ingushetia. How it Got Involved in the Conflict

1.2.8.1. Ingushetia and Chechnya in the Soviet time. Their common „history of injustice“

On 23 February 1944, all the Chechen and Ingush population (around 400,000 people) were deported to remote regions of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (Campana, 2007). The degree of cruelty in this process of expulsion is exemplified by the Khaibakh massacre. When the Russian NKVD realized that the people from the remote village Khaibakh could not be transported to the railway station for their further deportation, all of them - around 700 people, including newborn children and women - were locked in a wooden stable and then burned alive (Gaev et al., 1994).

Until 1957 Chechens and Ingush had to try to survive in their exile. Meanwhile, Grozny had become a typical Russian city and the former territory of the Checheno-Ingushetia had been divided between the neighboring republics (International Crisis Group, 2012).

The psychological effects of deportation is reflected in the words of the Ingush film director Sulambek Mamilov, who was six years old when his family was deported: "When one rings the bell at the door - that is ok. But if someone knocks – then my first thought is that it is the sound of a rifle butt and they came to evict us. This feeling of being guilty without guilt I have all my life long. I’d really want my children..., no, not children but my grandchildren to get rid of this feeling." (Mamilov, 2010)

In 1957, with the end of deportation, the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic was restored. Ironically, the years following deportation until the collapse of Soviet
Union are considered by the Chechens and Ingush as the most “stable” period in their history. And this despite the fact that the rehabilitated people were still treated as “unreliable,” as “bandits,” and as “counter-revolutionaries” (Malek, 2008). Memories about the past were banned and history rewritten. It was impossible to mention deportation, and Soviet historians falsified the Caucasian war, stating that Chechens joined Russia on a voluntary basis (Vinogradov & Usmanov, 1982), in spite of the fact that the “two-hundred-year long war” with Russia is one of the most persistent myths among Chechens (Mnatsakanyan, 2007).

Hence historical memory as a history of repression and injustice became one of the main differentiating feature of ethnic identity (according to ethno-psychologists like Stefanenko, 2003, Smoliz 1988). If a differentiating feature of ethnic identity is forbidden and suppressed by the authorities it becomes more actualized than others. The memories of Stalin’s deportation are alive in every family (Campana, 2009).

It is not surprising that along with the democratic changes in the USSR “repressed memory” played a crucial role. In 1991, the then Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic divided into two parts. While Chechens declared their independence from Russia, the Ingush people decided to remain (Gvareli, 2009). One reason for this decision was the hope that the new government of democratic Russia would return to the Ingush people their ancestral lands, the Prigorodniy district, which had been allotted during the deportation time to neighboring North Ossetia. These hopes were not realized. Already in autumn 1992, the first inter-ethnic conflict after the collapse of the Soviet Union in Russia took place, between the Ingush and the Ossetians. This conflict, and its consequences, have still not been settled. Moscow took the side of the Ossetians (Human Rights Watch, 1996), which was an additional coin for the “moneybox of injustice.”

Despite the formal separation, Ingushetia kept its economic, family, and cultural ties with Chechnya. In 1994, on the first day of the first war in Chechnya, unarmed Ingush people blocked the roads preventing federal forces from moving into Chechnya (Memorial, 2005; Nunuev, 2012).

1.2.8.2. Ingushetia and the Second War in Chechnya

In the second war Ingushetia played a crucial role as it was the only region in Russia which accepted people from the war-zone. For a few years, Ingushetia was a safe place for refugees. People lived under difficult conditions but they felt secure (International Crisis Group, 2012).

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3 The word Ingush comes from the name of the village Angusht, which today belongs to North Ossetia.
Until the year 2004 there were some cases of enforced disappearances which were mainly related to the “search” for fighters among the Chechen refugees. The turning point came after a large-scale raid into Ingushetia by the rebels from Chechnya in the night of 21 to 22 June 2004. As a result of the attack 56 persons were killed, among them the republic’s Interior Minister, his deputy, top prosecutors, and more than 40 Ingush policemen (Memorial, 2004). According to investigators, among the fighters were local Ingush residents.

The population of the republic, indignant over the attack, expected an adequate reaction from law enforcement agencies and was ready to support them. But the security agencies used techniques learned from Chechnya, such as illegal detentions and torture, as their first reply. And this reply was not directed only against those suspected of having been involved in the attack, but also against their relatives.

The prosecutors refused to take statements from victims, and the Ingush residents felt the first time how it is to be outside the law. Impunity started to bear results also in Ingushetia. People could no longer rely on law enforcement structures and felt helpless and insecure. The State deprived them of their right to be equal citizens. They could not protect their family members from unpredictable violence (Memorial, 2004). As a result, the population, which did not join Chechnya in its quest for independence and voluntarily stayed within Russia, felt itself to be second-class persons. How could that happen? The answer is probably rooted in the general attitude toward Caucasian people in Russia. For many Russians there is no difference between Chechens or Ingush. Caucasophobia (fear from “persons of Caucasian nationality”) is widespread in Russia, a racial phenomenon which, according to Russell (2006) „helps to remove moral obstacles to the inhuman treatment of Chechens and their neighbors” (p. 5).

After the tragic events in Beslan - a city near the border of North Ossetia and Ingushetia - where among the terrorists were Ingush too, the security apparatus got a full carte blanche for “fighting terrorism” in Ingushetia in whatever way they deemed it appropriate.

Likewise, the fabrication of criminal cases began in Ingushetia as well. Often a person was kidnapped in broad daylight and in the presence of witnesses. The person then vanished for several days, and his family knew nothing about his location, while law enforcement authorities denied the fact of his detention. During this time, the person who had disappeared was severely tortured with a view to extract confessions against himself and others. To stop this torture most persons were ready to give any names, which then was followed by the abduction of the newly named persons. After that the detention was “legalized,” i.e. his relatives were informed that their son had
been officially arrested and they were allowed to hire a lawyer. But a lawyer could do little in such circumstances and all hopes remained for the trial. Article 15 of the Convention against Torture (CAT) states that “any statement which is established to have been made as a result of torture shall not be invoked as evidence in any proceedings” (Ghandi, 2008), but Russian judges often simply ignored appeals which referred to this Article and dismissed them without examining the case. Only juries in jury trials sometimes accepted it and ruled in favor of the defendants, which did not protect the acquitted persons from subsequent persecution. For example, on 2 February 2006, Murad Margoshvili, being accused of terrorism, was acquitted, but immediately following the judgment armed men in camouflage stormed into the courtroom looking for him. Margoshvili was able to escape the court building but was forced to flee the country altogether (Politkovskaya, 2006). No wonder that Memorial named its report about the situation in Ingushetia „A conveyor of violence” (Memorial, 2005).

One has to mention that the main role in this „conveyor“ belongs not to the local police but to the Russian security services. There are many cases when local police arrived at a “special operation” spot but were not allowed by people in masks to approach. There were cases when the president of Ingushetia publicly promised to find the missing relatives or to protect a prosecuted family but had no mechanisms to fulfill his promise (Memorial, 2005).

So Ingushetia is going through its own time of impunity, when human rights are deliberately ignored, out-of-court executions committed, suspects tortured, criminal cases falsified, and detained persons often disappear or die.

The unbearable situation of uncertainty, fear of violence (particularly torture), injustice, the humiliating attitude of the Russian secret services toward the local police and the local government represented the structure of power within the society. Outrageous lies in the media lead to the widening influence of the radical Islamic movement among the youth, strengthened the position of local underground groups, and destabilized the situation. „The cruelty of investigations and judicial arbitrariness are common knowledge among the republic’s population. Over the years, many people have developed well-grounded discontent and even hatred towards representatives of the public authorities. The militants thus find acceptance on the part of the victims of such violations and people who are seeking to avenge their relatives thus becoming a mobilization base for the guerrillas. The reasons for taking up arms could be simple protest against injustices committed by the authorities and the arbitrariness of the siloviks” (Memorial 2008).
The perception or experience of impunity in the region is determined by political, historical, and cultural peculiarities. Therefore, memories here are suppressed but not repressed and are “waiting in the wings.” These memories promote complex emotions of “feeling guilty without guilt” (particularly since the deportation time), on the one hand, and lack of trust in the State and the State’s law on the other. This may develop into attitudes giving a meaning to injustice and impunity – no expectations, no disappointments, trusting only in God and relying only on themselves.

Religiosity may be here one of the most prevailing coping strategies, accepting everything going on not as “someone's will,” but only God’s will, which one must undergo and suffer through. Another important factor is the attitude to punishment. A deep belief in the inevitable judgment and punishment of God makes impunity as such impossible.

On the individual level, strong demands on men’s behavior not allowing them to fear or at least to show their fear may lead to more traumatization.

1.2.9. Conclusion

The perception or experience of impunity in the region is determined by political, historical and cultural peculiarities. Thus, as a result of post-Soviet events a new pattern of relationship between the State and the individual was established in the region. And impunity became one of the integral parts of that relationship.

In the Soviet era the State was perceived as something alien, interfering with the internal life of the community with its rules and traditions. “…relations between the state and society could be viewed as intergroup relations, where the state had a high status as an ‘out-group,’ a stranger to the people” (Stepanenko, 2009, p. 140). Despite the fact that there was always some kind of confrontation with the State (manifested in latent opposition), “a lot of thin threads connected the people to the state” (Lurie, 1994, p.125) and some protection functions were delegated to it (reflecting its paternalistic attitude and the corresponding expectation of paternal care). In Chechnya and Ingushetia, this expectation was not fulfilled and people became ever more alienated from the State.

Soon after the beginning of the second Chechen war people realized that it was not a war against terrorists (as it was officially declared to be), but rather a war against the people. The State did not want people to find refuge, or to recognize them as civilians. Massive human rights violations were backed by an established regime of impunity. Prosecutors substituted a real investigation of crimes committed by representatives of
the State’s law enforcement agencies by the formal opening and suspension of criminal cases, demonstrating to the local people that they were outside the law and the protection of the state.

Today’s situation in Chechnya and Ingushetia has passed from war to a State-terror regime. Now, not only terrorists or those suspected of being terrorists are persecuted, but also all the members of their families. If earlier the family or the clan as a psychological community had not only a value-oriented but also a protective function, in the situation of impunity these functions are suspended. This can cause a blow to the social and national identity, and lead to the dethronement of or disappointment in group beliefs (uniting people and differentiating them from out-groups). But more important than this is the tendency that it deprives the people of the mechanisms for coping with trauma which had traditionally existed within the society. Affiliation to community was one of them. Penetrated by fear, the community is not united as before and even avoids open contacts with persecuted families. Thus, where impunity reigns, victims and their families are socially excluded from society. There is no longer any social support for victims. And more than that, victims suffer from the awareness that they can become troublemakers for their family members and close friends.

On the other hand, the cultural attitude toward men, demanding that they be strong, and not allowing them to show any fear or emotion, can become an additional risk factor in the traumatization process.

At the same time, having an experience of surviving in a State without law may develop an attitude giving a meaning to injustice and impunity – no expectation, no disappointment, trusting only in God and relying only on themselves.

It is important to recognize that even if the we-image suffers from the situation in the region, religiosity remains untouched and constant. And it may be one of the most prevailing coping strategies, accepting everything that happens not as someone’s will, but rather only as God’s will to which one must submit. Another important factor here is the attitude to punishment. Deep beliefs about God’s inevitable judgment and punishment makes “impunity” as such impossible.
1.3. Traumatization in torture survivors and HR activists

1.3.1. Impunity as a shared social context for survivors of torture and human rights activists

A specific atmosphere, a culture of impunity (Afflitto, 1998; Derges, 2012; Fisher, 2002; Gill, 2004; Green, 1999; Loveman & Lira, 2006; McSherry, 1992; Opotow, 2001; Robben, 2005; Tyner, 2009), makes up the common social context not only for the survivors of torture and human rights activists but for all inhabitants of the region. Therefore, a proper understanding of the particular and common features of the psycho-social impact of impunity on these two target groups demands taking into consideration specific stressors and debilitating factors, which are intrinsically connected with key peculiarities of their shared environment.

Researchers underline the specificity of stressors in a situation of impunity, which is characterized by deliberate and systematic human rights violations (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Baeza, 2000; Cienfuegos & Monelli, 1983; Daniely, 2009; Dri et al., 2009; Edelman et al., 1998; Fields, 1996; Lira & Castillo, 1991; Lykes at el., 2007; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008; Sveaass & Lavik, 2000; Zur, 1994). The major distinctive factor lies in the causal attribution of the stressor. Cienfuegos and Monelli (1983) define the basis of these stressors as caused by traumatic political experiences, by repressive State policies of using its power and force especially to restrict and suppress human rights. Being a part of a power strategy, this causal characteristic has a particular temporal aspect, being chronic, repetitive, and enduring (Agger & Jensen, 1996). The power strategies by a State which are connected with impunity and create specific type of stressors include two basic forms: direct and indirect repression.

Direct repression is a vast category which comprises unlawful detention, torture, disappearances, executions, persecution, and killing members of the opposition (under false pretexts or not), threats etc. Evidently this strategy is aimed at both psychological impact and physical elimination (Orellana, 1989). Probably this form of repression is more familiar to torture survivors, who are most often its direct victims. Even though direct repression is less evident in case of human rights activists, it is still a very real problem for them as well. In Russia the State is unequivocal with regard to human rights workers (Gilligan, 2009) and the working climate for human rights activists, lawyers, and journalists dealing with human rights violation in the North Caucasus is hostile (Human Rights Watch, 2012). They face numerous threats and harassment by local authorities, attacks, abductions, torture, and even murder. Between 1999 and 2005,
thirteen HR-activists were killed and six disappeared in Chechnya (Gilligan 2009). And these crimes also spread far beyond Chechnya. In Moscow, for example, the independent Russian journalists Anna Politkovskaya (2006) and Anastasia Baburova (2009) were killed, as well as the independent Russian lawyer Stas Markelov (2009), who had participated in trials against Russian officers who had committed war crimes in Chechnya. In Ingushetia, Ingush opposition politician Maksharip Aushev was killed (2009), as well as Chechen human rights activist Nataljya Estemirova (2009). Numerous cases of threats and harassment are documented. According to Human Rights Watch impunity for all these abuses and murders of activists prevailed (Human Rights Watch, 2012). At the same time, not only victims of HR violations are intimidated into silence and do not dare shed light on the harassment and threats which they experienced, but even activists of the human rights movement. An example is quoted in a Human Rights Watch report (2012): „In spring 2011, a human rights activist in Chechnya was abducted and, according to the activist’s account, was beaten by armed servicemen and severely threatened. Upon release, the kidnappers specifically warned the activist to keep silent. The activist also received several similar warnings on the phone in the next few months."

The strategies of indirect repression can be divided into two categories. First, these are strategies under the immediate control of those who are in power: deprivation of basic subsistence needs (termination of employment, dispossession of housing, health care); denial of access to official power structures for protection; deliberate manipulation of information and distortion of facts. Thus, the primary level of indirect repression involves and is directed at a victim.

This kind of indirect repression is widespread in today's North Caucasus. For instance, on 7 April 2010 the mayor of Grozny, referring to the relatives of fighters, said: „From now on, for the relatives of unlawful enforcement agencies ‘all doors are closed’ and they shall be deprived of all rights (human) till their children stop committing inhuman acts against civilians“ (Memorial, 2010). As a punitive measure against the families of persons who are suspected of being involved in the activity of illegal armed groups authorities set their houses on fire, and „not infrequently the houses were set on fire with the members of the household inside“ ( Memorial, 2008, p. 26)

Media plays its special role in this type of repression. As during the Dirty Wars in Latin America, the State uses the media „to accuse the victims of serious crimes that impugned their honor and that of their families. Although the accusations were usually unfounded, the media’s failure to refute them caused predictable consequences for the victim’s social life and employment“ (Salimovich et al., 1992, pp. 77-78).
These consequences lead to the second level of indirect repression, which is caused by the influence of the State on society. This level can be illustrated by vast social campaigns and other activities which aim at marginalization (Agger & Jensen, 1996) or social (moral) exclusion (Opotow, 1990). “On 1 July 2009, A. Delimkhanov, State Duma Member representing Chechnya, said (televised by the Grozny TV channel), “We will meet the obligation assigned to us by President Ramzan. Allah willing, we will destroy those devils, those criminals, and those who assist them and those who support them in their thoughts.” They use the word “devil” (“Shaitan”) to describe the rebel fighters, and what the MP actually said was that people would be killed not only if suspected of having committed a crime, but also for a “thought crime” (Russian NGO’s Shadow report, 2012, p. 87). Moreover, this political strategy “wounds” internalized norms and values, making the impossible possible. This happens, for example, with the new practice of mocking the remains of killed people, demanding that their relatives disavow them, and the “refusal to give their bodies to their parents for burial” (Raubisko, 2011, p.107). These actions, in turn, shown on public TV, lead to ostracism, which “across the majority of traditional societies was always regarded as the worst form of punishment” (Memorial, 2009, p. 25).

Marginalization and social exclusion have different faces. On the one hand, these mechanisms support and foster the social truth as imposed by the State. On the other hand it divides and splits the society into a “good” (“correct,” “right”) part and a “bad” one, which leads to the impoverishment of social relations and forms of support, the reduction of cultural integration, and the feeling of belonging to a group.

This is especially obvious when dividing the HR movement into “good” and “bad” organizations. From the beginning of the second War in Chechnya the local HR community (at that time mainly based in Ingushetia) acted as a united front. According to Gilligan (2009) monitoring and documenting human rights violations was an organizing factor around which anger, fear, and disillusionment could grow together and find new ways in a search for truth and authenticity. This took place against the background of growing activity in public demonstrations, initiated by the local population. By 2001 “local resistance began to form an integral aspect of civilian defense for those brave enough to pursue it” (p. 163). The situation started to change when the new pro-Moscow Chechen government came into power, 2004-2005. These “ostensibly elected”(but de facto Moscow-appointed) authorities and their newly formed security forces manned by local ethnic Chechens were virtually allowed to operate outside the law. Their knowledge of the local customs and ways, family connections, social networks, etc., enabled them to act more selectively and effectively than the federal security forces” (Russian NGO’s Shadow Report, 2012).
At this particular juncture many NGO’s moved their offices to Chechnya and with that became less critical and often even pro-governmental. Public demonstrations faded away. As one of the most prominent Russian HR-activists Ludmila Alexeyeva expressed it: „The situation with the new government is still bad, but bad otherwise. The most important result of the decade is the fact that people in Chechnya are terrified and afraid to say another word, because doing that they put at risk all their family members. There are no longer any independent non-governmental organizations in the republic as they have to work under the total control of Chechen ombudsman Nukhazhiyev, who summons the leaders of those organizations, threatens them, and demands them to retract their words. He comes up with collective letters on behalf of human rights organizations and adds their signatures without asking them” (Seleznova, 2011).

In the event that NGO’s refuse to submit, they are declared “enemies of the State, enemies of the people and the law,” as was done by Chechen president Kadyrov in his interview with the local TV-channel (Memorial, 2010, p. 3). This not only leads to the reduction of the power of the human rights movement, but also creates distance between former comrades in the movement and to internal conflict, which must be seen as one more symptom of traumatization on the collective and group level (Agger & Jensen, 1995).

Infected by the State’s policy, society excuses and rationalizes the harm inflicted on the group of people, labeled as being outside the scope of justice. „Excluding others from the scope of justice means viewing them as unworthy of fairness, resources, or sacrifice, and seeing them as expendable, undeserving, exploitable, or irrelevant” (Opotow, 1990). As a consequence of social marginalization and exclusion, the „bad“ and „outside of justice“ part of society becomes deprived of its legal, social and political powers, and experiences a loss of skills and knowledge, of cultural integrity and self-esteem (CODEPU, 1989).

The „drop-out“group pays a terrible price for this exclusion. But society pays as well. It is understandable that these strategies may “infect” all society with pervasive fear (Lira & Castillo, 1991), which, together with manipulation of truth and marginalization, psychologically impacts the whole community.

In the research field of the social context of human rights activities and State terrorism, there is a tendency to distinguish the notion of truth as pivotal and consider its links and connections with other psycho-social phenomena: feelings, psychic strategies, choices, decision-making, etc. (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Becker, 2001; Dri et al., 2009; Lira, 1995; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008). In an impunity situation HR-activists and victims are „united“ by hidden reality (truth), which is avoided and denied by the
other part of the population. Under the influence of State terror they consider human rights and truth issues as a part of a conspiracy since they (human rights) are associated with extreme danger and death. One of the crucial notions connected with "truth" in the context of impunity is the notion of fear. The model of Elizabeth Lira (1995) puts it in the center of the causes of marginalization and describes it as the core of the marginalization mechanism. The predominant social reaction to political threat and fear is silence. The distinction of the people into victims and HR-activists and those who don't know resides again in the notion of truth. They know what is meant by „human rights issues”; they know the „truth” from their own experience.

Fear leads another part of the society to create dissimilar representations of human rights. This process is depicted by Castoriadis’ (1975) concept of the „social imaginary.” Lira uses this term to analyze the mechanism of marginalization, to describe how persecution, prison, torture exile, etc., may become different realities and fantasies to different social groups, and how the changes in their meaning is dependent on individual experience and social interaction related to „human rights.” „Fantasies – a mixture of memories, real experiences, desires, nightmares, fear of threats, and danger – were elements of projection. These different images or ‘interventions’ allowed people to fill the gap of official censorship and denial. As time passed, such meanings were transformed and apparently found a collective symbolization, in spite of all these contradictions” (Lira, 1995, p. 119). In any case a community split into two distinct parts suffers the distortion of reality. Salimovich and colleagues stress that „one of the goals of intimidation is to inhibit action by violently depriving individuals of their capacity to act, thereby interfering with the psychological process of reality testing. The impossibility of testing subjective experience against reality causes the boundaries between the real, the possible, the fantasized, and the imaginary to become blurred. Reality then becomes confused and threatening, without clear boundaries, and is no longer able to fulfill its role as guide of the subjective process” (Salimovich et al., 1992, p. 95). As a result, people disregard the consequences of human rights violations for the survivors and for society, as well as the real problem. Eventually, survivors and helpers become marginalized, which leads to the refusal of social and emotional support for them. Thus, the social context of marginalization, caused and maintained by impunity, is the shared environment for survivors of human rights violations and HR-activists.

1.3.2. Traumatization of torture survivors

Researchers and practitioners usually state that stressful life events are not equal in producing trauma-related disorder. It is widely acknowledged that events which
involve interpersonal violence and physical harm or threats to life are more likely to be traumatic than other kinds of highly stressful events such as natural disasters (e.g. APA, 1994, Breslau et al., 1999, Darves-Bornoz et al., 1998, Holbrook et al., 2001, Van Der Hart et al., 2006). This occurs for two reasons: first, this type of violence undermines our assumption in the benevolence of the world and of people, a disillusionment which can increase the risk of developing PTSD (Janoff-Bulman, 1992); secondly, interpersonal violence is usually aimed at “targeted” individuals, but not at the whole society, and suffering on one’s own may also contribute to PTSD (Atkinson and et al., 2007).

Furthermore, among all trauma events torture and kidnapping are associated with the highest risk of developing PTSD (50.8%), whereas the risk of PTSD following other traumatic experiences is around 9% on the average (Kessler et al., 1995; Peres et al., 2007). There is no doubt that not all types of torture are politically motivated and sanctioned. Here I will refer only to institutional and political torture and will not consider the other incidents.

### 1.3.2.1. Definition and historical aspect of using torture

According to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ,,torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity“ (UN 1995, p. 294). According to the former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak (2010), the UN definition covers four main elements: “an act inflicting severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental; the element of intent; the specific purpose; the involvement of a State official, at least by acquiescence”.

According to the World Medical Association, ,,torture is defined as deliberate, systematic or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering by one or more persons acting alone or on the orders of any authority, to force another person to yield information, to make a confession, or for any other reason“ (World Medical Association, 1975).

Okawa and Hauss understand torture as ,,an interpersonal trauma, the perpetration of cruel and sadistic acts by one human being upon another in an attempt
to shatter the self and break down the will to resist" (Okawa & Hauss, 2007). Stuart Turner (1993) also emphasizes that torture survivors are not just the victims of the threat of death or physical injury (as may occur in any kind of natural disaster), but they are also victims of „the focused attention“ of violators aiming to cause psychological change. This does not contradict the point-of-view of lawyers who see torture as an attack on the very core of human dignity (Nowak, 2012). “Torture itself is changing from a bodily-oriented atrocity towards a more psychological act, which leaves fewer scars and injuries” (Lueger-Schuster 2010, p.40). As a result the perversity of the intimate relationship (Ritterman, 1987) may contain the premeditated intention to destroy the normal coping and healing process (Stuart, 1993).

So, the overall aim of torture is to frighten the population into obedience and to destroy the victim, who is seen as an „internal enemy,” and to manipulate the people by displaying and demonstrating such power (Pesutic, 1989). Dehumanization and total control is the expected outcome of torture (Baker, 1992). The specificity of the trauma of torture is connected with the context (social, political, religious) of traumatization and relations between a victim and a perpetrator (Lueger-Schuster, 2010). Torture negatively impacts not only on the victim but also on the whole community to which he or she belongs (Campbell, 2007). As is emphasized in the definition given by the Center for Victims of Torture, “Torture is the deliberate and systematic dismantling of a person’s identity and humanity. The purpose of torture is to destroy a sense of community, eliminate leaders, and create a climate of fear” (The Center for Victims of Torture).

In order to distinguish torture from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, Nowak (2006) defines “the decisive criteria” as “the purpose of the conduct and the powerlessness of the victim, rather than the intensity of the pain or suffering inflicted” (para 39).

Behavioral psychologist Metin Başoğlu, on his side, argues that the UN definition does not consider the latest scientific evidence (Başoğlu, 2007, 2009), which does not confirm the difference between the long-term and immediate psychological impacts of CIDT (as any kind of psychological manipulations leading to fear, anxiety, and helplessness in a survivor) and physical torture. More than that, scholars state that CIDT is one of the „major determinants of the perceived severity of torture and psychological damage in detainees“ (Başoğlu, 2011).

On this basis, Başoğlu suggests some critical features of torture that differentiate it from other traumatic events. Among them are: intent, purpose, exposure to often multiple, uncontrollable, unpredictable, and potentially traumatic stressors which may
cause intense distress in most survivors, systematic and deliberate attempts to cut off survivors from any form of control to induce a condition of total helplessness and maximize the impact of the stressors (Başoğlu, 2011).

Unfortunately, even in the modern era of democracy and human rights, torture still survives, “albeit clandestinely, as a method of social control. Furthermore, the penal system is often based on confessions produced by torture or threats. Repressive structures generate terror through the threat of torture – in spite of its illegal nature – as in the case of the Latin American dictatorships and the so called ‘Dirty War’” (Dri et al., 2009, p. 206)

The use of torture has a long history. It is a long way from the time it was legal in the Middle Ages until its official elimination during the age of Humanism, Rationalism, and Enlightenment (Nowak, 2012).

According to the analysis of R. Foot (2006), torture served historically in four main contexts:

- when political agents acted on their sure and certain belief that a category of subhuman slaves existed, as reflected, for example, in the Nazi attitude towards the “barbarian” or “savage”;

- as the main tool for “criminal justice,” namely extracting confessions. In medieval times torture was incorporated into a judicial procedure. Considering confession as the “queen of proofs” contributed to torture becoming and remaining commonplace in countries lacking the presumption of innocence and also advanced interrogation, forensic, and other relevant skills;

- as an important reconstitutive function in a time of unconstrained royal power (Foucault). Through using torture the sovereign demonstrated his “absolute power over life and death,” through a punishment that was “both personal and public”;

- in modern history, terrorist tactics and political dissent and assassination have led to employing torture to acquire information or as means of deterrence and intimidation.

Regrettably, torture persists and today's manifestations of it echo these “traditional” functions of torture. In Nazi-Germany and Stalin’s Russia torture was even permitted and provided for by “the law” (Ingelse 2001, p. 30). De jure torture was banned in the Soviet Union, but the secret service officially instructed its officers to use the “old and tested technique” and Stalin himself wrote a memorandum considering that “physical pressure should still be used obligatorily, as an exception applied to known
and obstinate enemies of the people, as a method both justifiable and appropriate” (Ingelse, 2001, p. 30).

In the framework of the “Global War on Terrorism,” the use of torture returned to public discourse and a few countries developed some methods “to circumvent the absolute prohibition on practicing torture or CIDT” (Quiroga & Jaranson, 2008). The very concept of torture was subjected to semantics: “the use of force” in an interrogation to extract information has supplanted the word “torture,” since the measure and the scope of “force” are arbitrary; consequently, it is a way of legitimizing torture” (Deutsch, 2009). President Bush „signed into law the Military Commissions Act of 2006, which specifies certain interrogation techniques that are outlawed” (Okawa & Hauss, 2007). There is evidence of subjecting prisoners to torture, and of establishing secret prisons abroad. These facts violate the very principle of international law, according to which the “prohibition of torture and all others forms of CIDT is absolute and non-derogable. No exception is permitted under any circumstance, not even an emergency“ (Quiroga & Jaranson, 2008)

As then UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak stated in 2010, “the extraction of intelligence information in the context of the global fight against terrorism and the deliberate undermining of the absolute prohibition of torture, ill-treatment and the principle of anon-refoulement” (p.69) one of the major reasons of spreading of torture.

### 1.3.2.2. Epidemiology of torture

It is difficult to identify epidemiological evidence about the prevalence of torture. This information is usually distorted and underestimated (Green, 2003). Human rights groups have limited access to survivors, and therefore they can account for only a part of the cases. The Human Rights Center „Memorial,” which has been working in Chechnya since the beginning of the second Chechen War in 1999, continually monitors the situation in the conflict zone and has to admit that it covers only one third of the territory. Additionally, survivors often do not want to acknowledge their torture experience for shame, fear, or other reasons (Okawa and Hauss, 2007).

According to Nowak (2010), “torture is a global phenomenon. Only very few countries have managed to eradicate torture in practice. In the vast majority of States, torture not only occurs in isolated cases, but is practised in a more regular, widespread or even systematic manner“ (p.69).
Referring to refugees, Amnesty International states that “many of the world's 15 million refugees are torture victims” (Amnesty International, 2000b). These figures do not refer to the thousands of torture survivors (or maybe more) who did not flee but remained in their countries.

1.3.2.3. Torture in Russia

Torture in Russia is a latent and permanent phenomenon which is not linked only to the conflict in Chechnya. There are several reports by human rights NGO’s about police torture, torture of juveniles in state orphanages, torture in the military, and torture in prisons. It is on this basis that Human Rights Watch called torture in Russia a widespread activity (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Russia ratified the UN Convention against Torture and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1987 and 1998 respectively. The Russian Constitution states that international law has priority over domestic law and is directly applicable. But in practice in the courtrooms, “references to international law (and even to Russia's Constitution) often elicit smirks or irritation” (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

While the Russian Constitution (Article 21, part 2) states that “No one shall be subjected to torture, violence or other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment,” according to the Russian NGO’s Shadow Report to the UN Committee against Torture (2012), torture is not an official crime according the Russian Criminal Code.

Not being able to figure out the exact number of torture survivors in Russia, I refer to conversations with judges, cited by Human Rights Watch (1999), that in Russia from 50% to 80% of persons suspected of having committed a crime were subjected to torture during the course of their interrogations. Taking into account the anti-democratic trends in Russia over the past ten years, it is hard to imagine that this situation has been improved.

While considering the fifth periodic report submitted by the Russian Federation (2012) to the UN Committee against Torture, Alessio Bruni (Co-Rapporteur of the Committee) expressed surprise saying that “while ill-treatment in prison facilities had increased over the years, reaching 7,400 cases in 2009, criminal action had decreased.” Alessio Bruni sees the root of the problem in impunity – not the complete impunity; but in the sense that in case the perpetrators of torture are prosecuted – very often not using the articles related to torture – but others (abuse of power, attack and so on). (OHCHR, 2012)
Torture trauma in the North Caucasus has a specific pattern and dynamics. During the first years of the second War in Chechnya (1999-2004), trauma was more common and less private. Concrete examples are the so-called “clean-up operations” conducted by the representatives of the Russian Federal Army. Checking was done from house to house, accompanied by illegal mass arrests, torture, killings, and disappearances. This type of violence, when nearly the whole society had been involved, was linked to the political and social context and gave “supportive” meaning to suffering and strength to counteract the armed but anonymous enemy (protest movement). From 2004, the mass “clean-up operations” were replaced with targeted operations and conducted by small groups of representatives of the Secret Services or Chechen military (who were less anonymous and therefore more dangerous). As a result of these actions, trauma became more “private,” restricted to the affected victims and their families, leaving them on their own, stigmatizing and marginalizing them (Dmitrievsky at el., 2009).

1.3.2.4. Torture in the context of impunity

The situation connected with torture initiated by the State is very peculiar because of the justice system, which gets involved in the very core of traumatization and is loyal to power, protects its “rights” and positions. Because of this, “the torturers know beforehand that they will be protected for their evil practices by impunity, even in those few cases in which investigations advance and they are punished, because the benevolence of the system that protects and covers for them will immediately provide them with a pardon or it will compensate them with promotions in their careers” (Loewe, 2002).

Thus, the joint NGO Shadow Report submitted to the UN Committee Against Torture in October 2012 states that Chechnya’s authorities “have granted the uniformed forces total impunity; in this regard, Chechnya differs strikingly even from its closest neighbor republics” (Russian NGO’s Shadow Report 2012, p. 13)

On the other hand, torture as violence sanctioned by government in fact is the betrayal of the survivor by his own government and thus can be perceived as the loss of bonds of attachment, both symbolic and real. “Regardless of one’s conscious attitudes about one’s government, there tends to be a hope, or aspiration that it will embody parental qualities such as the provision of protection and security. The betrayal of these expectations, and thus loss of this form of attachment, compounds the impact of torture” (Saporta & van der Kolk, 1992, p.154).
1.3.2.5. Psychological impact of torture trauma in the context of impunity

One may suppose that traumatization by State torture in the context of impunity is one of the research domains in which “situational” theories predominate over “eventual” theories, that is, in the climate of impunity one deals with “repeated” (Herman, 1992), “cumulative” (Turner et al., 2006) traumas, consisting of long-term, multiple exposures to stressful events (Terr, 1991), which may lead to different psychological consequences, then one single-episode trauma (Campbell, 2007). Psychotherapists dealing with refugee-victims of violence organized by the State emphasize that victims often not only undergo a sequence of traumatic events, but continue to experience them even living in exile (Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008; van Willigen, 1992).

Along with the cumulative impact of trauma, scholars emphasize that its impact is also additive - surviving additional, different types of stressful events may lead to a greater traumatic effect (Turner & Lloyd, 1995; Turner et al., 2006) and summative – “the combination of event(s) plus impact is what individuals carry forward through time inscribed in memory, sense of self, and behavior” (Kammerer & Mazelis, 2006).

One of the theories of torture trauma in the context of impunity was elaborated by German psychotherapist David Becker, who lived in Chile for 17 years (from 1982 till 1999), dealing with victims of political repression. Becker combined several approaches (Becker, 2001): B. Bettelheim’s concept of an „extreme situation,“ which describes the experiences of survivors of Nazi concentration camps; the theory of cumulative trauma, which refers to the collective experience of stressful situations that gain “traumatic weight” in the process of accumulation; and the theory of “sequential traumatization” (Keilson, 1992), which emphasizes the stages and series in the development of a traumatic situation and its impact.

I refer to Becker’s definition (2001) of „extreme traumatization,“ which on my opinion, most corresponds to the process of traumatization in an impunity context. „Extreme traumatization is an individual and collective process that refers to and is dependent on a given social context; a process that is marked by its intensity, its extremely long duration and the interdependency between the social and the psychological dimensions. It exceeds the capacity of the individual and of social structures to respond adequately to this process. Its aim is the destruction of the individual, of his sense of belonging to society and of his social activities. Extreme traumatization is characterized by a structure of power within the society that is based on the elimination of some of its members by other members of the same society. The
process of extreme traumatization is not limited in time and develops sequentially” (Becker 2001, p. 5).

A number of researchers (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Başoğlu, 2011; Becker, 2001, 2003; Gorst-Unsworth & Goldenberg, 1998; Kira, 2002; Lira, 1995; Lueger-Schuster, 2010; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008, among others) stress the structural context of traumatization, which often becomes chronic. Even after a torture event, being released from a detention place or prison, or being physically liberated from the direct violent pressure and its effects, the persistence of a climate of impunity and of the same structure of life lead to the continuation of traumatic patterns, which include the fear of expressing the appropriate emotional reactions of anger and grief, because even „expressions of feelings become a threat to life itself and must be totally stifled“ (Baker, 1992, p.89).

Social and political situations augment psychological damage, which in Becker’s words is related with „chaos, despair, and a repetition of the traumatic experience, that, originally external, now becomes intra-psychic and subjective“ (Becker et al., 1989, p. 85). Victims return to „normal life,“ to the same structural context, with the same positional predispositions and prescribed relations, and they need to continue to live, to go on with daily life and adjustment. It is often mentioned that a new societal context is an important element in the healing process (Becker, 2001; Dri et al., 2009; Kimerling et al., 2007; Kordon et al., 1992; Maercker & Müller, 2004; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008; Turner & Gorst-Unsworth, 1990; Vogt et al., 2005). Unfortunately, it is rare under the condition of ongoing impunity and the same structure of power relations. And this factor, together with the lack of social support, may increase the dissociative pattern typical of trauma (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Deutsch, 2009; Knezevic, 2004; Lueger-Schuster, 2010; Weinstein & Lira, 1987), which, consisting of the necessity to combine an apparently normal life in habitual circumstances with the abyss of traumatic experience, brings survivors into a constant battlefield for psychic survival, having to regulate their intruding and overwhelming internal and relational experiences.

According to Miller (1992), survivors of torture are predisposed to having constant feeling of fear except in situations in which stimuli reliably predict their safety. „The longer survivors experience unpredictability and therefore stress, the likely they will develop depressive features which show themselves through learned helplessness“ (p. 116). This corresponds with Başoğlu’s theory of traumatization, which is based on the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses to the unpredictability and uncontrollability of threatening events (Başoğlu, 1992, 2011). Başoğlu states that uncertainty about the future and feelings of helplessness among torture survivors,
experienced together with the lack of emotional and social support as well as the loss of resources, can lead to anxiety and depression.

After experiencing such an exceedingly stressful event as torture survivors often have feelings of shame and guilt, which together with the necessity to keep secret the torture experience, may lead to psychological disorders (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Lueger-Schuster, 2010). Impunity augments traumatization and heightens the risk of PTSD and other trauma disorders, especially when there is an ongoing threat of being arrested and tortured again; the normal need for justice is frustrated; the future is uncertain; there is pressure to keep secret the experience of torture; an atmosphere of marginalization and a lack of social and emotional support and acknowledgment.

As a result of exposure to torture, the survivors may develop post-traumatic symptoms and even disorders: acute PTSD (less than three months), chronic PTSD (three months or longer), delayed PTSD (with at least a six month latent period between event and symptoms), complex PTSD. Apart from PTSD, many patients have co-morbid symptoms and additional mental disorders: anxiety, mood and substance-abuse disorders, dissociative disorders, somatic complaints, personality disorders, etc.) (Başoğlu, 2011; Goldfeld et al., 1998; Mollica et al., 1987; Turner & Gorst-Unsworth, 1993; Van der Hart et al., 2006).

A diagnosis of PTSD requires meeting the criteria of exposure to a potentially traumatizing event (criterion A), persistent re-experiences (criterion B), persistent avoidance (criterion C), persistent hyperarousal (criterion D), and a duration of symptoms for more than one month (criterion E) (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

PTSD is considered by some authors to be part of a „universal reaction to torture“ (Başoğlu et al., 2001; Campbell, 2007; Steel, 2009). But some researchers insist that PTSD is not sufficient to understand the whole spectrum of reactions to torture, as not all survivors develop PTSD (Mollica, 2004). As confirmation of that, Turner and Gorst-Unsworth (1990) distinguished four common characteristics of torture reactions among a refugee population: PTSD symptoms (incomplete emotional processing of shocking events); depressive reactions as a result of “consequential losses” and other adverse life events; somatoform symptoms; changes in personal value systems (personal, religious, or political thinking, or changes in core beliefs in a just or meaningful world). Despite the fact that PTSD and MDD are the most common diagnoses in the aftermath of torture (Van Velsen at el., 1996), they are not sufficient to explain the range of possible reactions to torture. As torture is considered to be a very complex traumatic experience, PTSD and MDD cannot encompass the whole spectrum of symptomatology as reactions.
The sequelae of torture are multidimensional and interconnected (Ortiz, 2001). Visible traces of or injuries from torture are very often difficult to identify. First, not all tormentors leave physical evidence; secondly, visible injuries can heal rapidly (Somnier et al., 1992). The UN Convention Against Torture (1984) defines both physical and mental suffering as being part of torture. And though some researchers classify torture into physical and psychological, it is obvious that any physical act of torture implies a psychological component (Physicians for Human Rights, 2008). This was already accepted and even aimed at in the ancient world, where this „practice“ comes from: “Punishment must be a blow to the spirit (or the soul) above all, instead of to the body” (Foucault, 1979). Irrespective of the techniques which may be used, torture always involves psychological suffering and may „profoundly change ideological perspectives and beliefs about human nature and life. This dimension may lead to a severe existential crisis“ (Agger & Jensen, 1996, p. 91).

A crime initiated by the State creates a situation in which neither resistance nor escape is possible (Saporta & van der Kolk, 1992) and which leads to a collapse and disorganization of the human defense system (Herman, 1972). As adjustment is impossible and a response to the threat or danger useless, torture produces strong and lasting consequences and deeply alters the psychological functioning of the individual in ways which may last much longer than the immediate stress reactions. Acts of torture challenge basic assumptions and beliefs, individuals feel vulnerable, damaged, endangered, helpless, and hopeless (Lueger-Schuster, 2010). Survivors are often overwhelmed by feelings of fear, grief, and guilt (Gonsalves et al., 1993) and experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, emotional liability, social withdrawal, and rage or irritability (Başoğlu et al., 2001).

Torture trauma is connected with a number of concomitant factors that may aggravate the traumatization. Başoğlu et al (1992) distinguishes the additional stress of being stigmatized as traitors, troublemakers, or criminals, which deprives survivors of the ideological support so vital in maintaining their sense of control over their lives and the environment for which they had sacrificed so much; further threat to one’s self or to friends or relatives; the loss of social, emotional, and ideological support from groups which support a restoration of justice. Social support plays a crucial role. Not for nothing Lindy and Titchener (1983) called it „the trauma membrane“ (paraphrasing the Freud’s „membrane of the mind“), and Lueger-Schuster (2010) named it among the protective factors from later PTSD.

But creation of this context of recovery becomes complicated in the situation of government – sanctioned violence „when the psychological needs of victims and the needs of their social network conflict“ (McFarlane & Van Der Kolk, 1996, p.25). In this
situation the meaning of trauma is unacceptable or forbidden. Lack of support and validation may “allow” traumatic memories to “continue to prey on the victims’ mind, and to be expressed as anger, withdrawal, or otherwise disrupted and disrupting behaviors.” This kind of trauma is “unlikely to result in the mobilization of external resources, in restitution, or in the meting out of justice” (McFarlane & van der Kolk, 1996, p.25).

An environment in which the search for truth concerning torture and the judicial processes seeking recognition and justice and responsibility for the perpetrators can occur is supposed to speed up and facilitate coping processes and reparation from severe trauma (Deutsch, 2009). A special effect is possible when “society as a whole operates as a support group,” when the experience of torture, shared through testimonies, is registered in the collective memory through certain acts, such as memorials. It is a “social expression” (Deutsch, 2009) facilitating the process of social mourning and supporting survivors in dealing with their past.

### 1.3.3. Factors of traumatization and stressors, which are related to human rights work. Secondary traumatization & chronic threat

In 1998, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the “Declaration on human rights defenders”. In 2000, Ms. Hina Jilani was appointed as the first special representative on human rights defenders, which itself is a fact of recognition of the importance role of human rights activists and of the danger some of them face. (UNHCHR, 2004)

But apart from physical danger, these people are also at risk of psychological trauma (Eisenman at el., 2000). But despite this fact the issue has not been empirically examined until recently. In the 90’s of the last century the greatest attention was focused on HR-activists from Latin America, where researchers examined the concept of trauma, therapeutic strategies, and relations developed under State-terrorism (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Lira, 1995). Recently researchers have begun to take into consideration other regions of the world as well.

As Buchanan et al. (2006) noted, the realization of the potentially dangerous consequences for people professionally dealing with trauma is on the increase, which is reflected in the growing amount of studies, whereby currently Balkan countries are in the focus. Prevalence rates of alcohol abuse, stress reactions, and nonspecific psychiatric morbidity of HR-activists working in Kosovo (Holtz et al., 2002), negative mental reactions among HR-activists caused by job conditions including low salaries, job insecurity, unsafe living environment (Cardozo et al., 2005; Cardozo et al., 2012),
developing programs for the selection, training, and support of HR-NGO staff members (Eriksson et al., 2000) are among the directions of investigation.

I would like to analyze HR-activists' traumatization from the point of view of the stress-factors which they face during their activity. Apart from shared stressors emerging from the situation of impunity, there are specific factors that can lead to traumatization among human rights activists. However, the analysis of available literature (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Eisenman at el., 2000; Lira, 1995; Timothy et al., 2002) revealed that not many studies deal specifically with human rights activists. Therefore, the problem appears to be under-researched.

The stressors which are connected with HR may be presented through the prism of the goals of HR activity and the conditions of their realization. According to Timothy and colleagues (2002), one can define the two following tasks:

**Counseling and assistance** for trauma survivors. HR groups offer the survivors a new social network for support on the emotional level – a space in which it is possible to share pain and to receive empathy, as well as to receive medical, social, and legal aid (Agger & Jensen, 1996). Often HR activists are the first source to whom survivors turn for urgent help. In the war and post-war reality human rights people deal with a wide range of incidents, including unlawful detention, disappearances, mass grave exhumations, looting, torture etc. HR-activists are potentially exposed to a large range of traumatic material due to the very essence of their job. This "professional" exposure has been defined as "secondary traumatization".

**The data collection** of human rights violations and documentation of torture and its long-term effects are tasks which reflect, so to say, the "truth mission" of local HR activists. Their implementation is important for the survivors themselves (as they long to restore justice) and for the international HR community and organizations, which require an undistorted account of the HR situation in the region. Functionally, international and local NGO movements are interdependent and create alternatives to State/Governmental policies and practices (Courville & Piper, 2004; Sadik, 1994), which implement UN goals and standards, including in the field of torture prevention. From the point of view of Courville and Piper (2004), the very existence of an HR movement implies a change in the status quo. Not surprisingly, the realization of this HR task, the uncovering of the truth, is rarely approved and supported by the State, which is the violator of HR. On the contrary, the State hinders this process in many ways, which creates a threat situation for HR activists and their families. HR-activists could be targeted by military or paramilitary forces (Timothy et al., 2002). The nature of human
rights work entails chronic, low levels of exposure to stress, connected with a chronic
threat related to their activity.

Thus, HR activists are subjected to a double traumatization: 1) as professionals
working with traumatic material and therefore exposed to secondary traumatization; 2)
as professionals resisting the climate of injustice and impunity and being therefore a
possible target of violence, which leads to continuously living under threat. The degree
of traumatization will be balanced against both the cultural context and the resources of
the object (political commitment, personality structure, social network, and the degree
of repression in the society in general). In the following paragraph I will consider these
two factors in detail.

1.3.3.1. Secondary traumatization in HRactivists

1.3.3.1.1. Definition and concept specification

According to Charles Figley (1995), secondary traumatic stress is “the natural
consequent behavior resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced
by a significant other. It is the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a
traumatized or suffering person” (Figley, 1995). Pearlman refers to it as “vicarious
trauma” or the “cumulative transformative effect on the helper of working with
survivors of traumatic life events” (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1996).

Awareness of the importance of the problem of secondary traumatization is
reflected in the growing body of research concerning various professionals interacting
with victims of trauma: clergy (Hendron & Taylor, 2012), international relief and
development personnel (Ericksson et al., 2001), psychologists (Blackwell, 2005; Lind,
2000), medicine care providers (Robins et al., 2009, Sinclair & Hamill, 2007), social
workers (Adams et al., 2008), scientists (qualitative researchers) (Rager, 2005), and
others.

In general, researchers use the term secondary traumatization to indicate the fact
that people are in close relations or contact with the victims of trauma, that, in the
„victim’s environment” (Dekel et al., 2005), they may undergo considerable emotional
distress and therefore may become indirect victims of the trauma themselves”
(Waysman et al., 1993, p. 104). Thereby, trauma may be transmitted somehow not only
to the loved ones but to the system of social support (Figley, 1998), including helpers
and HR activists. In the secondary traumatization, one is “a step away” from the trauma
and its manifestations. Secondary trauma may be exactly the same as the primary, only
that for helpers it will be milder (Ilyin & Soloveitchik, 2002)
Secondary traumatic stress (STS) symptoms recall classical PTSD symptoms: (1) re-experiencing of the traumatic event in dreams or memories, (2) avoidance of situations, thoughts, and impressions, which in one way or another are connected to the traumatic situation; as a result - the putting an end to certain activities, and (3) continued agitation, sleep disturbances, difficulty in concentration and attention, etc. These symptoms occur immediately after a collision with a traumatic event, and their presence is considered natural for thirty days after the stress. If they last longer, they are considered as a sign of secondary traumatic stress disorder (Stamni, 1999).

The specificity of the secondary traumatization depends on the situation (working conditions, the type and number of clients, the nature of their trauma, political, social, and cultural contexts of the time of the traumatic event and at the moment) and the personal features of the HR activists, which include their professional identities, resources, availability of support, personal histories, current life situations, and individual coping strategies (Illyin & Soloveitchik, 2002).

1.3.3.1.2. Specific factors which lead to secondary traumatization in HR activists

Specific factors which lead to the secondary traumatization of HR activists can be described and understood from different perspectives. I would like to refer to Fyodor Vasilyuk’s scheme of the therapeutic process as a basis for such analysis. Vasilyuk (2007) identified the three major elements of a counseling situation: a client, a counselor, and a problem, as well as the interactions between these three components (the attitudes and activities of client and counselor towards the problem and the nature of the counseling relationship).

Fig. 2: Vasilyuk’s scheme of the therapeutic process
I would rely on this general scheme while analyzing the peculiarities of the HR activist’s counseling activities and possible factors of traumatization, and describe these poles, paying most attention to the position of the counselor and to his or her interaction with the client (since the position of the client is already described in a previous paragraph).

1) **The counselor pole.** Speaking about HR activists as counselors we are not referring to professional therapists. In the majority of cases these are non-professionals who are involved in the execution of counseling functions. The counselor pole of HR activity is characterized by several widespread features which might augment the risk of secondary traumatization.

   Historically the HR movement was often initiated by family members of victims or by the victims themselves. Being gradually born in the midst of chaos (Agger & Jensen, 1996), these NGO’s arose spontaneously and their members usually rely only on their own resources, without special professional preparation – learning by doing. This was not only the case during the Dirty Wars in Latin America, but is also still nowadays in the North Caucasus region.

   “The new generation of activists learned that everyday life in Chechnya was a political arena, despite their apparent powerlessness and the absence of human rights training in monitoring, activism, or advocacy. They had to learn their lessons quickly” (Gilligan, 2009, p. 162).

   Thus, the majority of HR activists doesn’t have the necessary and sufficient training for this role (to say nothing about personal therapy), yet they become involved in the psychological assistance of torture victims. In the psychotherapeutic field professionals will not be allowed to work without special preparation and a strategy for handling their emotions (Canfield 2005; Williams & Sommer, 1999). It is nearly impossible for a therapist to enter the field of trauma work without full understanding and awareness of the implications which the work may have upon him or her. Volunteer social workers, researchers, and human rights activists dealing with “suffering people” are not prepared professionally for this kind of thing. Very often they are not even informed about it, think and feel that what they are experiencing is unique, and keep it within their private circle of support (Rager, 2005, p. 24). The absence of training and personal therapy leads to a number of consequences which might be crucial for the development of secondary traumatization. I will identify several of them:

   - **Emotional contamination.** Working with torture survivors, HR activists give them the possibility to express their negative emotions, wishing to ease their suffering
and to cope with the hostility which is so closely associated with a high level of anxiety symptoms. This great desire to soothe a client’s pain and to do it as soon as possible is an inseparable part of the process. In this kind of work, empathy is one of the most crucial tools which professionals bring to help the survivors of violence, as they cannot work in such a situation by distancing themselves from their client’s emotions (Sciarra, 1999). Sympathy, empathy, and the ability to share one’s emotions in working with trauma may lead to overflood even in case of a professional counselor, making it impossible to endure and cope with the strong emotional reactions of the client. In this field “being at one with the person under investigation, walking a mile in the other person’s shoes, or understanding the person’s point of view from an empathic rather than a sympathetic position” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 25) is important. But emotions are contaminated. Freud, in his book *Totem and Taboo*, describes the traditions in some tribes which prohibit communication between widows and widowers with other member of the tribe (Freud, 1913). Keeping the border between empathy and emotional contamination, coping with the clients’ (and one’s own) emotions becomes more difficult without proper training and personal therapy. HR activists often deny or repress their emotional counter-transference reactions of anger toward clients. They also have difficulties in managing the negative emotions in the team towards colleagues (aggression, for example). Not surprisingly, Lira admitted that the main problem for their team was the fact that recognizing and accepting their anxieties, impotence, and limitations was not allowed (forbidden), which caused difficulties in facing and discussing conflicts. Dealing with political and institutional situations in which omnipotence had been perceived as an “expression of „commitment,” they denied of any kind of anxiety” (Lira, 1995). Some researchers even suggest a causal link, suggesting that secondary traumatization is a result of empathic emotional involvement in the relationship with survivors of torture (Malkina-Pih, 2005).

- **Trauma reactivation.** Quite often HR activists have their own history of unresolved personal trauma (Agger & Jensen, 1996, de Marrais & Tisdale, 2010). It is understandable that a HR activist will feel a strong bond with the survivor in the event that he or she had had a similar experience in his or her own life (de Marrais & Tisdale, 2010).

„When Shamil Tangiev and Lidia Jusupova opened Memorial’s Grozny office in 2000, they exposed themselves to enormous risk. Tangiev traveled to towns and villages alone in his private car, or with colleagues, to conduct interviews and to document and photograph reported human rights violations. Achieving this as a young man of thirty-two, when Chechnya was covered by a tight network of military checkpoints, was exceptional. After losing his parents, an uncle, and an ethnic Russian neighbor when they
were shot by Russian soldiers and their bodies later burned during a *zachistka* (clean-up operation) in Grozny in January 2000, Tangiev took his law degree from the Institute of Economics and Law in Nazran (Ingushetiya) and began to work for Memorial in April 2000 (Gilligan, 2009, p. 161)

The pain of their own experience(s) may be “re-activated” when they hear their clients’ stories, which increases the risk of internalizing the clients’ trauma (Conrad, 2011). This may be close to a theory of *wounded healers* who have a greater empathy with their clients and can transform „their own wounds into healing power and hope, as seen, for example, in certain types of shamanism“ (Comas-Diaz & Padilla, 1990) This term was introduced into analytic theory by Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig (1999) in his concept of duality within archetypes, which stresses the importance of understanding and using shadow aspects of the psyche. A therapist may project off his wounded side the wounded healer archetype, which may bring him or her temporal relief, as another person (a client) carries the negative side of one’s bothersome archetypal energies. A counselor must be aware of these complex inner processes, and have the courage not just to live in one’s personal projections, but to see and understand the actual nature of his or her client. HR activists may have a need to help others in order to get emotional release via their relationships with clients (Kleinman, 1988). It also can become a possible way to escape from their own trauma, a way to avoid it, encapsulate and isolate it (and through such mechanisms – overcome it) (Maeder, 1989).

Lack of training not only makes the counselor more vulnerable, but more helpless as well, as failure is inevitably connected with the absence of working and self-care skills and knowledge. These skills are essential, especially with respect to the nature and specificity of the chronic and acute traumatization of torture victims and their families. Such traumata may lead to cardinal changes in the perception of the self and the world.

**Risk of compassion fatigue.** Absence of self-care skills makes this work particularly difficult and demanding. HR activists feel that they are able to contain their emotions (fear) and ensure that they „keep on track without getting too tired“ (Agger & Jensen, 1996, p. 23). They don’t allow themselves to think about self-care strategies “that are beneficial in these circumstances.“

„Once a correspondent of a well-known Western newspaper visited the office of our ‘Memorial’ human rights organization in Ingushetia. He had a conversation in an isolated room with an old man whose son had been abducted by special services and had not been heard about since. All of us knew quite well that old man with his very sad eyes and low voice. After his communication with the father of the abducted person the correspondent asked my colleagues: ‘How can you endure it here? I’ve spent an hour
and can't do it anymore!' But to us it seemed we had no right to retreat into our 'feelings and emotions,' to feel sorry for ourselves. First, there is nobody to feel sorry, when there is sorrow all around. Suffering does not surprise anybody. If one feels sorry for 'the sufferers,' that is chiefly because they cannot cope with their sorrow and overcome it. Secondly, it is a luxury for someone to feel sorry for themselves. But we had to do our work: we hoped the human rights activists' work would help influence the situation, that it could render some concrete assistance and reveal to the world at least some of the truth of what was happening in Chechnya” (Musaeva, 2009, p.582).

So human rights activists exaggerate their emotional resources, ignoring their limitations - although, as Jung said, „even the Pope has a confessor.” Working with torture survivors, HR activists are faced every day with this reality, and it slowly destroys their notion of the stability and predictability of the world, the safety and security of the peoples’ ability to control their lives. In these conditions, the symptoms may be considered as a means of adaptation to the traumatic event. Irrational and perverted (distorted) notions reflect the person’s attempt to protect his system of values and inner (moral) guides from the destruction caused by the trauma event. HR activists have to deal with the destructive feelings of survivors and their anxieties. But very often they are not aware of their own reactions (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Lira, 1995; Reshetnikov, 2006). This situation leads to ambivalent feelings, which one can range from “total omnipotence to total impotence” (Lira, 1995). To sum it up, the therapeutic role of counselor (who is represented by the HR activist) is characterized by several distinctive features, which make this position vulnerable to secondary traumatization: absence or lack of professional training, professional supervision, and personal therapy (all three constituent parts of therapeutic work). To make things still worse, HR activists are largely deprived of the social support and acceptance which is usually attributed to the work of a therapist or counselor. Such social support is necessary for HR activists to „maintain a modicum of balance between life and work“ (Rager, 2005), especially when dealing with emotionally laden work in a threatening context. This seems to be even more the case when the usually advised preventive measures (personal counseling or peer debriefing) are not available.

2) Interaction between client (survivor) and counselor (HR activist). Interactions between a survivor and a HR activist have their organizational and positional specificity. Organizational issues include the peculiarities of the counseling frame or setting, which is characterized by such aspects as length of exposure and scanty recovery time. Length of exposure (Timothy et al., 2002): this factor may become the determining one. Prolonged employment in such a setting is considered as a risk factor for psychiatric morbidity, which may affect the efficiency of the function of HR activists.
A secondary trauma is cumulative (Conrad, 2011). Witnessing the suffering of survivors over and over again can have a negative effect on even the most resilient and compassionate HR activists. **Scanty Recovery Time:** The very specifics of their work demand from HR activists contact with survivors on a daily basis and „being on call“ without days off” (Burton & Barton, 2009). They usually do not put limits in their job (Lira, 1995). They ignore their own needs, believing that they work in an „emergency“ situation which is apparently much more important than their own needs and lives (Lira, 1995). Unfortunately, this demanding and heavy workload can deprive them of the “time-off” which is necessary for the process of healing and recovering from what they have seen and heard (Conrad, 2011).

Quite often survivors pin their hopes and unrealistic expectations on the figure of the HR activist as savior, their last possibility to find justice and inner peace. This can lead to a feeling of omnipotence in a counselor (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Becker, 2003; Reshetnikov, 2006). But the saying that the higher one rises, the harder the fall, is especially topical for the situation, where the need for urgent help is impossible to achieve in a situation of impunity.

When the State deprives people from its protection, survivors apply to HR NGOs in the hope for restoration of their rights. There are not many tools, which HR activists have at their disposal to evoke a response from the State. And there are very few situations in which one does not have to wait for a long time for any kind of response of the respective State authorities. In cases of people who have disappeared, for example, there are great expectations from relatives and nearly no chances for a positive result. Consequently, the feelings of helplessness, disappointment, sadness elevate the risk for secondary trauma (Figley, 1995; Ilyin & Soloveitchik, 2002). The hardest thing to cope with is the fact that trauma undermines a person’s conviction that his work is genuinely useful and can make a difference (Kutuzova, 2007).

This conviction as well as other factors increase the over-involvement, hidden under the notion „commitment,” of HR activists (Lira, 1995). Lira suggests that this type of psychological pressure (external and internal) comes from different sources and forms an ideological basis for HR workers. It can be rooted in religious values, in political involvement, or in other „sources“ with various meanings. As, for example, can be seen from the following excerpt from the experience of an NGO in Ingushetiya:

“…we reminded each other time and again that actually we are lucky; as different from hundreds of thousands of other people we had a chance to talk honestly about those developments, to do something, and to act. The feeling of moral powerlessness
retreated against that background and that was and is our main motivation giving us strength and energy” (Musaeva, 2009, page 582)

All of these elements can have existential values, which increase in a threatening situation, affecting both the professional activity and everyday life of HR activists. The survivors' expectations and the HR activists' acceptance of an implicit (or explicit) role as savior is strengthened by the dramatic position of a volunteer „between two worlds.” On the one hand, they access the outside world and develop and maintain a communicative space between the groups inside and outside the repressive territory (Agger & Jensen, 1996), they join the efforts to fill a regulatory vacuum and to search for truth, justice and mutual support (Courville & Piper, 2004), and strengthen relationships between people. On the other hand, they live in the traumatic and threatening perception of a present where future refers only to the end of the regime; that they do not have any possibility to distance themselves (Lira, 1995) and to think about it also leads to further over-involvement and burn-out.

Apart from this, a predisposition to the position of salvation easily transforms a therapeutic triangle of „client – problem – counselor“ into another classical triangle of „savior – victim – persecutor“ (Karpman, 1968), which is known as one of the widespread traps in the helping professions.

Fig. 3: Triangle of „savior – victim – persecutor“ (Karpman, 1968)

3) A Problem. The major theme which brings survivors to HR activists – injustice and the persecution through the State – is well known to both participants in this dyad. They both share the common space and general climate of social life. This increases the over-involvement of a counselor, his or her empathetic attunement and fusion with a survivor, and becomes another possible key factor in creating the aforementioned abnormal helping setting. Yet a therapeutic problem is different from a theme or a situation. It should be constructed as a „symbolic object“ during the counseling process. It comprises the dialogic coordination of a theme of therapeutic interaction, of a subject of their mutual activity, the model of client’s complaint, and other aspects (Vasilyuk, 2007). HR activists usually have difficulties with the “remodeling” of a disastrous life
situation into a therapeutic problem, which impedes assistance and aggravates the HR activists’ risk of over-involvement and development of STS disorder.

As the specific aspects of the client’s role have already been described in the previous paragraph, I will omit it in this scheme.

To sum it up, the helping activity of HR activists is characterized by a number of particular features within the structure of the counseling situation, which makes this helping group especially prone to the development of secondary traumatization. The second type that might augment the level of symptoms is traumatization by threat, related not so much with the nature of the counseling interaction between a HR activist and a survivor but rather to the impediment and persecution of these helping activities by the State (Agger & Jensen, 1996).

1.3.3.2. Traumatization by threat

The role of threat in traumatization and the development of stress reactions and disorders is one of the topical themes in current literature on trauma (Başoğlu, 2005; Bykhovets, 2007; Tarabrina, 2009). According to Thomas Miller, for human beings it is natural to seek signals which predict safety. “Human beings are a safety signal seekers” (Miller, 1992, p. 116). Identifying themselves as possible target-objects (Agger & Jensen, 1996), HR activists experience a general ambience of threat. Threat is undefined or clear danger, experienced as having a high probability or certainty of becoming reality (Dvorkin et al., 2002). It is considered as a special type of stressor, which has “a peculiar psychological toxicity” (McFarlane & De Girolamo, 1996) and has its own peculiarities: invisibility (it is not felt by the senses), dealing with the future (perception of probable violence in the future), the impossibility to forecast the time and place of a “possible” violent act (the unpredictability and lack of control of possible traumatic events), the uncompromising (thoroughgoing) type of violence, the vulnerability of the person (realizing that the violence can erupt in everyday life at any time), violence as an event beyond normality (Tarabrina, 2009). Thus, threat can be defined as a stressor which is connected to the psychological, latent type of violence, often very difficult to diagnose (Bykhovets, 2007). The threat of violence itself can be considered as violence (Enikolopov, 2004), because it can produce an atmosphere of chronic fear (Lira, 1988, 1995) and anxiety, which again is part of the shared social reality for HR activists and survivors. The exhausting combination of anxiety and fear is the main producer of a stress reaction in the situation of uncertainty created by impunity (Soldatova, 2002).

Let’s cast a closer look at these characteristics.
**Anxiety:** Relating to anticipation, uncertainty and helplessness (Seligman) anxiety means the „inability to identify the precise content of the threat to one’s own life or to pinpoint when it will occur“ (Salimovich et al, 1992, p. 73). Spilberger (1996) states that the higher the objective danger is, the less individually differentiated the degree of perceived threat and level of rising anxiety. Individual differences in stress reactions are determined by the interaction between the individual and the situation. This reaction depends on cognitive processes, individual assessments of the situation, knowledge of the person’s own resources, adequate choice of the ways of coping, etc. (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Thereby the duration and strength of the anxiety arises from the assessment of the situation, which, according to Spilberger (1972), is based on four variables: 1) the situation itself, its familiarity (MacGregor, 1996), and potential danger (Horney, 1937); 2) the level of trait anxiety; 3) the effectiveness of the supposed counteractions to threat (Horney, 1937); 4) the personal response to the emerging feeling of anxiety (Spilberger, O’Neil and Hansen, 1972). According to recent researches, constant exposure to threat aggravates the consequences of experienced traumatic events and leads to the development of new stress reactions (Tarabrina, 2009).

A high level of anxiety might introduce anxiety disorders, panic attacks, and dissociative disorders” (Lueger-Schuster & Weber, 2012, p.47)

**Fear.** At the point when the person suffering anxiety is able to identify the content of the threat, “the resulting feelings of biological helplessness and social vulnerability transform initial insecurity into fear“ (Salimovich et al., 1992, p. 73).

Fear can be described as an individual as well as a collective experience, in the event of a subjective experience whose effects are occurring simultaneously in thousands of people within a society. Exactly this collective experience leads to the „climate of total fear“ in the Chechen Republic, which according to the HR NGO “Memorial” the authorities continue to maintain, despite some decided successes in the restoration of and a substantial improvement in the infrastructure of the region (Memorial, 2010, p. 2).

Foa and Kozak (1986) described the ways in which the development of the pathological structure of fear (associated to a traumatic event) may lead to PTSR. These structures include the representation of stimulus, responses, and their values (meanings). Any information related to the trauma activates these structures of fear, of which people suffering PTSD have quite a number, and which are thus quite easily activated. Attempts to avoid their activation lead to symptoms of avoidance (Rothbaum et al., 2000).
So, fear can have unforeseeable repercussions for social and political behavior (Salimovich et al., 1992, p. 72). According to the theory of Salimovich and colleagues, in a situation in which the circumstances have been perceived as threatening, fear may take on a permanent character and generate the following four groups of psychological processes: 1) a feeling of vulnerability, a sense of personal weakness, and a sense of persecution and marginalization, which "places one at the mercy of arbitrary events beyond one’s control"; 2) a durable state of alert, without rest, which can be expressed through various symptomatologies; 3) a sense of powerlessness, defenselessness, and helplessness caused by the recognition of the fact that the person’s own resources are unfit in the face of danger; the person feels no control over his or her present and future life; 4) a distorted perception of reality.

1.3.4. Conclusion

The traumatization of torture survivors and HR activists has both similarities and differences. Both target groups are united by the general context of living, the general atmosphere of impunity, as well as the traumatization by the continuous threat to their lives and the lives of their relatives (both direct and indirect). If torture survivors are inclined to primary traumatization, HR activists are affected both by the survivors’ sufferings and by threat. They are prone to at least two major types of traumatization: secondary stress (associated with such factors as insufficient training, over-involvement, history of personal trauma, etc.) and traumatization by threat, which leads to durable fear and anxiety and affect the psychic functioning and emotional stability of the person.

Table 1. Comparison of Traumatization of HR activists and torture survivors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traumatic/stress factor</th>
<th>HR activists</th>
<th>Torture Survivors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary traumatization (the experience of torture)</td>
<td>- (usually don’t have an experience of direct torture unless through earlier personal or relatives’ traumatization)</td>
<td>+ (PTSD as possible reaction; threat to halt activity aimed at the restoration of justice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat traumatization</td>
<td>+ (compulsion to silence and obedience augments fear, depression, and anxiety)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect State traumatization</td>
<td>+ (social marginalization and)</td>
<td>+ social marginalization and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the interplay of these factors one can expect that thanks to the absence of primary traumatization the level of severe traumatic symptoms will be lower in HR activists than in torture survivors, yet the weight of stress factors may lead to an equally high level of anxiety, fear, and other milder reactions.

As for torture survivors - they have experienced a traumatic event, which involved “actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to their physical integrity, which is the “A” criterion of PTSD. Not surprisingly, according to statistics, torture is associated with the highest risk of developing PTSD.

I supposed that the process of traumatization for survivors is continuing in time and has a strong tendency of being sequentially as they are immediately exposed to the impunity context, which, according to Keilson’s theory, may be considered as the next stage (series) of traumatization.

At this “impunity stage” of traumatization survivors are oversensitive (over-vulnerable) to any kind of threat and danger, as they are predisposed to feel fear outside of a situation in which they can rely on stimuli which predict safety (Miller, 1992). I suggest that unpredictability, uncontrollability, uncertainty, and the feeling of helplessness, experienced together with the lack of emotional and social support, can additionally aggravate the traumatization.

HR activists, in turn, are at great risk of developing secondary traumatization due to their professional peculiarities. Even such secondary traumatic stress symptoms are reminiscent of those of classical PTSD; they are not as strong, as this kind of stress results not from the experience of, but rather from knowledge about, an overwhelming traumatic event. So, HR activists in a situation of impunity go through secondary traumatization as well as through traumatization by constant threat - which may produce an exhausting combination of high anxiety, fear, and other milder reactions.
Part 2. Empirical part

The study investigates a link between impunity and traumatization, which was discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis (chapters). I used both quantitative and qualitative measures as I sought to investigate differences and similarities between torture survivors and HR activists with respect to the level of traumatization, the impact of mutual context on traumatization, as well as the perception of impunity, and the psychological representations of this phenomenon in two sample groups.

Three hypotheses are tested in the research.

Human rights activists have a lower level of severe traumatic reactions (PTSD, dissociation, depression), yet their level of anxiety will be similar to the victims' level of anxiety.

There is an association between the level of perceived impunity and the level of traumatization.

There are differences in the perception and experiencing of impunity in human rights activists and in torture victims.

Subjects

The study includes two groups:

1) Torture survivors in the North Caucasus (Russia) (49 participants). The mean age was 42 (Std. Deviation = 9,7). All participants of this group were men. 27 of them have jobs, 22 – no job. 27 with higher education, 22 without higher education. Marital status: 26 – married, 23 – not married. The inclusion criteria were experience of at least one of the following torture events: detention with torture during clean-up operations, torture in police custody. We focused on survivors of torture living within their own communities (as distinct from refugees who have left for other countries or internally displaced people - IDP).

2) Human rights activists who provide assistance to survivors in North Caucasus (46 participants). The mean age was 40 (Std. Deviation = 9,8). 24 participants of this group were men, 22 women.

Only two respondents of this group had no job and were without higher education. Marital status: 27 – married, 19 – not married.

For the statistical analysis, the samples were divided into 3 groups by age:

20-30 years - Group N 1
31-45 years - Group N 2  
46 years and more - Group N 3.

Participation in the research for both groups was voluntary and unpaid.

Information about demographic variables is summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Demographic variables of samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Survivors</th>
<th>HR-activists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>42 (Std. Deviation = 9.7)</td>
<td>40 (Std. Deviation = 9.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job status</td>
<td>27 have jobs, 22 – no job</td>
<td>44 have jobs, 2 – no job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education status</td>
<td>27 with higher education, 22 without higher education</td>
<td>44 with higher education, 2 without higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>26 – married, 23 – not married</td>
<td>27 – married, 19 – not married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summing up the demographic information in the two sample groups, as can be seen from the table, the groups differ in job and education status. Though these criteria were not cardinal for the research and inclusion in the sample, they were tested and controlled throughout the research and did not show any significant impact on the results.

Measures

Each respondent completed several measures:

- Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire (RTSQ) to measure their appraisal of redress (Başoğlu at el., 2005; Başoğlu & Şalcıoğlu, 2011). The questionnaire related to the sharing of the trauma story to NGO’s or authorities, retributive justice (investigation, court, and punishment of perpetrators), receiving compensation for their trauma, activities in commemoration of past events, community (social) responses to survivors of human rights violations (recognition of survivors’ suffering, their contribution to the war effort, society’s attitudes towards survivors), the meaning they attributed to their trauma (was past suffering worthwhile, given the present circumstances of the country?), political and social responses to human rights violations (community protests, international protests, international media coverage, efforts by foreign governments to stop human rights violations, efforts by NGO’s to stop human rights
violations), and global rating of their sense of justice (“Considering what you and/or your close ones went through, do you think justice has been served in your case? How satisfied are you with this outcome?”) (Başoğlu & Şalcıoğlu, 2011, p. 57).

- 48-item Emotions and Beliefs After War (EBAW) questionnaire, which was also devised for the purposes of this study. It consisted of (1) 13 items assessing the appraisal of impunity and associated emotions, (2) 12 items measuring the appraisal of threats to safety (the Fear and Loss of Control Scale), reflecting fear and helplessness responses; (3) 6 items relating to beliefs concerning other people, society, and justice, (4) 7 items assessing changes in appraisal of the cause of the war and expectations about the future of the country, and (5) 10 items relating to beliefs about God and religion.

- Depression (Beck) is a 21-question multiple-choice self-report inventory, one of the most widely-used instruments for measuring the severity of depression (Russian adaptation of Tarabrina, 2001)

- Mississippi scale. Civic. The scale consists of 39 self-report items derived from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders III-R criteria for PTSD. The adaptation of the scale was made by Tarabrina (2007).

- World Assumption Scale (WAS) - a self-report scale, to examine cognitive schemes and basic assumptions about themselves and the world, which are key to the influence of trauma (Padun & Kotelnikova, 2008).

- State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) - a self-report instrument that differentiates between the temporary condition of state anxiety and the longstanding quality of trait anxiety. The Russian variant was standardized and adapted by Yu. Khanin (Dermanova, 2002).

- Dissociative Experience Scale – DES - is a self-assessment of 28 questions that measures dissociative symptoms. Russian adaptation by Agarkov and Tarabrina (Agarkov & Tarabrina, 1999).

- Impunity association. A coding scheme was made and all the content items on the association texts were coded in 12 categories by two independent experts. Respondents were asked to write down their associations to “impunity” (appendix N 2 for the instruction). Content analysis of the narrative part of all the association data was performed with the assistance of Content-Analyzer and Kleptomania software. SPSS-15 software was used for all analyses.
**Translation of measuring instruments**

The majority of outcome measures (STAI, WAS, Mississippi Scale, DES) have Russian variants which are standardized, adapted, and widely used in research. Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire (RTSQ) and the 48-item Emotions and Beliefs After War (EBAW) questionnaire were translated from English into Russian. The process of translation and the adaptation of the instrument consisted of the following steps, which are suggested by Joop T.V.M. de Jong (2001): (1) examination of the instruments by two to four bilingual experts with respect to content and concept equivalence, (2) the translation of the instruments into Russian, (3) literal back-translation of the instruments by other translators, (4) examination of the translation by monolingual experts not familiar with the local language, (5) back-translation of all those items amended by the monolingual group, (6) examination of the back-translation by a bilingual group informed by the discussion in the monolingual group, and (7) testing in a pilot study.

**Matrix structure of data**

Data was organized in a matrix 95x98, where 95 is the number of participants and 98 the number of parameters, which reflect measuring instruments. Among the parameters are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>- demographic variables (age, family status, education, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Mississippi Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- DES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- Beck depression inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>- STAI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>- WAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>- EBAW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>- Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire (RTSQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>- Association test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general scheme of investigation is shown in Fig. 4.
Fig. 4: The general scheme of the investigation:

Severe stress reactions
- PTSD
- Depression
- Dissociation

Mild stress reactions
- Situational anxiety
- Trait anxiety

Impunity
- Redress Questionnaire
- EBAW

Basic beliefs
- WAS

Impunity associations
**Hypothesis 1:** Human rights activists have a lower level of severe traumatic reactions (PTSD, dissociation, depression), yet their level of anxiety will be similar with the victims’ level of anxiety.

Two groups of measures were used: questionnaires, which aim at measuring severe traumatization reactions and mild stress reactions.

The scheme of analysis for this hypothesis is shown in Fig. 5:

**Fig. 5:** the scheme of the analysis for Hypothesis 1

---

**Results**

*Posttraumatic stress disorder* (PTSD) is the most frequently reported psychiatric consequence of traumatic events and of human-made disasters in particular, while symptoms of PTSD in different populations may result from different determinants (de Jong et al., 2001). Scores on the PTSD checklist in survivors group ranged from 50-136 ($M = 86.59$) and in human rights activists from 53 to 128 ($M = 80.89$). Prevalence rates of posttraumatic stress disorder were low: 4% in survivors and 2% and in HR-activists. Yet problems of adaptation were found in 24% and 6%, respectively. The results are reflected in the table 3.
Tables 3-4. Comparison between groups with respect to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Classification according to the norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>HR activists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi-scale. Group</td>
<td>norma - 35-96</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptation problems - 97-111</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PTSD - 112 and higher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mann-Whitney did not show any difference between groups (p=0,157), yet being classified according to the norms (1-norm – 3-PTSD), Pearson Chi-Square shows significant differences between survivors and HR activists (p=0,017).

### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>8,193(a)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>8,698</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>7,037</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of ValidCases</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a 2 cells (33,3%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2,42.

Dissociative symptoms were measured by the Dissociative Experience Scale (DES). The results on this questionnaire widely varied. For survivors they ranged from 0.7 to 50.7 (M = 11,656), for HR activists - from 0.4 to 74.7 (M = 9,397). Though the mean score was higher in the survivors group than in the volunteer group, statistical analysis of the data did not show a significant difference between the groups. Table 5 shows the means for both groups.
Table 5. Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of Dissociation. Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissociative Experience Scale – DES survivors</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11,656</td>
<td>10,5100</td>
<td>1,5170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR activists</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9,397</td>
<td>12,1026</td>
<td>1,7844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the raw data were classified according to the severity of dissociation, the majority of participants of both groups (85% of survivors and 93% of HR activists) fell into the first group of low level of dissociation.

Tables 6-7. Dissociative Experience Scale, classified according to the severity of dissociation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissociative Experience Scale – Group</th>
<th>Survivors</th>
<th>HR activists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>low level - 1-20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate level - 41-60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heightened level - 61-80</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no significant difference between the two groups of respondents: in both cases the level of dissociation is predominantly normal.

Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>4,007</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>4,871</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Assoc</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depression (Beck Depression Inventory): The results on depression for survivors range from 0 to 50 (M = 13,37), and for HR activists from 0 to 29 (M = 9,78).
Table 8. Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of Depression. **Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beck Depression</td>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13.37</td>
<td>10.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>HR activists</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>7.096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A higher prevalence of depression results was observed in survivors group. Severe depression was displayed in 6.5% of survivors and 0% of HR activists, and only 34% of victims had minimal depression in comparison with 59% of HR activists. Pearson Chi-Square showed a difference between the groups with p=0.042.

Tables 9-10. Depression. Comparison between groups. Classification according by the levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beck Depression Inventory Group</th>
<th>survivors</th>
<th>HR activists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal depression - 10-15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild depression - 16-19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate depression - 20-29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe depression - 30 and higher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chi-Square Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>8,229</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>9,444</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>4,386</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among survivors the depression score was higher for the older participants (Chi-Square test p=0.002).
**State anxiety**: survivors – range from 23 to 80 (M = 46,18), HR activists – range from 20 to 62 (M = 42,15). Low anxiety level is rare in both groups: 6% for victims and 11% for HR activists. Moderate state anxiety is observed at 37% and 52% of victims and HR activists, respectively. And 57% of victims and 37% of HR activists exhibited a high level of state anxiety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46,18</td>
<td>10,710</td>
<td>1,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>HR activists</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42,15</td>
<td>9,893</td>
<td>1,459</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical analysis did not show significant differences between groups. Yet for both groups state anxiety showed differences with age: p=0,047 for survivors and p=0,031 for HR activists. The level of state anxiety was significantly higher for the older participants.

**Trait anxiety**: survivors – range from 23 to 71 (M = 49,55), HR activists – range from 20 to 62 (M = 46,70). As in the case of state anxiety, there were practically no participants with low trait anxiety in both groups (2% in both). Yet there were some differences in distribution between moderate and high anxiety level. This ratio is 18%/80% for survivors and 39%/59% for HR activists. Statistical analysis did not show significant differences between groups. Nor were age differences found for this parameter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trait</td>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49,55</td>
<td>9,354</td>
<td>1,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>HR activists</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46,70</td>
<td>8,432</td>
<td>1,243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A check for job and education parameters for all scales gave no significant results.

**Discussion of the first hypothesis**

Testing hypothesis 1, I supposed that survivors group will show a higher level of severe trauma-related symptoms than HR activists, keeping in mind that HR activists are continuously exposed to traumatization, but to the milder level of it. The findings
showed significant differences for depression and PTSD level, which corresponds with the assertion of scholars who believe that PTSD and MDD are most commonly associated with torture diagnoses (Van Velsen, Gorst-Unsworth and Turner, 1996). At the same time no significant differences were found for dissociation (low in both groups), even though the mean score was higher in the survivor group than in volunteer group.

This accords with the finding which maintains that dissociative reactions sometimes have a transient character (Spiegel at el., 1995) and do not become more persistent symptoms (Murray at el., 2002). Thus, despite the fact that the primary dissociation can promote the development of PTSD (Tarabrina, 2001), the highest risk of chronic disorder is associated with more sustainable, stable symptoms of dissociation (Veltishev at el., 2005).

The second possible reason for the low rate of dissociation could be that of all the questionnaires used precisely this one proved difficult to respond to, a fact that became clear in the course of the experiment. The very form of the questionnaire was regarded as quite difficult by the respondents (ranging from 0 to 100%), and often the respondents answered without going into the matter. During the elaboration of the method the authors encountered a similar problem. In the first case, the authors used an analogue scale (where 0% means: “This never happens to me,” and 100%: “With me this happens all the time”).

However, in some studies using this method a significant correlation between IQ and the total score of DES was established. It is believed that after the authors (Bernstein-Carlson and Putnam) replaced the analogue scale with the scale of intervals this effect has been avoided (Tarabrina, 2001). I believe that the manifestation of effect could be connected not only to the use of the analogue scale, but with the fact that the responses were ranked from 0 to 100%.

Finally, the researchers admitted that the scale of dissociation was not designed as a “diagnostic tool” (Agarkov & Tarabrina, 1999) and that therefore such high scores should not be interpreted as a sign of diagnosis of dissociative disorders, and low scores may not give the absolute value of the level of dissociation.

According to the results, anxiety is high for both types and in both groups, which may be explained through the trauma experience. As Spielberger put it, it is likely “that individuals who had been previous victims of crime are likely to show high state anxiety and correspondingly high levels of trait anxiety” (Spielberger, 1983, p. 5). At the same time the impunity situation, appraised as unstable and dangerous, also leads to higher anxiety (Chadee at el, 2008).
Findings show that the level of state anxiety was significantly higher for the older participants, which corresponds with the findings of All and Fried (1996). Taking into consideration that the fear of violence increases with age (Chadee & Ditton, 2003; Clarke & Lewis, 1982), one can propose that elderly people are more vulnerable to the uncertainty and uncontrollability of an impunity environment. Additionally, elderly people have a limited set of coping strategies - they are less mobile and more socially vulnerable (Schimer & Kahana, 1992).

Thus, against the background of the increased level of trait anxiety in the whole sample, the immediate reactions of elderly people are higher.

In summary, the results show significant differences for depression and PTSD level, yet no differences for dissociation (low in both groups) and anxiety (high for both types and in both groups). Both survivors and HR activists live with a lack of protection: 1) when no one has been made responsible for the violence that survivors have suffered; 2) HR activists become possible target-objects of violence with impunity because of their opposition to the State.
**Hypothesis 2:** There is an association between the level of perceived impunity and the level of traumatization.

Measures and scheme of analysis

Mississippi Scale, Dissociative Experience Scale, Depression (Beck) inventory, State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), and EBAW (Emotions and Beliefs After War questionnaire).

The scheme of analysis for this hypothesis is shown in Fig. 6.

**Fig. 6:** Scheme of analysis for hypothesis N 2

The level of perceived impunity was assessed by the self-rated 48-item EBAW (Emotions and Beliefs After War questionnaire) elaborated by Başoğlu and his colleagues. Between-group comparisons and independent t tests were used for
Results:

The Mann-Whitney test showed a significant difference between groups for emotional response to perceived impunity (assessment of appraisal of impunity and associated emotions) \((p=0.002)\) and fear and loss of control block (items measuring appraisal of threat to safety) \((p=0.043)\). These results are partly consistent with Başoğlu's findings on survivors and controls (Başoğlu et al., 2005). Relative to HR activists, survivors had stronger emotional responses to impunity, significantly greater fear, and loss of control over life. Yet in contrast with Başoğlu's findings no significant difference was demonstrated between the groups for the causes of the war or for faith in God.

### Table 13. Emotional response to perceived impunity and fear and loss of control block. Test Statistics (a) between two groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotional responses to perceived impunity</th>
<th>Fear and loss of control</th>
<th>Appraisal of other people and justice</th>
<th>Appraisal of the cases of war</th>
<th>Beliefs about God/religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>718,000</td>
<td>855,000</td>
<td>914,000</td>
<td>958,000</td>
<td>1026,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>1799,000</td>
<td>1936,000</td>
<td>1995,000</td>
<td>2039,000</td>
<td>2202,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-3.048</td>
<td>-2.028</td>
<td>-1.442</td>
<td>-1.108</td>
<td>-0.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>.553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to discover associations between trauma-related characteristics and appraisal of redress items correlation analysis was used. It shows significant correlations of Emotional Response to Perceived Impunity with all trauma-related characteristics (stress, depression, dissociation, anxiety level) in both survivors and HR activists. The fear and loss of control scale correlates with Mississippi, Dissociation and State anxiety in survivors and with all trauma measures in HR activists. Appraisal of war causes correlates with practically all trauma measures in both groups (Appendix 3).
These findings are also related to the overlap of symptoms and of course to certain overlap of instruments (e.g. Mississippi scale and State/Trait Anxiety Inventory obviously overlap, as well as Mississippi scale and Dissociative Scale). This is very logical, as PTSD usually has „a high rate of comorbidity”(Follette & Naugle, 2006, p. 31), and the most widespread comorbid disorders are mood disorders (e.g. dysthymia and major depressive disorder), and anxiety disorders (Riggs at el., 2006). This is confirmed by epidemiological data in the USA, according to which, among people suffering lifetime PTSD disorder, about 80% also experience depression and other anxiety disorders or addiction (Friedman at el., 2009).

**Discussion for the second hypothesis**

Testing the second hypothesis I expected that impunity may lead to strong emotional reactions. Empirical research has shown that survivors have stronger emotional responses to impunity and significantly greater fear and loss of control over life. These results are partly consistent with Cardozo et al. (2000), Başoğlu's (2005), and Lykes’ (2007) findings. In an atmosphere of impunity, society, although traditionally very supportive, becomes cautious and indifferent. Thus in the perception of survivors a climate of impunity and fear changed people, and only belief in God is unchangeable and untouchable in strict religious society and can serve as a cognitive coping mechanism in the attempt to regain a sense of control over uncontrollable stressor events” (Başoğlu, 2011, p. 57). Religion is a resource not only for survivors but for HR activists too, as neither group showed significant differences in their faith in God.

As I expected, results show significant correlations of Emotional Response to perceived impunity with all trauma-related characteristics (stress, depression, dissociation, anxiety level) in both survivors and HR activists. These results do not correspond to the findings arrived at by Başoğlu and his colleagues (2005) and Şalcıoğlu (2004), who state that traumatic stress reaction is not associated with the emotional response to impunity. Such a difference may be explained by specific conditions of study. My study took place in an acute situation of impunity, a de facto State-terror regime, not in the post-war area in former Yugoslavia (Başoğlu at el., 2005) or post-earthquake zone (Şalcıoğlu, 2004). In an ongoing impunity environment the traumatization process has a tendency to persist and of being sequentially, as survivors exposed this environment are being released from custody, perpetuating the next stage of traumatization (Keilson). The reflection of impunity in the psyche of the individual (cognitive processing and meaningfulness of perceived impunity) may have a strong emotional effect associated with traumatization. This view is supported by the fact that studies conducted during
the dictatorship in Chile (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Baeza, 2000; Lira, 2005; Rojas, 2000), just after the “Dirty War” in Guatemala (Zur, 1994), as well as a study among refugees from the countries where a climate of impunity is still “in power” (Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008), maintain that perceived ongoing impunity is associated with emotional response to trauma.

Similarity in the correlation of emotional response to perceived impunity with all trauma-related characteristics in both groups may be explained by the fact that they share not only an impunity environment, but also the same cultural context, influencing the manner of cognitive assessment and emotional response.

The fear and loss and control scale correlates with Mississippi, Dissociation and State anxiety in survivors, and with all trauma measures in HR activists, which partially accord with previous findings (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Başoğlu at el., 2005; Lira, 1995; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008). Helplessness induced by fear as well as uncertainty, unpredictability and uncontrollability in the situation of impunity sponsored by the State may contribute to the strong emotional response in both groups, as both of them are at the higher end of the risk of being exposed to human rights violations. More than that, these marginalized people live in the constant fear that their relatives and friends are endangered too.

Appraisal of the cause of the war show significant correlations with practically all trauma measures in both groups, which again supports the cognitive theories of traumatization, asserting that change in beliefs may impact on the emotional response to trauma (Foa et al., 1999; Kalmikova & Padun, 2002; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Livanou at el., 2002), and contradicts Başoğlu’s findings (2005). One can suggest that many years of instability, life “from one war to another,” disillusionment with the leaders, with the causes of war and perceived worsening of the situation (political and social), loss of hope for the future and in the State, results in the strong trauma-related emotional reactions in both groups.

**Hypothesis 3:** There are differences in the perception and experiencing of impunity in human rights activists and in torture survivors.

**Measures and scheme of analysis**

To test this hypothesis I used the Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire, Emotions and Beliefs after War, Basic Beliefs, and the Associations about Impunity Test. The scheme of analysis is shown on the Fig 7 presented below.
Data analysis. For RTSQ, EBAW and WAS between-group comparisons, independent t tests were used for continuous variables and Chi-Square tests for categorical variables. SPSS-15 was used for all analyses.

Content analysis. For the association test, in the first stage of narrative analysis, I worked together with another researcher to develop a coding scheme. We drew on subjects' phenomenological experiences as well as on theoretical background. Each researcher coded an entire associations text of 20 subjects using the coding scheme, than we discussed the results and updated the coding scheme. Further on, each expert coded the whole scope of association-replies of respondents. Difficult or ambiguous cases were discussed separately and worked out together. The results were analyzed by SPSS-15 statistical program. For testing the aforementioned hypothesis 12 codes were formed:

1) phenomenological description of impunity in action. This category includes such phrases as - “Impunity is a phenomenon when women are beaten, when children and elderly people are killed. When children and the elderly are called terrorists and perpetrators.”

2) psycho-emotional state of a victim, image of a victim (“It is about the fear, humiliation, and sufferings of innocent victims”)

3) enumeration of perpetrators and those who are responsible for the crimes against humanity, tortures and human rights violations (“Putin, Federal Security Service, police, Kadyrov...”)

---

**Fig. 7:** Scheme of analysis for hypothesis N 3

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)
4) the psycho-moral state of perpetrator, image of a perpetrator ("Callousness, indifference, megalomania, lack of faith in anything. For a person who committed a crime and has not been punished for it - impunity grows into permissiveness")

5) the moral-ethical appraisal of impunity phenomenon ("rudeness, dissoluteness, ignorance, opportunism, hypocrisy...")

6) the position of the State in impunity ("... when the state which must protect its citizens, but, on the contrary, becomes a murderer of them").

7) punishment in real life ("But faith in God, faith in justice allows us to think that impunity still will be punished")

8) punishment by God ("... God's punishment will overtake everyone. ...And even if one manages to escape justice (criminal punishment), nothing will help him in the day of Retribution")

9) consequences of impunity ("Impunity generates crime, deprives people of faith in a better tomorrow, produces fear ...")

10) moral impunity ("... society is not deprived of its respect for people who should have been punished by contempt")

11) historical impunity. ("... when a person kills another person and for it he is rewarded and gets a monument," "when criminals are glorified for political purposes")

12) society (reducing the role of the population in the political life of the country)

Quantitative analysis of word-usage frequencies was run by the Content Analyzer v0.52 program.

Results

Free Association test

The image of victim, perpetrator and State were analyzed on the basis of the Free Association Test (Appendix 2). Free Association test stories show that both groups actively include the themes of State, Punishment, Law, Image of perpetrator and victim in their associations related to impunity. All these notions were among the most frequently used in both target groups. Let us view the results in detail.
**Image of the victim**

In the image of the victim the major topic for the group of survivors was “suffering”. This word had the 7 rank position among the most frequent words in this group (9; 0,0066), which is significantly higher than its 58 rank position for the human rights activists (3; 0,0015). Among the feelings enumerated by the survivors were fear (7; 0,0051), humiliation (4; 0,0029), anger (3; 0,0015), weakness (2; 0,0014), revenge (3; 0,0022), emptiness, chaos, hatred, etc. It is interesting to mention that the word “evil” was among the highest rank notions in this group. It has fourth position (with the frequency of 18; 0,0133). In Russian “anger” (zlost) and “evil” (zlo) are words with common root. Victims also stressed the loss of trust in authorities and uncertainty as to the future. One of the respondents metaphorically characterized impunity as “an atomic bomb, which destroys everything and kills everyone – the guilty and non-guilty.” Thus the image of the victim in this target group of respondents is characterized by deeply subjective set of psychological states which arise as a reaction to impunity.

As for the HRactivists, they also spoke about fear (5; 0,0026), pain (3; 0,0015), hatred (4; 0,0021), anger (4; 0,0021), helplessness (3; 0,0015), and sufferings (3; 0,0015). They also stressed mistrust. Besides, human rights activists expressed their will to help, their desire for revenge, to punish the perpetrators and restore justice on behalf of the survivors. ("Desire to punish them myself": Respondent M). Human rights activists not only referred to the victims’ sense of chaos and emptiness but also cared about the possible psychosomatic disorders which the victims may develop as a result of violence and impunity. HRactivists stressed that their fear and pain concerned mostly the life and safety of their relatives and much less their own lives; as it appeared in the words of the Respondent A: “I fear not for myself, but for my relatives.” Their suffering was also connected with the inactivity and inertia of other people. Thus, in comparison with the survivors group, HRactivists focused not just on the profound emotional or psychological influence of the consequences of impunity, but rather on the image of people as victims, sufferings of the innocent, violence towards women, children, and elderly people. Many HRactivists created an image of people as innocent “victims, who is being destroyed for the sake of Radiant Future.”

**Image of the perpetrator**

The group of survivors paid relatively little attention to the image and characteristics of the perpetrator. The figure of perpetrator appears in their associations for “impunity” as indifferent towards the suffering of innocent, conceiving and
maintaining evil intentions, egoistic and dependent on personal interests, arrogant and ignoring law and common moral norms – an image of an “omnipotent monster.”

The group of human rights activists differ significantly on the volume and frequency of the image of a perpetrator in their associations. This portrait gains many psychological and moral characteristics: cynicism (2; 0,0010), aggression (2; 0,0010), unscrupulousness, amorality, arrogance (3; 0,0015), greed (2; 0,0010), cruelty (4; 0,0021), impudence (3; 0,0015), loutishness (5; 0,0026), corruption (6; 0,0031), megalomania, etc. The strong moral accent (amoral behavior, loss of life and moral principles, loss of conscience, loss of faith) goes hand in hand with characteristics of general psychological lowering – of intelligence and personal traits. One of the human rights activists devotes the whole space of his impunity associations to characterizing perpetrators of impunity crimes, proposing the entire mechanism of the impact of impunity: “Impunity sharpens all mean, low feelings, particularly of cowardly people. This pushes them to further crimes against human morality, against humanity. This is absolutely inconsistent with high spirituality, leads people down the false path, and develops unbelievable cruelty. Impunity is a limited notion. Sooner or later punishment occurs, but sometimes people realize it too late” (Respondent T.).

Neglect of moral norms and human rights is closely connected with the loss of spiritual and moral values, the loss of inner pivot. Many HR activists write about the price which perpetrators pay for the neglect of the notion of sin and evil. There is much more moral condemnation in the stories of HR activists than in the stories of survivors. HR activists are very keen to describe a special subjectivity which arises from moral impunity, in which violation of the law (juridical and moral) becomes normal. Even more, it makes them omnipotent and provides them with a symbolic mandate to follow their own interests and commit atrocities, trespassing basic human norms. They get a clear answer to Raskolnikov’s question, “whether I am fearful creature or have the right?” Thus, as Vanessa Dri and her colleagues note, “the cynic places him/herself as the moral operator of impunity or as the violator of everything that might limit his/her desire for power and material goods.” (p.194)

Chi-square test showed a significant difference in the frequency of dealing with a perpetrator’s psychosocial and moral characteristics (p=0,007). The human rights activists were much more active than the survivors in addressing the image of perpetrator.
**Table 14.** The frequency of dealing with a perpetrator’s psychosocial and moral characteristics (Free Association Test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square Continuity Correction (a)</td>
<td>7,368(b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>6,117</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association Of Valid Cases</td>
<td>7,600</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7,287</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Image of the State**

The image of the State and its role in impunity is marked in both groups. Among survivors there is a tendency to identify the State with the perpetrator: “Impunity is a crime of the State against victims.” It is noted that “the State is indifferent to the victims, and it takes the side of the perpetrators, who are not only free from responsibility for their crimes but are also made heroes for political reasons instead of receiving legal punishment.” HR activists spoke about the weakness of the State, its low qualification and reluctance to fulfill its duties. As in the case of perpetrators, the politics of the State towards people arouses moral criticism in human rights activists: “impunity exists when the State kills its own citizens and justifies it by the struggle against terrorism. Terrorism is an artificial notion, which was created in order to justify one’s actions, when there are people who can do anything they want, while others have a single right – to die... The State, which is supposed to defend its people, murders them, and calls this the salvation of the nation and of humanity.”

**Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire (RTSQ)**

In order to elicit information about the appraisal of various redress events I used the Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire (Başoğlu et al., 2005). How do victims and human rights activists perceive the situation? In global ratings for the questions, “When you think about what you and your close ones went through, do you think justice has been served in your case?” and “When are you consider the suffering other people went through, do you think justice has been served in your community / country?” the Mann Whitney test shows significant difference both in ratings for these two questions (p=0.002 for people close to one and p=0.032 for the community in general) and for the
evaluation of the satisfaction which the outcomes of justice serve (p=0.000 for “close ones” and p=0.001 for the community in general). These findings are shown in the table 15.

Table 15. Global rating and evaluation of the satisfaction which the outcomes of justice serve.

Test Statistics (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Global ratings. When you think about what you and your close ones went through, do you think justice has been served in your case?</th>
<th>Overall, how satisfied are you with this outcome?</th>
<th>Global ratings. When you consider the suffering other people went through, do you think justice has been served in your community / country?</th>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>766,500</td>
<td>696,500</td>
<td>894,000</td>
<td>735,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>1801,500</td>
<td>1921,500</td>
<td>1929,000</td>
<td>1911,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-3.112</td>
<td>-3.626</td>
<td>-2.143</td>
<td>-3.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When responding to a question of the interview on changing feelings about injustice over time (Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire) both groups of interviewees mostly noted that their feelings did not change. There was no difference between groups on this matter. How do victims manage to cope with a situation which does not change emotionally? Even though there is no apparent difference between survivors and HR activists, we do recall that the Mann-Whitney U test showed a significant difference in emotional response to perceived impunity (p=0.002) as well as of fear and loss of control (p=0.043) (table 11).

If the emotional response and inner tension remain of the same intensity, and the perpetrators of the crime are not punished, what can help victims to cope, and to restore a sense of justice in their own mentality? There is no juridical punishment, that is true. But one can hope for and believe in God's punishment, in God's justice. The Beliefs about
God block in RTSQ showed no difference between HR activists and victims with respect to this parameter. A similar pattern can be found in the Free Association Test, in which both survivors and HR activists stressed the inevitability of God’s Punishment and Judgment. Thus, respondent M. (survivor group) noted that "People define impunity as injustice, absence of punishment for the evil which one caused. But that’s not true. People will pay their debts for the evil they committed. Probably, this will not happen immediately, but definitely during one’s lifetime, if one doesn’t repent of his or her sins. God will give back the evil which one caused to other people. We are just guests in this world. Resign yourself, be humble." Respondent L. from the same group wrote that "Everything is in the hands of God." This position was supported by respondent N.: “Impunity doesn’t exist. Sooner or later one will be punished. Thank God!" The same ideas were frequent in HR activist group. For example, respondent C. noted: “there might be a delay, but God's punishment will reach everyone. Everyone will have to make one's response. One can escape from criminal trial and judgment, but no one will escape Last Judgment and God’s punishment. Thus, impunity is quite a temporary phenomenon.” Some of survivors, as if following the way of the biblical Job, suggested that the world is mysterious and beyond human capacities to understand its ways: “human virtue is nothing if it is judged by another man. Only a person himself or herself can make his or her choice – what he or she can do and what he or she can’t do. It is not seldom that bad deeds (even crimes) end in good results.”

Though the Belief about God block in RTSQ showed no difference between HR activists and survivors with respect to this parameter, there was a significant difference for two questions in RTSQ filled in by our participants: “How satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in this life? And how satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in the afterlife?” In the Mann-Whitney test p=0,000 and p=0,009, respectively; Kolmogorov-Smirnov p=0,011 and p=0,024, respectively.

Tables 16-17-18. Evaluation of the satisfaction with justice from God

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranks.</th>
<th>group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in survivors</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57,51</td>
<td>2818,00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRactivists</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36,60</td>
<td>1647,00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in after life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>survivors</th>
<th>HRactivists</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>this life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that they</td>
<td>54,28</td>
<td>40,12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will find the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punishment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they deserve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from God in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test Statistics(a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in this life</th>
<th>How satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in afterlife?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>612,000</td>
<td>770,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>1647,000</td>
<td>1805,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-3,802</td>
<td>-2,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test Statistics(a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in this life</th>
<th>How satisfied are you with the thought that they will find the punishment they deserve from God in afterlife?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Differences Absolute</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Differences Positive</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Differences Negative</td>
<td>-.334</td>
<td>-.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>1,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social level

Apart from the personal level of impunity, researchers (Dri et al, 2009) distinguish lack of moral condemnation (moral impunity) and ignoring the truth (historical impunity). These two issues were also studied with the aforementioned measurement techniques.
Moral impunity

Three blocks of questions in the interview (Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire = RTSQ) were directed to assess these aspects and subjective satisfaction: acknowledgement of responsibility (Have those responsible for human rights violations fully acknowledged their responsibility for acts of human rights violations? How satisfied are you with this outcome?), apology to victims (Have they made genuine public apologies? How satisfied are you with this outcome?), compensation to victims.

There was no significant difference between the two groups in response to the question of whether acknowledgement or apology took place. Practically all participants gave a negative reply to this question. Yet there was a significant difference in satisfaction with the outcome. Though both levels of satisfaction were low, the Mann-Whitney test shows that the satisfaction level of human rights activists is significantly higher both for acknowledgement by perpetrators of responsibility for their acts (p=0.006) and apology (p=0.001).

Table 19. Satisfaction with the outcome of the evaluation of acknowledgement by perpetrators of responsibility for their acts and apology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome of the evaluation of acknowledgement by perpetrators the responsibility for their acts?</th>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome of the evaluation of receiving apology from the perpetrators?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>873,000</td>
<td>857,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>2098,000</td>
<td>2082,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-2.734</td>
<td>-3.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compensations of Victims

The views of survivors and HR activists on compensation problem were strikingly different both in the question of Receiving any monetary / moral compensation for trauma and in evaluation of satisfaction with this compensation (Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire = RTSQ). The Pearson Chi-Square test shows a difference for both monetary compensation (p=0.002) and non-monetary compensation (reinstatement of social/occupational status) (p=0.034). And the Mann-Whitney test
showed a significant difference with respect to satisfaction with compensation (both with \( p=0.000 \)).

Tables 20-21. Receiving monetary compensation for trauma.\(^4\)

### Crosstab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receiving any monetary compensation for trauma,</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>HR activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square Continuity</td>
<td>9.440(b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction(a)</td>
<td>7.742</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>10.217</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>9.339</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^a \) Computed only for a 2x2 table  
\( ^b \) 0 cells (0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.70.

### Tables 22-23. Receiving non-monetary compensation for trauma.

### Crosstab Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receiving any non-monetary compensation from the state(reinstatement of</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>HR activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) According to the UN General Assembly resolution on the right to a remedy and reparation (2005) compensation is one out of five different type of reparation, which means a form of reparation in terms of money. Here I use the term “monetary compensation” given by the RTSQ questionnaire.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>social/occupational status...</th>
<th>49</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Chi-Square Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>6,766(a)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>7,706</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>6,434</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 48.

**Tables 24-25. Evaluation of compensation satisfaction**

**Ranks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with this outcome? (monetary compensation)</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>38.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activists</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>57.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with this outcome? (non monetary compensation)</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activists</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Test Statistics(a)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome?</th>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>651,500</td>
<td>701,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>1876,500</td>
<td>1926,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-4.621</td>
<td>-4.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Grouping Variable: group

Interestingly enough, a significant difference was also found in the type of desired compensation (p=0.000 in Pearson Chi-Square test). Human rights activists spoke
mostly of monetary compensation while victims stressed the importance of moral compensation.

For the survivors, the disclosure of truth can verify the reality of what has happened, and the punishment and humiliation of the perpetrator can to some degree restore the emotional balance. Although these elements are highly important, they cannot, however, repair the serious and long-term damage to health nor the lost opportunities in life. The calculation of the cost of health damage and lost opportunities is difficult but will probably in most countries rise to enormous levels. However, compensation has an importance that goes beyond its material value. It is also a symbolic acknowledgement of the fact that serious damage has taken place. The decision of The Norwegian Parliament in 1999 to grant 250 million NK as “an historical and moral settlement” of the economic liquidation of the Jewish minority during World War II is an example of such an act. It meant both a material and symbolic acknowledgement of guilt and compensation obligations for the Norwegian State over fifty years after the actual events took place (Sveaass & Lavik, 2000).

German psychologists (Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008) indicate cases of disappeared people whose family members refused to accept compensation from the State, as due to the facts of impunity they consider financial reparation as betrayal. In cases when applicants from the North Caucasus to ECtHR win, Russia respects the Court decision in part – it pays compensation to the survivors but does not undertake any real investigations (Memorial, 2010). Accepting money without receiving justice leads to a feeling of guilt in victims (Baeza, 2000).

In the Free Association Test there was no significant difference in the frequency of the moral impunity theme among associations about impunity. Both survivors and HR activists stressed the absence of moral reproach and of the condemnation of impunity and crimes against humanity both by the State and by society. Instead of receiving punishment perpetrators may well be rewarded. Respondents wrote about the atmosphere of indifference and the tacit approval of violence. Indifference, silence, ignorance, and the mockery of justice are among the core characteristics of moral impunity which were mentioned by respondents. „Impunity is indifference to and approval of violence,” „impunity is denial of justice and its humiliation,” „no one cares about human rights violations and crimes.” The loss of legal regulation and the transformation of moral values and rules have their consequences. They lead to the degradation of people, the decay and lowering of the psychological and moral level of society, and the lowering of the spiritual potential of the country. The community is turned into an accomplice which legitimizes the power of impunity. A respondent from the group of HR activists stresses that „the most difficult is not even the action of
impunity, but rather inertia and the absence of reaction in the community." In contrast with survivors, the group of HR activists was significantly different (Mann-Whitney test p=0.003) in its evaluation of the role of social and political responses to human rights violations and community protests as possibly having a positive impact on the healing of profound personal suffering ("Certain events may have an effect on people's distress and anger about the injustice they suffered. I will go through a list of events and ask about their effect on you," Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire = RTSQ).

**Historical impunity**

Historical impunity is defined as „an act of the symbolic erasure of a crime against humanity committed by the State through discourses and institutionalized myths (the official truth)” (Dri et al., 2009). Social denial, oblivion, or distortion of the facts, constructing new versions of a primary narrative – these are a few manifestations of historical impunity.

In the interview (RTSQ) we asked respondents whether the truth about events been adequately uncovered and made public. All participants of the survivors’ group and the majority of respondents from HR activists’ group stressed the absence of adequate coverage of the truth in public, yet a significant number of HR activists responded positively to this question. Pearson Chi-Square test shows a significant difference between the two groups in the appraisal of this fact (p=0.008). According to the Mann-Whitney test there is also a significant difference in satisfaction with the outcomes of the public exposure of the truth (p=0.002) and media coverage (p=0.003).

**Tables 26-27. Uncovering the truth in public and media coverage.**

**Crosstab**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has the truth about events been adequately uncovered and made public?</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do not know</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>9,683(a)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>12,120</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>6,847</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.39.

Tables 28-29. Satisfaction with the outcomes of public uncovering of truth and media coverage.

Ranks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome? (of public uncovering of truth)</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with this outcome? (of public uncovering of truth)</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41.59</td>
<td>2038.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRactivists</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53.93</td>
<td>2427.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with this outcome? (media coverage)</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41.69</td>
<td>2043.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HRactivists</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53.82</td>
<td>2422.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test Statistics(a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome? (of public uncovering of truth)</th>
<th>How satisfied are you with this outcome? (media coverage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>813,000</td>
<td>2038,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2043,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-3,128</td>
<td>-2,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Grouping Variable: group

Not only historical memory, but also episodic memory exists in the form of narrative which a person is able to make for him or herself or for other people. People exchange narratives in social interactions with other representatives of society. Narrative is the means of social impact. Statistical analysis showed the difference between groups in the fact of telling trauma stories to authorities (State or international) (Pearson Chi-Square p=0.000) and to NGO organizations (Pearson Chi-
Square $p=0.000$). There is no significant difference between the groups in telling the story of your trauma to someone else such as family, friends, or a professional care provider. Interestingly enough, there was also no significant difference in satisfaction about having told one’s trauma story in any of the three aforementioned cases. In the case of HR activists, a significant correlation was found - 0.602 (.000) - between the satisfaction of telling a trauma story to an NGO and to friends or family.

Table 30-31. Telling trauma story to authorities (State or international).

**Crosstab Count**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telling of trauma story. To authorities (have you ever told your trauma story to state or international authorities?</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>HRactivists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chi-Square Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>26,874(b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction(a)</td>
<td>24,774</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>28,409</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher’s Exact Test</td>
<td>26,588</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a  Computed only for a 2x2 table
b  0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.54.

Tables 32-33. Telling of trauma story to NGO. Crosstab Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telling the trauma story to NGOs (have</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>survivors</td>
<td>HRactivists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
you ever told the story of your trauma to other non-governmental authorities such as NGO ...)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>yes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>39,715((b))</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction(a)</td>
<td>37,069</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>45,846</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>39,292</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>39,292</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Computed only for a 2x2 table
b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16,76.

Thus HR activists are much more active in addressing their narratives to local and international communities. They were also more positive about the acknowledgement and evaluation of activities that take place in the community in remembrance of past events (the suffering that people went through, or people who were killed, had disappeared, or had been detained, tortured, or imprisoned). Pearson Chi-Square test showed significant differences on this question (p=0.048), and the Mann-Whitney test represented differences in satisfaction with activities in remembrance of past events (p=0.002).

Both survivors and HR activists mentioned in the Association Test lie, dissimulation and hypocrisy as pivotal for the current social context of impunity. The official narratives about events and intentions is characterized by respondents as highly distorted. Perpetrators are represented as heroes and are rewarded for their heroism, innocent people are persecuted in the name of noble intentions and mottos of the protection of the country and its people against terrorism, for the sake of justice and safety; memory about victims is vandalized. “Impunity deprives people of the right to find out the truth,” and the truth itself becomes distorted and marginal. Artificially
formed, a distorted narrative swaps victims and perpetrators: “Children and the elderly are killed, and at the same time called terrorists and killers. They are guilty because they are weak and helpless.”

**WAS**

Is the more active position of HR activists (manifested in higher satisfaction of redress for trauma, higher narrative activity, more trust in community protest, etc.) associated with differences in basic beliefs about oneself and the world? It was surprising to discover from between-group comparisons with independent t tests (as the variables are continuous), that the groups differ significantly only in one measure – their belief in the benevolence of people (Mann-Whitney test, p= 0.022). (This finding supports previous researches - Başoğlu at el., 2005; Kalmikova and Padun, 2002; Livanou at el., 2002 - and confirms the view that baseline beliefs are at risk of being shattered in a traumatic situation.

**Table 34.** Basic beliefs. Between-group comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Statistics (a)</th>
<th>benevolence of world</th>
<th>benevolence of people</th>
<th>justice</th>
<th>control</th>
<th>randomness</th>
<th>self-worth</th>
<th>self-control</th>
<th>Luckiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>1010.00</td>
<td>822.000</td>
<td>967.000</td>
<td>107.150</td>
<td>997.000</td>
<td>898.50</td>
<td>939.50</td>
<td>1048.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>2235.00</td>
<td>2047.000</td>
<td>219.200</td>
<td>229.650</td>
<td>2078.000</td>
<td>197.950</td>
<td>2164.500</td>
<td>2273.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-0.875</td>
<td>-2.292</td>
<td>-1.197</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.972</td>
<td>-1.710</td>
<td>-1.405</td>
<td>-0.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>,381</td>
<td>,022</td>
<td>,231</td>
<td>,677</td>
<td>,331</td>
<td>,087</td>
<td>,160</td>
<td>,554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neither self-worth, nor self-control, luckiness, nor other variables showed significant differences between groups.
Yet, it was interesting to identify differences in correlations between basic belief items and trauma-related measures. In survivors self worth is negatively associated with PTSD (r=284, p=0.048), dissociation (r=368, p=0.010) and depression (r=380, p=0.009). Luckiness manifests negative correlations with dissociation (r=308, p=0.010) and trait anxiety (r=455, p=0.001). There is also a negative link between of trauma and PTSD (r=308, p=0.031). As for HR activists, PTSD is associated with benevolence of people (r=439, p=0.002), randomness (r=314, p=0.034), and self-worth (r=358, p=0.0015). Depression with benevolence of world (r=312, p=0.037), the benevolence of people (r=368, p=0.013), and luckiness (r=321, p=0.031). State anxiety with benevolence of the world (r=305, p=0.039), the benevolence of people (r=322, p=0.029), self-control (r=302, p=0.041) and luckiness (r=378, p=0.010). Trait anxiety with benevolence of world (r=327, p=0.026), control (r=343, p=0.020) and self-worth (r=333, p=0.024). (Appendix 4).

**Discussion**

The findings of this study provide insight into survivors’ and HR activists’ views of impunity and their ways of experiencing different aspects of this phenomenon.

We can identify the following differences in the perception and experiencing of impunity among human rights activists and among torture survivors. The survivors are deeply focused on descriptions of the emotional effects of impunity. They doubt if anything can change the pain and suffering they had to pass through without any blame from their side and without any punishment for the perpetrators. They do not receive any compensation and their tormentors receive no punishment. Criminal impunity becomes a trap with no way out except belief in God and His Last Judgment in the Trial that no one can escape. They thirst first of all for moral compensation for their sufferings. In contrast, HR activists are significantly more focused on the image of the perpetrator and on the analytic description of a special subjectivity which arises from an atmosphere of impunity.

Although in practically all parameters of retributive and moral justice there was unanimity between groups in acknowledging the fact of criminal and moral impunity, these two groups differed significantly with respect to their satisfaction with the outcomes of attempts at retributive and moral justice.

Further, the two groups differ with respect to their personal position and activity in restoring justice. Though there were no differences in the Basic Beliefs Test and Başoğlu’s parameters of justice, the interview, which grasped the actual personal position, showed significant differences for community protest and social-political actions both with respect to historical justice (acknowledgement and evaluation of
activities devoted to remembrance and memory formation) and to its role in transforming personal psychological states.

More specifically the groups differ on the following issues:

**Global rating of justice.** HR activists involved in the movement for achieving justice are more informed about the rare facts of justice gained within the country. They successfully use the international justice mechanisms (ECTHR). Although the victories in the Court of Strasbourg represent a small percentage of all the human rights violations committed here and the population has often never been informed even about those few triumphs, for HR activists they are a significant result of their activity (for the same reason HR activists are more satisfied with the outcome of acknowledgement or apology towards survivors). Moreover, HR activists are more informed about the activity of intergovernmental organizations concerning the region. For the same reason, HR activists are significantly different in their appraisal of the fact that the truth about events been adequately uncovered and made public. Not surprisingly, they also differ in their degree of satisfaction with the outcomes of the public exposure of truth and media coverage. For survivors, most of this information is simply not available. They often feel that they and the entire region have been “abandoned” and betrayed by the outside world.

**Addressing the image of the State.** Survivors tend to identify the State as the perpetrator, while HR activists, dealing with the State’s legal structure and trying to use its legal mechanisms, spoke about the weakness of the State, its low qualification and reluctance to fulfill its duties.

**Addressing the image of perpetrators.** HR activists pay more attention to it than survivors do. They describe perpetrators’ special subjectivity, which makes moral impunity possible and normal for them and may lead them to feel omnipotent. This may result from the fact that HR activists, in their attempt to protect survivors and help them perceive perpetrators as opponents, experience strong negative emotions towards them, while survivors mainly deal with their own emotions.

**Addressing the image of victims.** Survivors’ reactions to impunity were mainly connected to descriptions of its emotional effects (fear, pain, humiliations, chaos, anger, will to revenge, etc.). HR activists also spoke about emotional suffering. But the responsibility they took on themselves appears in their desire for retribution, to carry it out themselves, restore justice on behalf of the victims, and to care for them. This may result from a tendency to over-involvement and their over-willingness to assume a position of salvation. They also do not allow themselves to feel fear and are more concerned about the lives of their close ones than their own. For HR activists it is
difficult to withstand the unrealistic expectations which survivors have towards them. This might be the reason why they connect the inactivity and inertia of society to suffering, as in their “fight” with the State for justice society is the only accomplice they can have. It could be the reason why HR activists differ significantly in their appraisal of the role of community protests and political and social responses to violence for the healing of profound personal suffering.

**Appraisal of the importance of monetary and of non-monetary compensation.** Human rights activists spoke mostly of monetary compensation while victims stressed the importance of moral compensation. Fighting against impunity, HR activists often feel helpless in their attempt to help people achieve justice. One real goal they can seek to is monetary compensation in a European Court. Secondly, dealing every day with people who suffer from financial and health problems as well, HR activists want to but cannot change their lives. Thus, monetary compensation is, for them, more achievable and useful. Survivors, on the other hand, perceive getting only monetary compensation without achieving justice either as the price to be paid for the violation their rights or as a betrayal of relatives who have disappeared. This corresponds with the conclusions of Baeza (2000) and Rauchfuss and Schmolze (2008).

**Assessing satisfaction with punishment by God “in this life” and “in the afterlife.”** HR activists’ attitude are for the most part reflected in the position: “believe in God but rely on yourself.” They are motivated to achieve justice “in this life,” and this is the main aim of the activity for which they are ready to put their lives at risk. It is worth noticing that the groups show no differences with respect to the beliefs about God questions (Başoğlu’s test). All participants come from strict religious societies and for all of them belief in God is the main cognitive coping measure which helps to restore justice in their own mentality, helping them to reestablish meaning.

**Sharing (telling) the trauma story with authorities (to State or international and NGO organizations).** Possibly, this results from the fact that HR activists professionally deal with the recording of the history of violence in the region and their position is more active.

Neither group differed in acknowledging the fact of criminal and moral impunity, as well as in assessing changed feelings about injustice over time. Actually all of them have to find the way to deal with past traumatic events covered-up by the current impunity environment. HR activists can cope by working in a human rights NGO, while survivors have to do that in more emotional intrapersonal way.

Thus, the differences groups have in the perception and experiencing of impunity almost certainly derives from the different positions and roles they have. HR activists
involved in the struggle for justice (compared to survivors less satisfied with the “certainty” that perpetrators will be punished by God “in this life” and “in the afterlife”). They are connected to support networks (local and international), have more access to the independent media, and thus differ with respect to the global rating of justice and in assessing the truth uncovered in the media. In the impunity situation the only achievable aim for them is monetary compensation, while survivors prefer moral (non-monetary compensation). The responsibility for regaining justice they assumed may exceed their resources. They expect solidarity from the community (traditionally supportive), compared to survivors they attribute a more important role to social protest, and more than survivors connect the inertia of society to suffering.

The different position groups have in the impunity environment did not, however, reflect the differences in assumptions about oneself and the world, except with respect to the benevolence of people. But correlation between trauma-related measurements and basic beliefs show significant differences. Thus, among survivors, luckiness negatively correlates with dissociation and trait anxiety. This could be a result of the attempt to comprehend the meaning of trauma, to answer the question: “Why did it happen to me?”, “Why I am such an unlucky person?”, as well as a result of the feeling of lost invulnerability. Then it becomes easier to understand the fact that in this group self-worth negatively correlates with PTSD, depression and dissociation - the stronger the trauma response, the lower the feeling of self-worth is. There is also a negative link of justice and trait anxiety, which might be the “trace” of experiencing the unpredictability of the world.

In the HR group the pattern is different. They share with survivors the negative correlation between self-worth and PTSD, as well as between luckiness and depression and state anxiety, which can have the same sense of trying to understand the meaning of the process of traumatization (from events they went through). At the same time one can find in this group the peculiarities – a sense of the benevolence of the world and of people correlates negatively with depression, state and trait anxiety. Possibly, this also comes from the engaged position of HR activists. They place themselves in opposition to the State, struggle for the establishment of justice for survivors and the rule of law for the community. The benevolence paradigm reflects the way they perceive the ideological “vacuum” they live in, having neither support nor positive feedback from the community. Being in danger, they cannot rely on the people around them, the world is no longer a predictable and safe place, and they can no longer control it (negative correlation between control and state and trait anxiety).
Part 3. Conclusion and general discussion

There is still little research on psychological aspects of impunity. The majority of such studies are related to the field of trauma and explore the association of impunity and traumatization (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Baeza, 2000; Becker, 2001; Başoğlu et al., 2005; Fields, 1996; Lykes et al., 2007; Rauchfuss & Schmolze, 2008; Sveaas & Lavik, 2000). From this perspective my thesis continues this tradition of the research within the link of trauma and impunity. But I extend the research area and include not only quantitative measures of trauma, as it is usually done, but also qualitative measures of impunity partly following the works of Başoğlu and his colleagues (2005). Also, two distinct samples were included in the study – HR activists and torture survivors – which share the common culture in the region, which is determined by political, historical, and cultural peculiarities of post-Soviet events and is characterized by a particular pattern of relationship between the State and the individual, with impunity as its integral part.

These two groups not only share a common context, atmosphere of impunity and traumatization by the continuous threat to their lives and the lives of their relatives. There are also some differences, for, while torture survivors are inclined to primary traumatization, HR activists more often experience secondary traumatization, which is related to their professional activity.

The aims of this study were two-fold. On the one hand, I tried to compare objective measures of group differences between survivors and HR activists to assess the level of both severe - PTSD, depression, dissociation - and mild stress symptoms as well as their association with impunity measures. This aim was approached by the first and second hypotheses. On the other hand, I approached subjective parameters of impunity perception and comprehension by the two target groups, which is revealed by the third hypothesis. Regarding the first aim, results (1) show the increase of trauma measures for survivors (which replicates previous findings of Başoğlu and is consistent with studies of Goldfeld et al., 1998; Lueger-Schuster, 2010; Mollica et al., 1987; Peres et al., 2007; and Van der Hart et al, 2006, and anxiety measures for HR activists; 2) show no significant difference for one of the strongest trauma criteria – dissociation; 3) age differences for state anxiety, which is higher for the older participants (results in accord with the findings of All and Fried (1996) and Lenze & Wetherell, 2009).

PTSD and depression are considered to be the most common reaction to torture. Additionally, these psychological consequences may be aggravated by uncertainty, unpredictability, and uncontrollability in an impunity situation, as a next stage of traumatization (Keilson). This postulate is reflected in a higher level of severe trauma-
related symptoms (compared to HR activists) and high level state/trait anxiety. HR activists, in turn, are at risk of developing secondary traumatization due to their professional peculiarities and constant threat to their lives. Thus they show a milder level of trauma response, which becomes apparent through the high level of state/trait anxiety.

As for the second research objective, interview and content analysis of association data, it shows that the groups differ in 1) the emotional reaction to impunity, 2) the appraisal of the impunity pattern, and 3) (attitude) the position towards the special environment which impunity induces.

1) Regarding the emotional reaction to impunity it was shown that survivors have stronger emotional responses to impunity and significantly greater fear and loss of control over life (partially corresponds with findings of Başoğlu at el., 2005; Cardozo et al., 2000; Lykes, 2007). They have less belief in the benevolence of people, which corresponds with previous results demonstrating the high risk for baseline beliefs to be shattered by incomprehensibility of the trauma situation (Başoğlu at el., 2005; Kalmikova & Padun, 2002; Livanou at el., 2002). Emotional response to perceived impunity, as well as the fear and loss of control scale, significantly correlate with all trauma-related characteristics (stress, depression, dissociation, anxiety level) in both survivors and HR activists. This result does not correspond with the findings of studies conducted in the post-war (Başoğlu at el., 2005) or post-earthquake zone (Şalcıoğlu, 2004), but is in accord with studies dealing with de facto ongoing impunity environments, such as the dictatorship in Chile and the “Dirty War” in Guatemala (Agger & Jensen, 1996; Baeza, 2000; Lira, 1995; Rojas, 2000; Zur, 1994), which appears to support the view that an ongoing impunity context is the next stage of traumatization for the survivors.

2) Different patterns of impunity perception were shown for HR activists and survivors. Groups differ in the assessment of the supposition that the truth about events been adequately uncovered and made public, as well as of the global rating of justice and satisfaction with the outcomes of attempts at retributive and moral justice. They portray differently the images of the State, perpetrator, and victim. The survivors are deeply focused on describing the emotional effects of impunity, while HR activists are significantly more focused on the image of the perpetrator and on the analytic description of a special subjectivity induced by the environment of impunity. The two groups also differ in choosing the preferable compensation: the moral is more important for survivors, and the monetary for HR activists. HR activists have been involved in the more than a hundred cases won in the ECHR (resulting in the payment of monetary compensation by the State); this gives meaning to their activities and helps them to deal
with the feeling of helplessness they have (as a reaction to the expectations which survivors have of them). Despite the common feature of giving importance to faith in God, the groups differ in assessing the satisfaction they anticipate of punishment by God “in this life” and “in the afterlife.” Due to their professional motivation, HR activists are more oriented toward achieving justice “in this life.”

3) The position (attitude) towards impunity seems to be more active in HR activists: they show significantly more initiative in sharing (telling) the trauma story with authorities (State or international) and NGO’s. Also, they give more importance to community protest and social-political actions, as they themselves expect and need the community support and perceive it as their only possible companion in fighting against State-sponsored impunity. Beside the fact that in both groups feelings of self-worth and luckiness negatively correlate with trauma-related measurements and anxiety which might reflect the attempt to comprehend the meaning of the process of traumatization, for HR activists the sense of the benevolence of people and the world negatively correlates with depression, state and trait anxiety. This may reflect the way HR activists experience the passivity and indifference of the community in which they live and the unpredictability of the world. It appears that the perception of impunity may be connected with the specific features of HR activist or survivor roles and positions, the activity frame of volunteer work (for HR activists), as well as profound inner processes of the attribution and restoration of meaning (in survivors). This suggestion demands further investigation and assessment. Correlation of objective trauma measures and basic world beliefs provide some supporting evidence for this idea. The influence of activity on the attribution of meaning and the experience of trauma have been theoretically investigated in many psychological approaches.

In summary, this is the first study to investigate the association between impunity and traumatization in two groups – HR activists and torture survivors. Results highlight different patterns of impunity comprehension in the two target groups, as well as differing traumatization intensity between them. Impunity perception patterns require further investigation and replication in larger samples and cultural groups.

3.1. Limitations and future research

The fear of participation in both groups – survivors and HR activists. This factor may influence upon the results.

The group of survivors – those who appealed to human rights organizations and agreed to participate in such a study as this - might well evidence a rather high level of
adaptation and of tolerance for anxiety, and clearly have the capacity to establish social ties and seek for help. We know nothing of those who do not dare to speak of their traumas. Research into the prevalence of torture is hard to undertake in non-refugee groups, so studies of people who remain in the community in which they were tortured are very limited. The leveling effect of the severe trauma of torture limits studies of the effect of culture and ethnicity in torture survivors (Jaranson, 1994). The diversity of survivors’ backgrounds in many treatment centers makes it difficult to collect large enough samples of any given group to perform statistical analyses. Consequently, conducting research to learn about torture survivors has been and remains challenging (government sanctioned torture).

Differences between groups in education and employment.
4. Abstract

This thesis explores the association of impunity and traumatization in torture survivors and human rights activists. It comprises three theoretical chapters and an empirical part, which approach this general theme of research.

In the background of the thesis I tried to define relevant factors in order to explain the influence of impunity on traumatization in target groups. I refer to the model of traumatization factors, to the theory of cumulative trauma, and to the model of psychological influence of impunity on the psyche of the individual and on the life of society. The first chapter provides the analysis of the phenomenon of impunity; it presents the notion of impunity and analyses its different perspectives in such domains as law, human rights, political science, sociology, and psychology.

The second chapter deals with the local historical and cultural context of the impunity atmosphere in the North Caucasus region. It is argued that the North Caucasus region has its own specific characteristics related to the experience and perception of impunity, which arises from the long history of injustice here and the various traditions of coping with it. Ethnic, cultural, religious and historical aspects are presented and analyzed through the prism of the phenomenon of impunity.

The third chapter of the theoretic part approaches the problem of traumatization in torture survivors and HR activists. It provides a detailed view of the context of impunity and the influence of threat - factors which are common for survivors and HR activists - and also reveals the factors which are peculiar. From the review of literature I derive that these factors are – the primary traumatization of survivors, aggravated by the unpredictability, uncontrollability and uncertainty of impunity situation, experienced together with the lack of emotional and social support from society; and the secondary impact on HR activists.

The second part of the thesis presents the empirical study of impunity and its association with traumatization. The objectives of the study were 1) to assess severe and mild traumatic reactions in survivors and HR activists, 2) to explore the association of traumatization and impunity, 3) to study the perception of impunity and its different patterns in two target groups. The participants formed two groups: 1) Torture survivors in North Caucasus (Russia) (49 participants) (I focused on survivors of torture living within their own communities); and 2) human rights activists who provide assistance to survivors in North Caucasus (46 participants).
Measurements comprised both scales and questionnaires, which assess levels of traumatization and the effects of impunity: the Mississippi Scale for PTSD, the Depression Inventory of Beck, the Dissociative Experience Scale – DES, the State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire (RTSQ), the Emotions and Beliefs After War (EBAW) questionnaire, the World Assumption Scale (WAS), and the Impunity Association Test.

The results showed a higher level of severe trauma-related symptoms in survivors (compared to HR activists) and high-level state/trait anxiety in both groups. Also, differences between survivors and HR activists in patterns of impunity perception and attitude towards this phenomenon were identified and analyzed.

In summary, the findings of this thesis support the idea of the impact of impunity on the experience of trauma and the restoration process. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allowed achieving some advance on this important topic.
5. Zusammenfassung

Die Dissertation untersucht die Verbindung zwischen Straflosigkeit und Traumatisierung bei Folterüberlebenden und Menschenrechtsaktivisten. Sie beinhaltet drei theoretische Kapitel und einen empirischen Teil, die sich mit diesem Forschungsthema auseinandersetzen.


Das dritte Kapitel des theoretischen Teils behandelt das Problem der Traumatisierung von Folterüberlebenden und Menschenrechtsaktivisten. Es beinhaltet eine detaillierte Darstellung des Kontextes von Straflosigkeit und des Einflusses von Drohungen – ein Faktor der sowohl bei Folterüberlebenden wie auch bei Menschenrechtsaktivisten verbreitet ist – und auch jene Faktoren, die bei den beiden Zielgruppen unterschiedlich sind. Aus einer Literaturübersicht leite ich ab, dass diese Faktoren die folgenden sind: die primäre Traumatisierung der Überlebenden, die durch die Unvorhersehbarkeit, Unkontrollierbarkeit und Unsicherheit der Situation der Straflosigkeit verstärkt wird, die zusammen mit einem Mangel an emotionaler und sozialer Unterstützung durch die Gesellschaft erlebt wird; und die sekundären Auswirkungen auf die Menschenrechtsaktivisten.

Der zweite Teil der Dissertation präsentiert eine empirische Studie von Straflosigkeit und ihrer Verbindung mit Traumatisierung. Die Ziele der Studie waren 1) schwere und milde traumatische Reaktionen von Folterüberlebenden und Menschenrechtsaktivisten zu bewerten, 2) die Verbindung von Traumatisierung und
Straflosigkeit zu untersuchen, 3) die Wahrnehmung von Straflosigkeit und ihrer verschiedenen Muster in den zwei Zielgruppen zu untersuchen. Die Teilnehmer formten zwei Gruppen: 1) Folterüberlebenden im Nordkaukasus (Russland) (49 Teilnehmer) (mein Fokus waren Folterüberlebende, die in ihrer angestammten Gemeinschaft weiterlebten); und 2) Menschenrechtsaktivisten die Folterüberlebenden verschiedene Formen an Unterstützung geben (46 Teilnehmerlnnen).

Messgrößen beinhalten sowohl Skalen als auch Fragebögen, die das jeweilige Ausmaß der Traumatisierung und den Einfluss von Straflosigkeit bewerten: die Mississippi Scale for PTSD, das Beck-Depressions-Inventar (BDI-I), die Dissociative Experience Scale (DES), das State/Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), das Redress for Trauma Survivors Questionnaire (RTSQ), der Fragebogen Emotions and Beliefs After War (EBAW), die World Assumption Scale (WAS), und der Impunity Association Test.

Die Resultate zeigten ein höheres Level von schweren mit Trauma verbundenen Symptomen bei den Folterüberlebenden (verglichen mit den Menschenrechtsaktivisten) und eine hochgradige Angst-Charakteristik in beiden Gruppen. Weiters wurden die Unterschiede zwischen Menschenrechtsaktivisten die Folterüberlebenden in bezug auf Muster der Wahrnehmung von Straflosigkeit und ihrer Einstellung gegenüber diesem Phänomen identifiziert und analysiert.

6. Literature


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Appendix 1. Glossary

**structural impunity**—the institutional structures of the State, such as the constitutional authority conferred on the army for internal security (McSherry and Molina, 1992)

**strategic impunity**—specific procedures and structures adopted to prevent criminal investigation or prosecution, such as tampering with evidence and thwarting investigation (McSherry and Molina, 1992)

**political/psychological impunity**—manipulation of fear, distrust, and isolation among citizens (McSherry and Molina, 1992)

**cycle of impunity** (“I first heard the term used by the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative in Burundi at the height of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. He has since reaffirmed the point that impunity for one atrocity can breed further atrocity” (Rodley, 2000)

**social marginalization** – the process of depriving people of their political and social power (CODEPU, 1989)

**individual marginalization** – the process when people experience a loss of knowledge and skills, self-esteem and cultural integrity (CODEPU, 1989)

**organized violence** - “the inter-human infliction of significant, avoidable pain and suffering by an organized group according to a declared or implied strategy and/or systems of ideas or attitudes. It comprises any violent action that is unacceptable by general standards and relates to the victim’s feelings. Organized violence includes *inter alia* torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and punishment, as in Article 5 of the UDHR (1948). Imprisonment without trial, mock executions, hostage-taking or any other form of violent deprivation of liberty also falls under the heading of organized violence” (Sveaass & Lavik, 2000).

**impunity** – “the impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of human rights violations to account – whether in criminal, civil, administrative proceedings – since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to them being accused, arrested, tried and, if found guilty, convicted” (...) Impunity covers “all the measures and practices whereby, on the one hand, states fail in their obligations to investigate, try and sentence those responsible for violations of human rights and, on the other hand, impede the enjoyment by victims and their families of the right to know the truth and have their rights restored” (Joinet, 1996)
**moral impunity** - absence of moral punishment vis-à-vis a crime (Beckerman, 2000, Dri et al., 2009)

**historical impunity** - symbolic erasure of a crime committed by representatives of the State through the official truth, institutionalized myths and discourses, misrepresentation of the facts and denial (Dri et al., 2009).

**direct repression** - (in ascending order of severity) - “Violent arrests, forced exile; threats; arbitrary imprisonments; torture; the “disappearance” of prisoners; executions; the killing of opponents under false precepts; death during torture. Whereas psychologically, the aim of the last four is to eliminate her or him physically (Orellana, 1989)”

**indirect repression** - “deprivation of food, housing and health care; dismissal from work; distortion of facts and manipulation of information” (Agger and Jensen, 1996)

**“invisible” stressor** - threat of radiation, chemical, and other similar lesions. (Tarabrina et al., 2009). That invisible menace, vague threats, and the sense of helplessness before this enhances reactive anxiety, expressed in subjectively experienced emotions of fear, tension, anxiety, nervousness.

**moral exclusion** - Three dimensions – severity, extent, engagement (ranges from unawareness to ignoring, allowing, facilitating, executing, and devising moral exclusion. At the more passive end of this dimension, people who have the intellectual, financial, or social resources to hinder the doing of harm choose to remain aloof, disinterested, or uninformed) Opotow (2005).

**distorted social reality of impunity**- when the functions of law are abolished by the State and victims and perpetrators swap places, whereby the State marginalizes the victims and protects the perpetrators. The absence of “condemned violence” produces a “new morality” which destroys the social fabric through the establishment of new values and symbols which accompany impunity.

**torture** – torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity“ (UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment)
secondary traumatic stress - is “the natural consequent behavior resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other. It is the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person” (Figley, 1995).
Appendix 2. Blank for Associations Test

Безнаказанность – это...

«Безнаказанность» все понимают по-разному. Мы просим Вас написать те ассоциации, слова, определения, которые вызывает у Вас слово – безнаказанность. Нас интересует только Ваше личное мнение. Пишите любое количество определений. Пишите первое, что приходит Вам в голову. Время работы 10 минут.

(English translation: “Impunity is ...Everybody understands „impunity“ in his/her own way. We ask you to write down all associations, words, definitions, which this word “impunity” evokes within you. We are interested only in your personal (own) opinion. Write any number of definitions. Write the first thing that comes to your mind. Time of work - 10 minutes.”}
Appendix 3. Correlations matrix. Correlations of Emotional Response to perceived impunity with trauma-related characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Spearman's rho</th>
<th>Missippi scale.Civic</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Mississippiscale.Civic</th>
<th>Dissociative Experience Scale - DES</th>
<th>Beck depression inventory</th>
<th>State anxiety</th>
<th>Trait anxiety</th>
<th>Emotional responses to perceived impunity</th>
<th>Fear and loss of control</th>
<th>Appraisal of other people and justice</th>
<th>Appraisal of war cause</th>
<th>Beliefs about God/religion</th>
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<td>Survivors</td>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
<td>Mississippi scale.Civic</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
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<td>Dissociative Experience Scale - DES</td>
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<td>Mississippi scale.Civic</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
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# Appendix 4. Correlations between basic beliefs items and trauma-related measures

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**Note:** The table shows correlation coefficients and significance levels for various benefits of people and world. The significance levels are labeled with stars: `*` for p < 0.05, `**` for p < 0.01, and `***` for p < 0.001.
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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).