

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this dissertation was to identify whether the custom of blood revenge is a motivation for the Chechen diaspora to act as foreign fighters in the war in Ukraine, 2022- present day. The custom of blood revenge is not unique to the Chechen society and has existed for centuries in communities across the world. For this reason, blood revenge as a motivation for foreign fighter participation should not be overlooked and could prove helpful when developing strategies of disengagement.

The following research question, along with three objectives, was analysed: “What is the motivation for Chechen foreign fighters to fight against Russia in the war in Ukraine?”. Alongside this research question were three objectives: A) What were the main pull factors for joining this conflict in particular? B) Are Chechen customary laws or ‘Adats’ a driving factor for mobilisation and if so, should researchers put more emphasis on blood revenge (Ch’ir) when discussing Chechen foreign fighters? C) What level of influence does the practice of blood revenge (Ch’ir) still hold in the diaspora’s society today?

This research was conducted using qualitative analysis of secondary sources in both English and Russian to provide diversity of sources and perspectives. Due to this topic being under researched, an examination of foreign fighter motivations was conducted using examples of historical conflicts within the time frame of the 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Century. These historical examples were then used in conjunction with a background on the custom of blood revenge, background on

Russian-Chechen relations within the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century, an overview of the war in Ukraine and the battalions of Chechen foreign fighters. This combination of topics illustrated the various grievances of the Chechen diaspora, acknowledged their relation to historical motivations and highlighted the need for rigorous examination of the custom of blood revenge as a motivation for Chechen foreign fighters.