



## CHECHNYA PEACE FORUM

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### **Threat from Chechnya**

SIR – On this day in 1944 Stalin all but obliterated a nation, banishing the entire population of Chechnya to perish in the labour camps of Siberia and Kazakhstan.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, a de facto independent Chechnya has suffered two invasions by Russian troops. The civilian population has been subjected to horrific bombing.

The war is not over. Carpet bombing has been replaced by oppression. The rule of law is non-existent, with the threat of persecution or even assassination at the hands of the regime's militia.

Vladimir Putin has given carte blanche to the President of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, and his henchmen to rove across the region unchecked. A consequence is that Islamic radicalisation in the northern Caucasus is matching them. Muslim youths, influenced by dangerous trends abroad, are responding to Russian oppression in a manner that threatens to destabilise the entire region and beyond.

Not only is it our responsibility to put pressure on Russia to comply with human rights obligations, but it is of the utmost importance to our own security.

Stability in the northern Caucasus is a precondition for the development of true democracy in Russia. Otherwise Russia will continue to be an unpredictable and bullying figure on the world stage.

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