

Reported: "Beslan School Reopens"



Read the following three newspaper articles from September 16, 2004 about the Beslan tragedy.

- "As School Reopens, a Russian Town Tries to Begin Again" by Seth Adams in the New York Times
- "Beslan Schools Resume Classes" by Sergei Grits in the Toronto Star
- "Beslan Children Restart School" by Anatoly Medetsky in the Moscow Times

Once you have read the articles, critique the way the story was covered in each country. Write all your thoughts down in the organizer below.

The Moscow Times	The New York Times	The Toronto Star

Beslan Schools Resume Classes



Sergei Grits
Toronto Star
September 16, 2004



BESLAN, Russia—Two weeks after heavily armed militants took more than 1,200 hostages in a school in southern Russia, students in this grief-stricken town returned to classes accompanied by nervous relatives and armed, camouflage-clad police.

Boys in dark suits and girls in lacy white bows began the day with a minute of silence to remember the 338 people - nearly half of them children - killed in the Sept. 1-3 siege in this quiet, industrial town.

Students from School No.1, which was almost completely destroyed, school in Beslan, North Ossetia, were exempt from returning to class.

But classes in Beslan's seven other schools resumed yesterday after a day's postponement to give the military more time to search buildings for weapons and explosives.

A top law enforcement officer, meanwhile, signaled that investigators are taking a hard look at how police and security agencies reacted during the siege.

Bomb-sniffing dogs were led around the schools Tuesday. Yesterday, police with rifles stood guard outside entrances as a trickle of students arrived.

Only one of every four turned up, the state-controlled Rossiya newspaper reported, but officials expected the numbers to increase gradually.

"We have mixed feelings. We are afraid, but it's necessary to start school and we hope that things will turn for the better," said parent Mila Kiyanova.

Soslan Sikoyev, the region's acting regional interior minister, said officials were taking extra security measures, including daily armed patrols of schools and 24-hour surveillance.

There was also a proposal to have regular inspections at schools and kindergartens.

The siege ended in explosions and gunfire, sending terrified children - some naked and bloodied - running from their ruined school building. Authorities say all the hostage-takers were killed, except one suspected attacker, who was detained.

Beslan Children Restart School



Anatoly Medetsky
Moscow Times
September 16, 2004

The Moscow Times.com

As children in Beslan belatedly began their school year Wednesday, officials were still struggling to identify the bodies of hostages and terrorists killed in the chaotic battle at School No.1.

Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov said Tuesday that 14 out of the 31 dead terrorists had been identified, Interfax reported. Prosecutors have made no further progress in identifying their bodies since then, a spokeswoman said Wednesday. This figure differed from that given Wednesday in Kommersant, which said that only two of the dead attackers had been positively identified.

One was Khanpasha Kulayev, a brother of the only suspected terrorist in custody, Nurpasha Kulayev, who has been charged with terrorism and murder. Vladimir Khodov was identified by fingerprint analysis.

Police tested the fingerprints of 26 other suspected terrorists, but were unable to match them, the newspaper said.

Nurpasha Kulayev also identified his fellow villagers from Sayats, Chechnya, who took part in the attack, the newspaper said. The report did not say how many villagers he identified.

One suspected terrorist was mauled to death by hostages' relatives as he attempted to flee the school after the battle, Kommersant reported eyewitnesses as saying. The man was caught after the crowd around the school pulled off his pants to check whether he had been circumcised, the newspaper said.

Several other men suspected of being attackers were also stopped and partially undressed, and police had to intervene to prevent them from being beaten up, the newspaper said. Alexander Panov, North Ossetia's first deputy prosecutor, said he was unaware of the crowd checking men to see whether they were circumcised.

Murat Kaboyev, a journalist for local newspaper Zhizn Pravoberezhya, dismissed the report as "lies."

There was no indication that any suspected terrorists might have fled the scene, Ustinov said, Interfax reported. But Kaboyev said that an 11-year-old hostage recognized one of the men who helped rush the wounded to a hospital as a terrorist. "I saw on TV one of the terrorists opening the doors of an ambulance vehicle," Kaboyev reported Kristina Dzgoyeva as saying.

As of Wednesday, 82 hostages' bodies remained unidentified, Panov said, with prosecutors only able to identify between one and three people per day because of their severe injuries.

Tissue samples taken from 78 bodies have been sent to a laboratory in Rostov-on-Don for genetic analysis, Ustinov and Panov said. Their DNA is being compared with that of hostages' relatives who have undergone blood tests.

The hostages' bodies are being stored in refrigerated train cars, said Natalia Oleinik, head of the republic's forensic bureau, Gazeta.ru reported.

Panov said Wednesday that 80 people were still missing, according to official statements from relatives. "Of course, the greatest probability is that the missing people are among those who have yet to be identified," he said.

Gazeta.ru reported that relatives had compiled a list of 150 missing people, but added that many relatives declared their loved ones missing in disbelief even after they were confirmed dead. Children going to Beslan schools on Wednesday had to pass armed police at the gates, RIA-Novosti reported.

As School Reopens, a Russian Town Tries to Begin Again



Seth Mydans
New York Times
September 16, 2004

The New York Times
ON THE WEB

BESLAN, Russia - This is a town that has gone beyond mourning, a town of silence and numbness, where streets and courtyards are empty of children, where people greet each other without smiles.

It is a town where children wake in the night with shouts of fear, where some people have stopped eating and some have stopped talking, and where desperate parents visit the morgue day after day in search of missing sons and daughters.

Two weeks after hundreds of people were killed when Chechen separatists seized a school here Beslan's six remaining schools reopened their doors on Wednesday. But Middle School No.6 on normal life is still far away, and only a handful of students dared to attend.

When one small boy saw an armed soldier guarding the door of his school, he pulled on his mother's hand and burst into tears.

"Don't worry, don't worry," said the soldier. "I'm here to protect you."

The cemetery at the edge of this town in the southern Russian region of North Ossetia, where hundreds of children, parents and teachers were buried in the pouring rain, is stark and empty of mourners now. Wilting flowers rustle in the wind. As winter approaches, the ground is growing harder.

The scene of the killings, Middle School No.1, is a ruined shell, smashed and partly burned. Its surviving students are either hospitalized or preparing for long vacations with their families.

The school has become the aching soul of Beslan, a place of grief and horror where people wander the shattered halls in shock. At least 300 people died here, half of them children. At least 700 more were injured, and scores have disappeared.

At the main entrance, dozens of photographs of missing people, most of them children, have been taped to the walls. A giant bullet-scarred blackboard is propped nearby, scrawled with messages from visitors: "We won't forget you. We love you. Forgive us for being unable to save you."

Then she told them to draw, and they produced a frightening array of works with titles like, "War Against Children," "Living Targets" and "Killers." Some of the pictures might have been mistaken for the fantasies of violence that some boys like to draw, with guns, bombs, masked bandits, dead bodies and people jumping from windows to their deaths. In this case, they were reportage.

On the back of one picture, as if in a personal note to herself, one student had drawn, simply and starkly in pencil, a body in a coffin.

One drawing, though, was filled with color and sunshine. It bore the title "To Those Who Died" and it was as if its artist had reached out and felt the beating heart of her departed friends. It was the kind of happy vision that belongs especially to children: a teddy bear, a small rabbit and sprays of multicolored flowers. At one side, in red, was a heart inscribed with one word, in English: "Love."