

Efim Rezvan

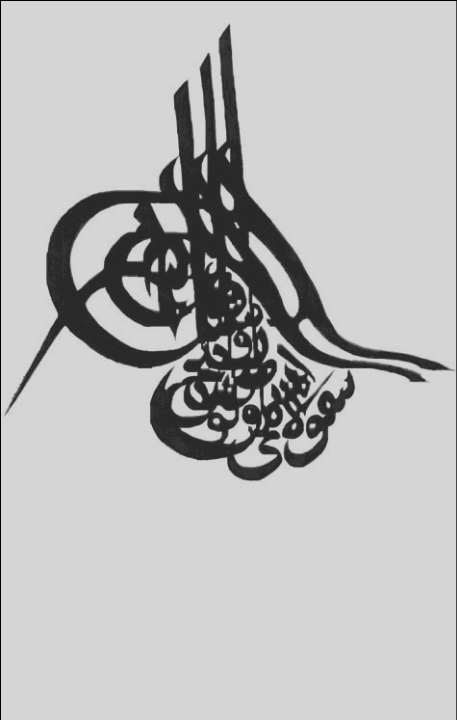
20 Projects in 20 Years: New Millennium Mosques of Russia

جائزة عبد اللطيف الفوزان
Abdullatif Al Fozan Award

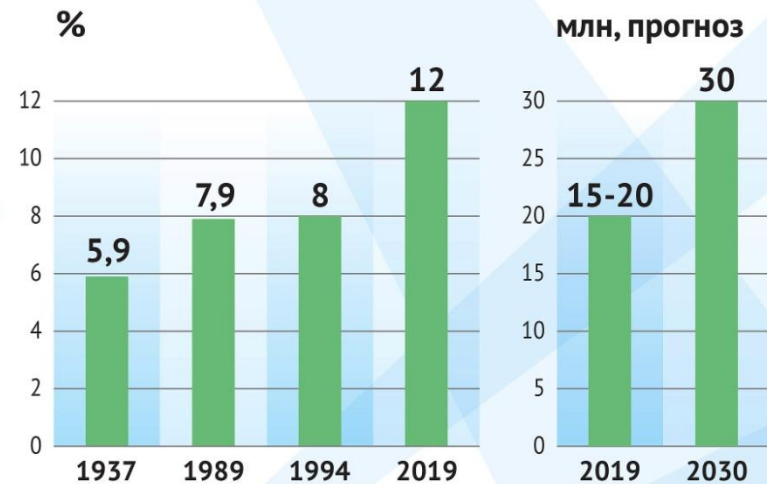
for Mosque Architecture

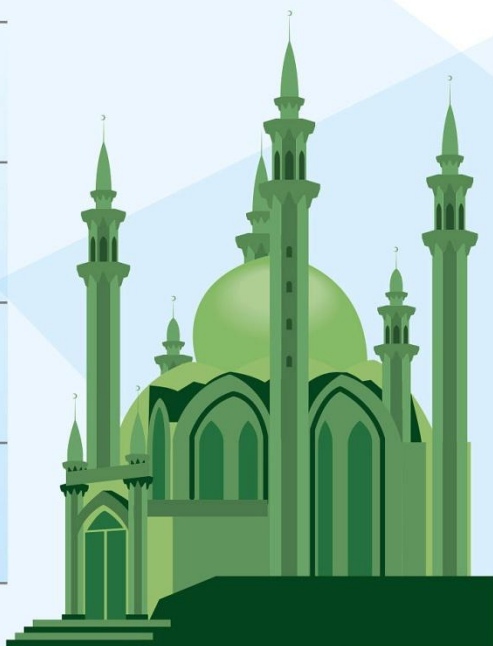
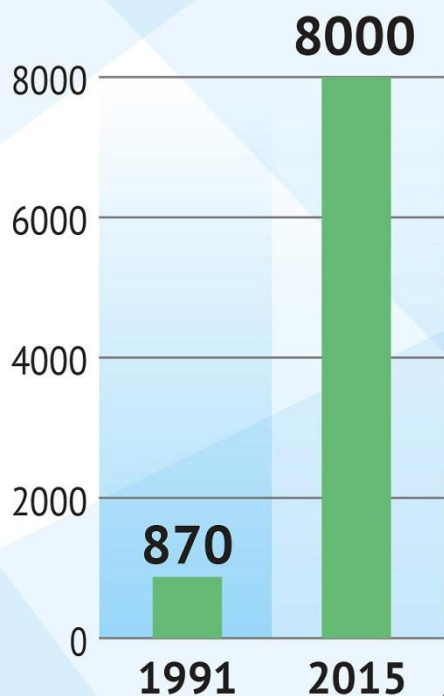
لعمارة المساجد





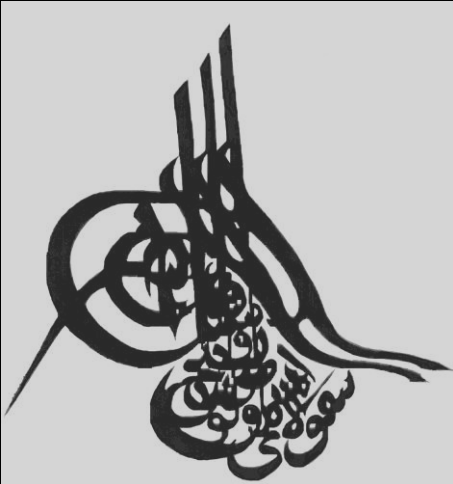
Islam is the second largest religion in the Russian Federation after Christianity. **Followers of Islam live in almost all subjects of the country and belong to 40 different ethnic groups.** 90% of Russian Muslims are Sunnis, Shiites make up 10% of their total number. Absolutely the most part of Muslims of Russia lives in nine of 85 subjects of Federation. These are the North Caucasus Federal district (Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia and Adygea) and the Volga Federal district (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan). Today, the number of Muslims is 12% of the country's population with the prospect of growth to 30% in 2030.





During the current religious revival, the number of mosques in the country has increased many times **(from 870 in 1991 to 8000 in 2015)**. In a significant number of cases, we are talking about small quarterly mosques, but over the years, many truly monumental structures have been built. The rise of these projects was the result of the new administrative and financial capabilities of the Russian Muslims, the assertion of their religious and national identity and even some rivalry between the Islamic regions of the country. The strengthening of ties with co-religionists around the world, large historical and cultural projects supported by the Federal center were of prime importance also. We would like to analyze shortly 20 projects of the mosques with a capacity over 1,000 people built between 1999 and 2019 in various regions of the country.

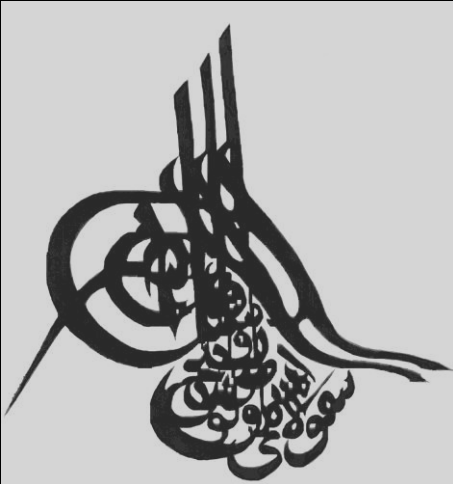




The Southern federal district

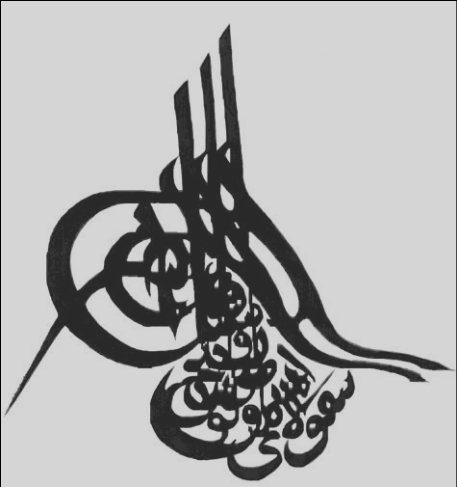
The Southern federal district with a population of about 1646 thousand people (11.21 % of the population of Russia as of January 1, 2019) and an area of 448 thousand km² (2.61 % of the territory of Russia) includes eight subjects of the Federation, different in composition of the population and the degree of industrial development. The Northern Caucasus part of it is the poorest one. It has the highest population growth in Russia. Most of the local budget funds are subsidies from the Federal center. At the same time, half of the largest architectural projects for the construction of mosques in Russia are connected with it.





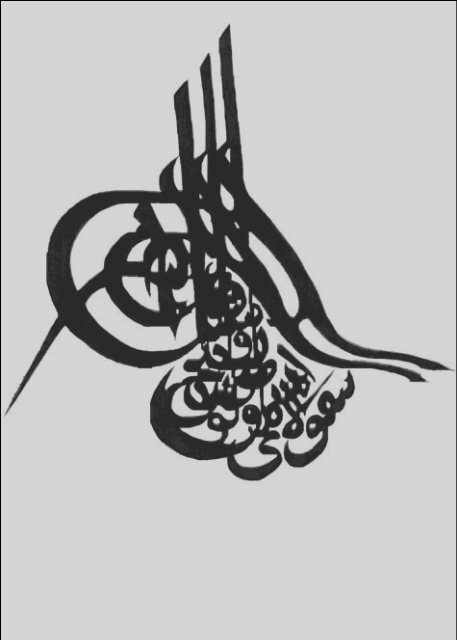
The Chechen Republic which has now the population of about 1.5 million people and 71 place in Russia in gross regional product (out of 85) is the leader in the number of monumental buildings of a religious nature. The huge amounts annually allocated by the Federal budget contributed not only to the revival of Chechen villages and cities, but also created a reliable financial basis for a series of impressive construction projects in both civil and religious spheres. We are talking about five monumental mosques with a capacity of 30, 10, 5, 5 and 2 thousand people, respectively.





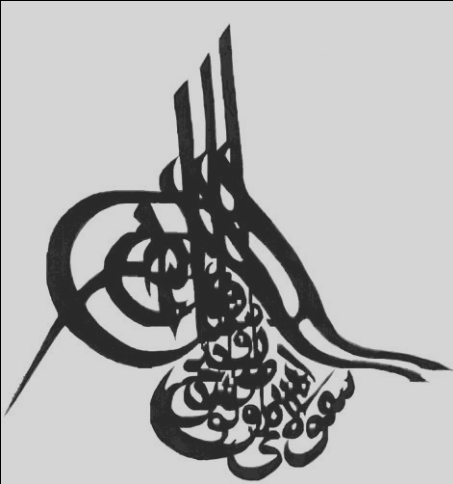
Among the most recent constructions of this type one can mention first of all the **mosque “Pride of Muslims”** named after the Prophet Muhammad, opened in the city of Shali quite recently, on August 23, 2019. According to Ramzan Kadyrov, the Head of the Chechen Republic, this mosque is currently the largest in Europe. The architectural composition of the mosque is mostly connected with the Arabic classics and a combination of Persian, Central Asian and Byzantine styles. The white mosque has four minarets 63 m high. The walls are decorated by the Thassian marble (Greece). Nearly the mosque one can find 12 fountains for ritual purification constructed in oriental style with marble arbors. The height of the dome of the mosque is 43 m The author of the project is the Uzbek architect Abdukahar Turdiev. He was among the designers of the Hazrati Imam complex in Tashkent. The manufacture of carpet for the mosque was entrusted to a Turkish company.



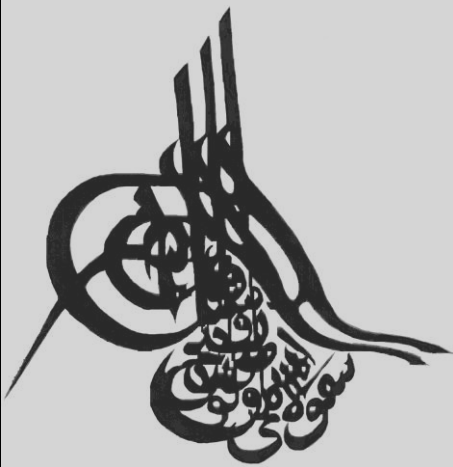


Central mosque of the Republic continues to be the “Heart of Chechnya” named after Akhmad Kadyrov in Grozny, the capital of the Republic, which was opened on October 17, 2008. The Mosque is located on the picturesque banks of the river Sunzha in the mid of a huge park. It is built in the Ottoman neoclassical style. The Central hall of the mosque is covered with a huge dome (diameter — 16 m, height — 32 m). The height of four minarets is 63 m. They are ones of the highest minarets in the South of Russia. The exterior and interior walls of the mosque are decorated with travertine, and the interior is decorated with white marble. Capacity is more than ten thousand people. The same number of believers can pray in the summer gallery and square adjacent to the mosque. The mosque was painted and decorated by Turkish specialists. For the pattern painting (the patterns are made in the style of traditional Chechen ornaments “bustam”), synthetic and natural paints with special additives were used, thanks to which, according to experts, the mosque will retain the color scheme in the next 50 years. For patterns and *ayat* from the Qur’an the spraying of gold of the highest standard was used.

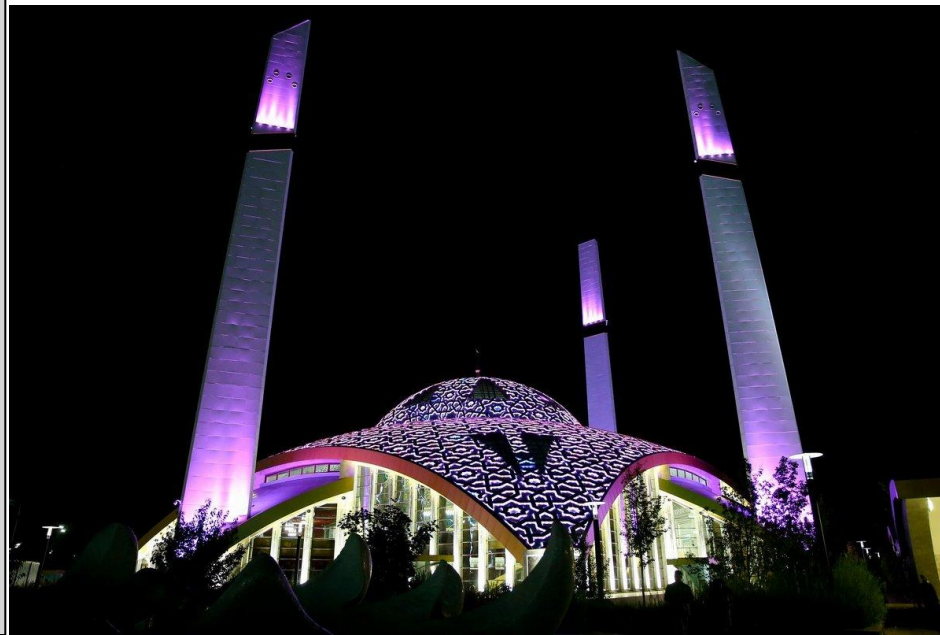


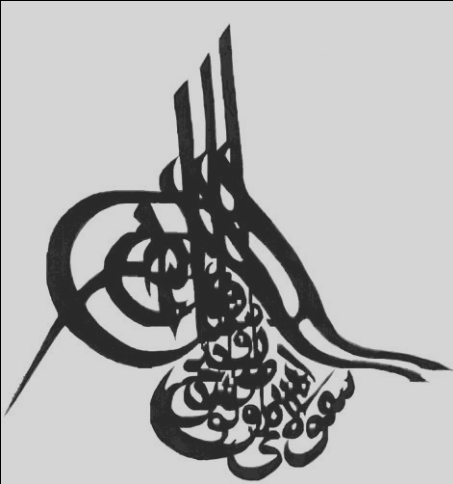


The mosque has 36 chandeliers. Their forms are reminiscent of the three shrines of Islam — 27 of them imitate the mosque Qubbat al-Sakhra in Jerusalem, eight are modeled the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina and the largest, 8-meter chandelier repeats the forms of al-Ka'bah al-Musharrafah in Mecca. Chandeliers, also decorated with Chechen ornament made of Swarovski crystals by the Turkish firm “Ustun Avize”. *Mihrab* (8 m high and 4.6 m wide) is made of white marble. It creates the illusion of endless deepening intersecting spaces. Qur’anic *ayat* are skillfully woven into the overall ornament of the architectural decoration of the mosque. The vault of the main dome of the mosque is crowned with *surah* “Al-Ikhlās”. The concept of the mosque lighting has three levels. The first level (the flood lighting) is providing the general illumination of the lower part of the structure and minarets. The second level is the accent lighting of architectural elements of the building. The third level is the festive lighting. This lighting solution allows visually raising the height of the minarets and making dynamic lighting on the central dome

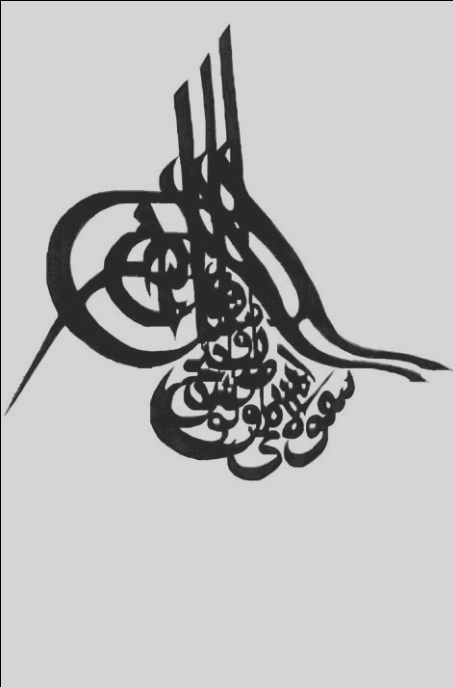


The mosque named after Aymani Kadyrova in the city of Argun (about 45 thousand residents) was opened on May 16, 2014. It is named after the widow of the first President of Chechnya Akhmat Kadyrov and was funded by the public fund named after Ahmat Kadyrov. The concept of the design is to symbolize and emphasize the human ability to conquer and overcome hardships. According to the Turkish architect Deniz Baykan, author of the project, the main slogan of the design was “yes, we can do everything for this country, if we believe it”. The opening ceremony was preceded by a marathon “From heart to heart”, in which more than five thousand residents of Chechnya and other republics of the North Caucasus ran 16.4 km from the mosque “Heart of Chechnya” in Grozny to the mosque named after Aymani Kadyrova in Argun. The construction began in 2011. It is created in high-tech style and it is the first mosque in Russia of this kind. During the day, depending on the weather, the arches of the mosque change shades of colors — from light gray to turquoise-blue. At night, the mosque and surrounding areas are illuminated with colorful led lights and spotlights.



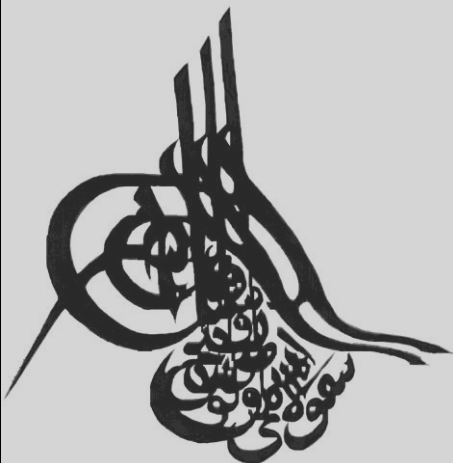


The walls of the mosque are decorated with marble. The oval vaults of the main prayer hall are crowned by a dome 23 m high and 24 m in diameter. The names of the Almighty are engraved in the dome of the mosque. Illuminated murals are used in the interior decoration. Three 55 m minarets rise above the dome of the mosque. The crescent with a star is erected separately in front of the entrance to the mosque. A five-ton chandelier in the shape of a crescent measuring 31 m in diameter is suspended in the main prayer hall. The mosque consists of four floors, three of which (under an oval dome) are intended for men. The upper tier of the mosque is reserved for women and has a separate entrance. The mosque is designed for five thousand people, but together with the surrounding areas can accommodate up to 15 thousand. The mosque is adjacent to the park and has a library. Argun Mosque is surrounded by a complex of high-rise buildings called “Argun-City”. The construction of “Argun-city” started in 2011 and was designed by the same architect as the mosque as part of the large-scale reconstruction of the city



The Sultan Delimkhanov mosque designed for five thousand people in Jalka village (around nine thousands residents) is the largest rural mosque in Europe. The opening of the mosque in 2011 is timed to the 60th anniversary of the first President of the Chechen Republic, Akhmat-Hadji Kadyrov. The mosque is named after a man whose sons (two of them are Heroes of Russia) play an important role in the politics and economy of the region. Adam Delimkhanov is a Deputy of the State Duma (Parliament) of the Russian Federation since December 2007. He is called in the press in different ways: “the future successor”, “a confidant of Kadyrov”. Anyhow he is one of the closest persons to the head of the Republic and perhaps the most influential person in Chechnya after Kadyrov. The mosque has four minarets and is made in Ottoman neoclassical style.





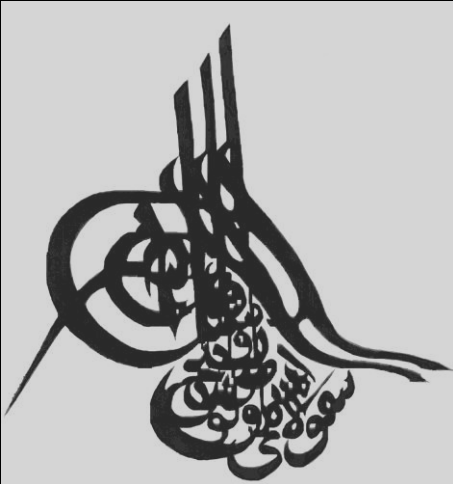
The Central mosque in the village of Alkhan-Yurt was built in 2012 and is named after a local resident, former mufti of Chechnya, theologian Magomed-Beshir-Hadji Arsanukayev who belonged to Naqshbandiyya. In 1992—1994 the village became a place of a sharp rivalry between different political forces, one of which was supported by Naqshbandiyya and the other by Qadiriya. Arsanukaev was ousted by the order of Dudayev, the first president of the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, who had launched an anti-Russian insurgency. Today, the village, which suffered greatly especially in the second Chechen war, is home to about ten thousand people. According to the mosque architect Balaudi Magomadov, the Chechen businessman Adam Albakov suggested him to prepare the project of the mosque, spacious and at the same time elegant. The mosque consists of three volumes. Its forms, although reminiscent of Oriental architecture, have been used since ancient times in Chechnya in the construction of large complexes. Therefore, the style in which the mosque was built Magomadov calls “purely Chechen”.



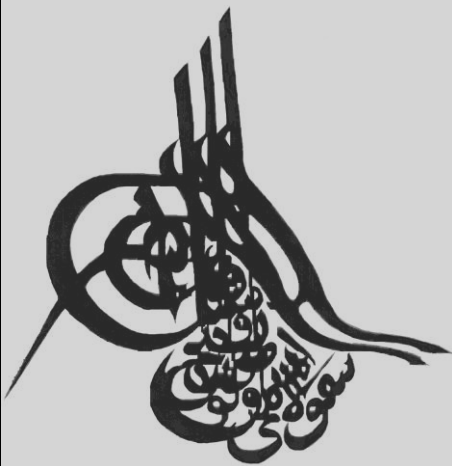


According to him it is impossible to find the second such mosque in the whole world. The main hall is designed for 1800 people, but in reality it can take up to 3000 believers without feeling of discomfort. In addition, the second hall can accommodate women who can see the Imam on the huge monitor. The mosque is very well equipped technically. This is due, in particular, to the fact that it will house two *madrassas* on the first floor — male and female, for 150 students each. The mosque is notable primarily for the fact that it was built not on state, but entirely on private money.



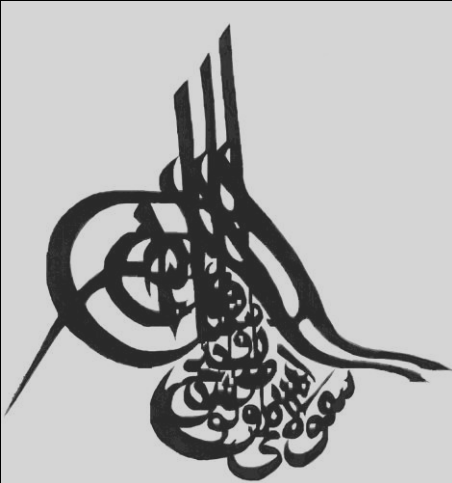


It is important that in many cases the creation of a monumental building of the mosque means the beginning of large-scale works on the renewal of urban and rural settlements. It is easy to see that the geographical locations of the new mosques as well as their names are closely related to the power structures of the Republic and its recent history. **The construction of huge mosques, therefore, has primarily political and symbolic-power importance.** This is especially evident in the example of the mosque named after Sultan Delimkhanov in the village of Jalka (designed for five thousand people with a population not reaching nine thousand). As we have seen, mosques in Chechnya are built in different architectural styles and by different architects. At the same time in many cases Turkish influence is visible and there is a wide involvement of Turkish firms in the construction and decoration of buildings.



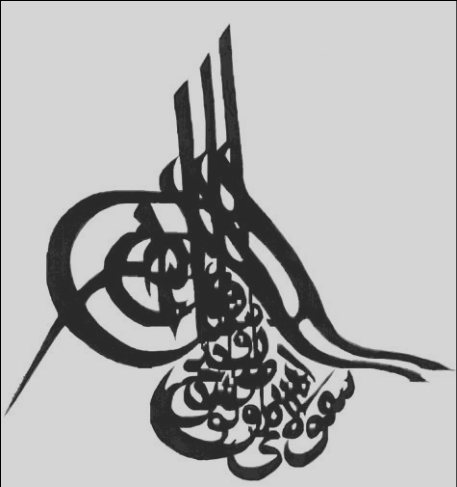
In the Soviet times **the Republic of Ingushetia** constitutes one federation subject together with Chechnya. The Ingush are extremely close to the Chechens. From cultural and ethnographic point of view they can be considered a single people, but after the collapse of the USSR, the historical destinies of Chechnya and Ingushetia (now about half a million inhabitants) diverged. The latter escaped the deaths and destruction associated with the first and second Chechen wars, but at that time became an asylum for hundreds of thousands of refugees. Like Chechnya, Ingushetia is a subsidized region (Chechnya is 71st in Russia in terms of gross regional product, Ingushetia is 79th) and is heavily dependent on federal support.





The Central mosque of Nazran, the capital of the Republic of Ingushetia (about 120 thousand inhabitants), was built in 1996 and named in honor of Muhamad-Basir Ozdоеv, the first teacher of the Ingush Islamic Institute named after Imam Al-Shafi'i. Ozdоеv was killed during the Ossetian-Ingush conflict in 1992. In comparison to Chechen projects the Central mosque of Nazran is much more modest and accommodates about two thousand believers. It has one minaret, the dome looks like as if recessed into the roof of the building. In total, the city of Nazran has five large and about 15 small mosques.



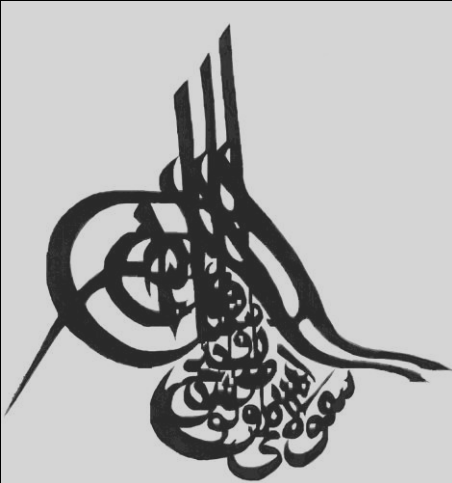


Dagestan, neighboring Chechnya, is the largest subject of the North Caucasus Federal district (more than 3 million inhabitants, 32nd in Russia in terms of gross regional product). It has three monumental mosques built after 2000, with a total capacity, respectively, 15, 8 and 3.5 thousand worshippers.

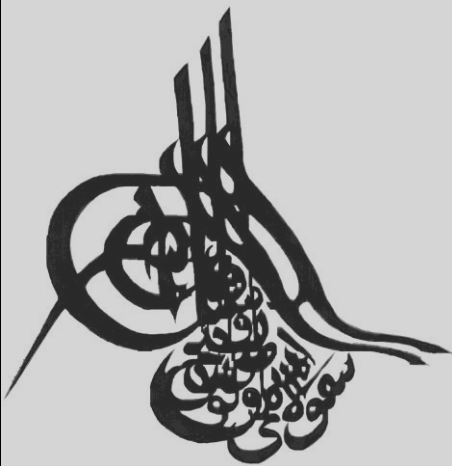




First of all, it is, of course, **the Central mosque or “Yusuf Bey Jami”**, located in **Makhachkala**, the capital of the Republic (more than 600 thousand residents in 2019). The mosque was built thanks to the help of one of the rich Turkish families and erected by invited Turkish architects in the Ottoman neoclassical style close to Kocatepe mosque in Ankara. The mosque was built in 1997. Since 2005 it was reconstructed, and the number of believers attending the mosque at the same time increased from 8 to 15 thousand people. The whole construction consists of two minarets, each 42 m high, four small cupolas and one large main dome with a diameter of 21 m and a height of 35 m. The outer and inner walls are painted in white. It is two-storied building. The first floor is intended for men and the second for women. The male part is covered with green carpets, women pray on red ones. Temple walls, arches, vaults and columns are richly decorated (geometric patterns, stone carvings, abstract or floral ornaments, as well as Qur’anic *ayat*). Numerous chandeliers made of Damascus glass give a special beauty to the interior of the mosque.

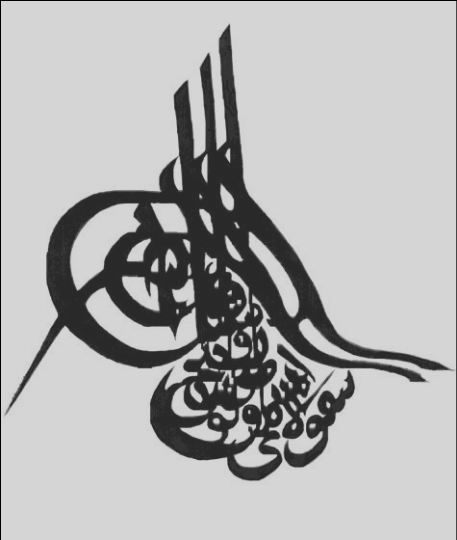


The mosque named after **Abdulhamid-Afandi from Inkho (also in Makhachkala)** is associated with the name of a Sufi Sheikh who was engaged in mentoring in difficult atheistic times. He secretly opened *madrassah* in the basement of a private house in the city of Khasavyurt. It was this *madrassah* that trained many well-known Dagestan ‘*ulama*’. The opening of the mosque which was built on the initiative of the Dagestan mufti, Sheikh Ahmad-Hadji Abdullayev, took place on September 25, 2015. The building is decorated with two minarets. The height of the dome is 30 m. Its capacity is more than 3.5 thousand people. In architectural terms, the building combines elements typical of Cairo mosques of the 19th—20th centuries, and neo-Ottoman models



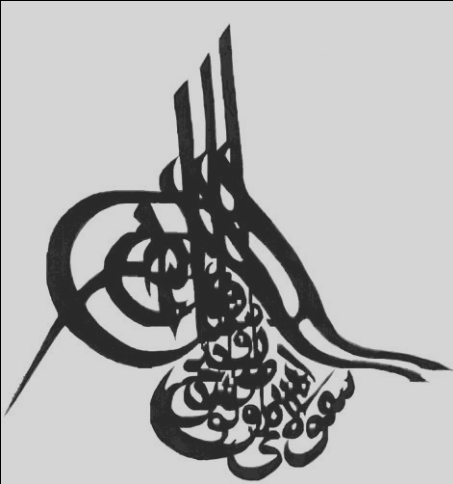
Undoubtedly, **the mosque named after Said Afandi Chirkei in the city of Kaspiysk** (around 120 thousand of residents) is also of prime interest. The mosque is named after Said-Afandi of Chirkei, Naqshbandi and Shazili Sheikh and one of and one of the spiritual leaders of the Muslims of Dagestan, who along with six of his *murids* was killed by a suicide women-bomber. The mosque opening took place on February 9, 2013. Specialists from Syria were involved in the design and creation of the original interior. It is faced with local marble. The mosque capacity is around eight thousand believers. Construction has one white dome, little towers in four corners and one minaret. The building of the mosque was financed by Suleiman Kerimov, Lezgin by nationality, a Russian businessman and politician, in 1999—2007 — the Deputy of the State Duma (Parliament) of the Russian Federation, and since 2008 — the member of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (the Upper house of the Russian Parliament) from the Republic of Dagestan. He controls the financial and industrial group “Nafta Moscow”. In 2019, Kerimov took the nineteenth position in the ranking of “Twenty richest Russian businessmen”, published by the “Forbes” magazine.





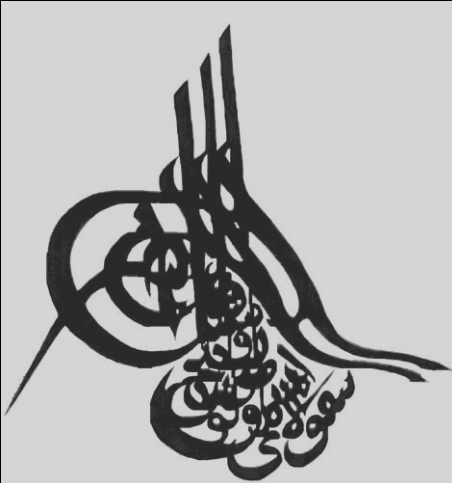
It is important for us that in Dagestan, as in Chechnya, the names of the new mosques and the ideological connotations associated with them are **directly refer to the recent history of the Republic**. However, in contrast to Chechnya, Dagestan projects are much less financed from the federal budget.



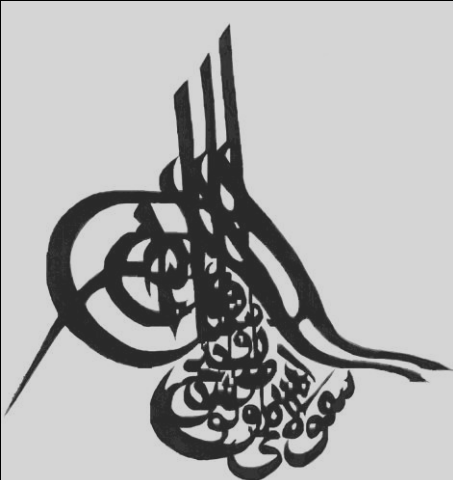


The Central mosque of Cherkessk, the capital of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic (over 465 thousand inhabitants, 78th place in Russia in terms of gross regional product) was built in 2007—2013. Patrons of the construction were various individuals and legal entities as well as the Mayor's office of Cherkessk. The main features of the building are its size and the domes, delivered to Cherkessk from the city of Volgodonsk, where they were made at one of the enterprises of “Atomash”, Russia's largest nuclear engineering corporation. A total of 33 domes of various heights and sizes were made. Their delivery to the administrative center of the Republic became an important event in the life of the city, as they were brought here on 20 long trucks. The Central mosque (white stone, green domes and spires of minarets) occupies a huge area, more than four thousand square meters. The building allows almost five thousand believers to pray simultaneously. The architectural style is mostly the Byzantine one, supplemented by elements of the classic Muslim architecture.



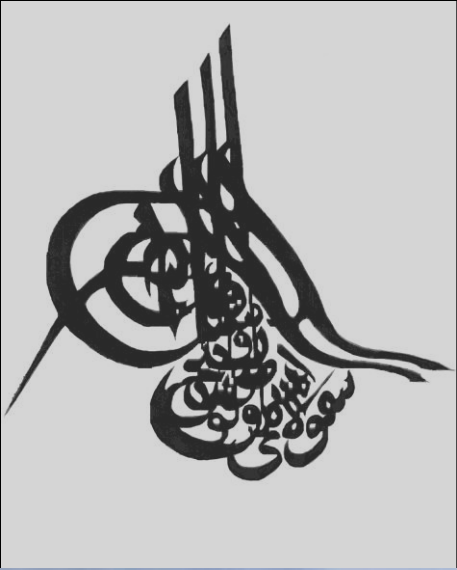


However, the Circassian mosque is not like any Turkish one. It is clearly possible to distinguish in its decoration elements the features of the national Caucasian style. The height of the temple is 32 m, four minarets are 52 m high. The mosque has 220 windows, which makes the building very bright inside and visually spacious. Outside, such a number of windows give the three-floor mosque a unique appearance. The main dome has a diameter of 18 m, the other domes are placed on the galleries of the building



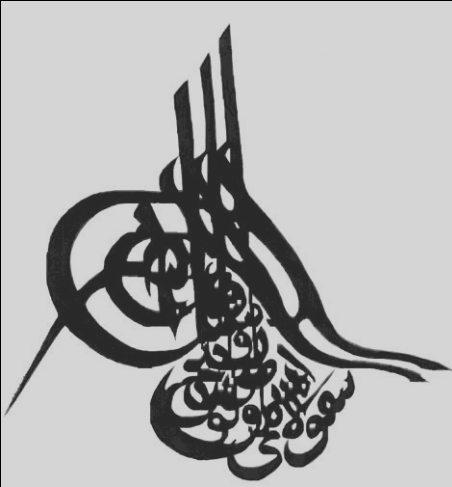
The Cathedral mosque of the city of Maikop, the capital of the **Republic of Adygea**, is also the residence of the Spiritual administration of Muslims of the Republic of Adygea and Krasnodar region. Maykop (over 140 thousand inhabitants) is a predominantly Russian city (over 70% of the population, Adyghe people make up about 19% of its inhabitants). The Republic of Adygea (76th place in Russia by regional gross product) is a part of the Southern federal district. This is the only region of Russia located inside another region —the territory of the Republic is surrounded by the territory of the Krasnodar Kray.



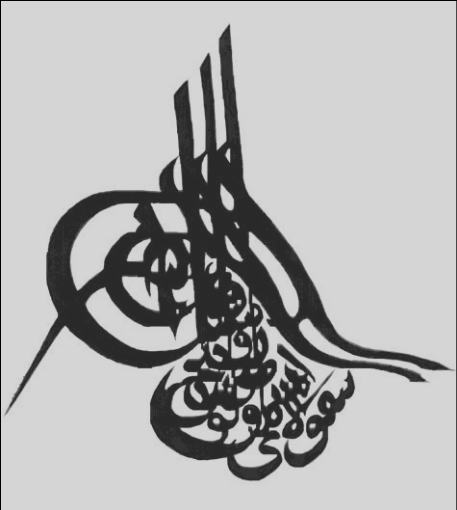


The mosque was built on the initiative of the Republic administration in just 18 months in 1999—2000. The construction was carried out at the personal expense of Khalid Bin Saqr al-Qassimi, Crown Prince of Ras al-Khaimah. The project of the building was prepared by Abdulakh Bersirov, the Honored artist of the Republic of Adyghea. The external facade of the mosque is made of white stone. The domes and tops of the minarets are bright blue, symbolizing the sky. There are five domes, the main one is located in the center of the building and is surrounded by four smaller ones, followed by four minarets. The inner walls of the mosque are decorated with *ayat* from the Qur'an. The capacity of the mosque is 1000 people.

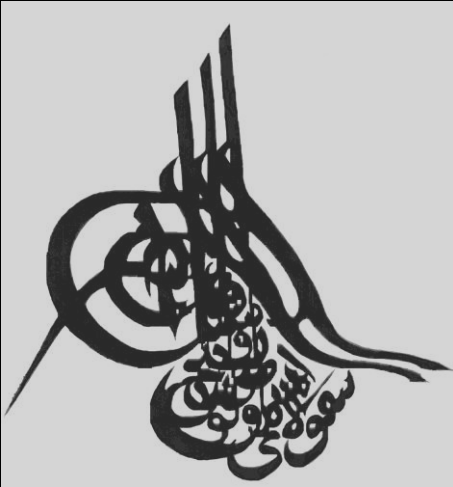




Rostov-on-Don, the largest city in the South-West of Russia, the administrative center of the Southern Federal district and the Rostov region. It is the tenth most populous city in Russia with population of more than 1133 thousand people in 2019. The city is a major administrative, economic, cultural, scientific, educational, industrial center and the most important transport hub of the South of Russia. Informally, Rostov is called the “Gateway of the Caucasus” and the southern capital of Russia. Russians make up over 90% of the city's population, Muslims (primarily Tatars and Azerbaijanis) consist 1.1% of its population. The city has about forty Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Greek Catholic and Protestant churches, a synagogue, two Buddhist centers and a Cathedral mosque.

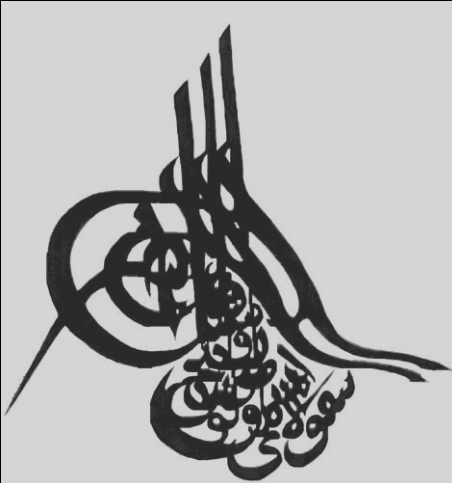


The mosque was built in 2000—2003 by local architect B. K. Nogarbekov and with financial support provided by the Turkish patrons of Rostov Muslims. The project is designed in a simple and laconic style, with one 27 m minaret. It accommodates up to 1.5 thousands believers. On the ground floor of the mosque one can find a prayer hall for women, two Sunday school classes and rooms for ritual ablution. The entire second floor is occupied by a men's prayer hall. The floors of the mosque are lined with the Turkish carpets. There is a system of heating: in winter the floor temperature rises to 37 degrees. The tall windows from floor to ceiling are looking to the four sides. They are decorated with patterned bars. A huge chandelier with 830 bulbs is the centre-piece of the interior finish. The prayer hall is lit by four side chandeliers also. An artist from Turkey was invited to paint the walls (ornaments and Qur'anic *ayat*).

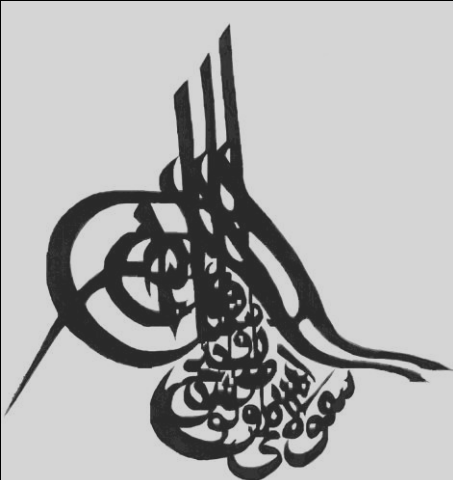


Saratov Cathedral mosque is the main Muslim temple of Saratov was revived in 2005. Here now is also the residence of the Spiritual administration of Muslims of the Saratov region (part of the Southern federal district). The mosque has a library and *madrasah* named "Sheikh Said". Saratov (about 900 thousand inhabitants, 91.6% of the inhabitants are Russians) is one of the leading centers of higher education, research and project activities. In addition to one of the oldest universities in Russia, there are more than two dozen universities. Mechanical engineering, oil and chemical industries are developed.



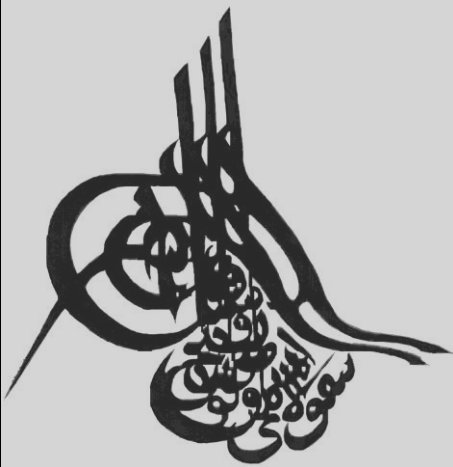


Tatar settlements in the borders of modern Saratov appeared in the 17th—18th centuries. The first stone mosque was opened here in 1836. Later, a new mosque was built on the same site. It existed until the 1930s, when the Soviet authorities began to persecute representatives of various religions. The temple was closed, and then the building was partially destroyed. Only in 1989 the mosque was returned to the Muslims. It was decided to destroy the dilapidated building and to build in its place a new one. The new mosque has two domes and a minaret with a height of 46 m. A characteristic feature of its external appearance is the alternation of red and white brick strips. The prayer hall has an area of more than 500 sq m. The mosque capacity is over 1000 people.



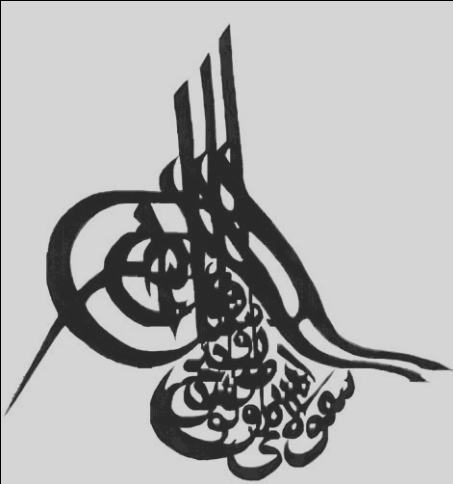
Volga Federal district

According to the 2002 census, the population of the Volga Federal district is 31 million people with 18.4% Muslims, primarily Tatars (over 4 million people) and Bashkirs (1.4 million people) among them. The Volga Federal district share of industrial production in the Russian economy is 23.9% — this is the highest figures. The Republic of Tatarstan is one of the technologically developed and richest regions of Russia (with the population about four million people and the eighth place in Russia in terms of gross regional product). It is not surprising that four monumental mosques with a capacity of 3, 1.5, 1.2 and 1 thousand people respectively were built on the territory of the Republic.



Since 2005, **the main Cathedral mosque of the Republic of Tatarstan and the city of Kazan is the Kul-Sharif mosque**, located on the territory of the Kazan Kremlin. The construction of the temple was started in 1996 by the local architects Sh. Latypov, M. Safronov, A. Sattarov and I. Sayfullin as a recreation of the image of the legendary multi-minaret mosque of the capital of the Kazan khanate. The opening of the mosque took place on June 24, 2005 and was connected with the 1000th anniversary of Kazan. In terms of the construction the Kul-Sharif presents two squares superimposed on each other at an angle of 45° and forming an important Islamic symbol of “the Blessing of Allah”. The lancet arches with Qur’anic *ayat* and elements of traditional Tatar ornament are the important feature of the building. In the crosshairs one can find tall stained glass windows. Four 55-meter main minarets rise at the corners of the main building. They are complemented by two small minarets and two minarets at the entrance — so many towers were at the ancient Khan's mosque





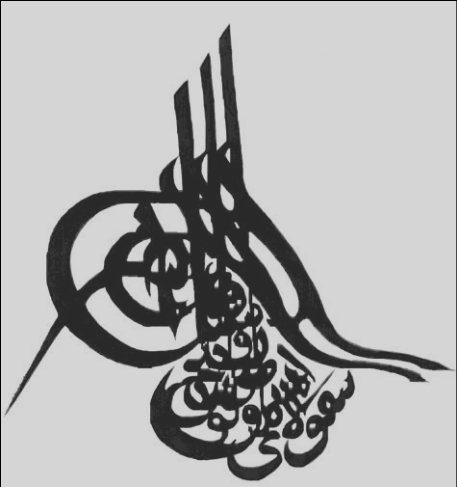
The dome (36 m high and 17.5 m in diameter) is decorated with the forms associated with the image and decorative details of the “**Kazan cap**”, the **gold filigree crown**, one of the **regalia of the Russian tsars**. This crown was made for the Russian Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich immediately after the conquest and accession of the Kazan khanate to the Moscow state (1552) and the adoption of the title of “Tsar Ivan of Kazan”. There is a legend that it was made by jewelers of the conquered khanate.





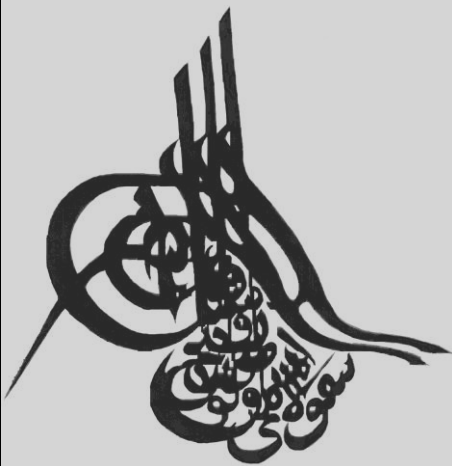
The architectural multi-minaret solution of the appearance of the mosque was achieved through the development of semantic elements that bring the architecture of the mosque closer to local traditions. Granite and marble were brought from the Urals, the interior-carpet is the gift of the government of Iran, and a colored crystal chandelier with a diameter of five meters and weighing almost two tons was made in the Czech Republic. The building of the mosque is faced with white marble (at sunset casting pinkish tones). The dome and spires of the minarets have a turquoise color. The facade of the main building is decorated with bronze inscriptions. Decorative paving tiles with green and red ornaments (in the colors of the flag of Tatarstan) are laid on the square-yard. The mosque has a spectacular night architectural illumination



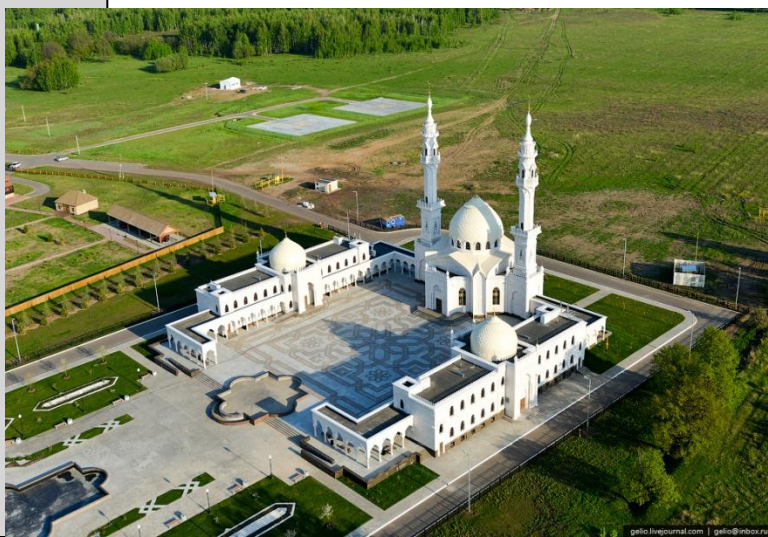


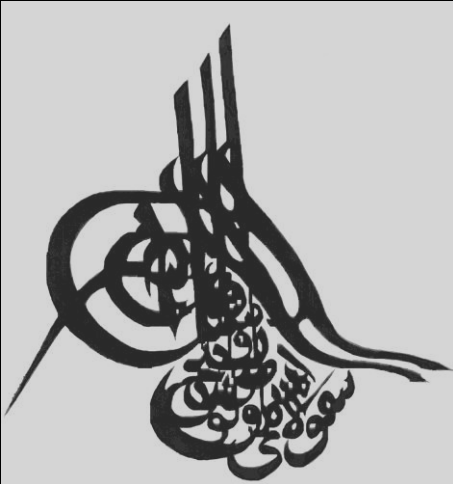
In 2021, Russia will widely celebrate the 1100th anniversary of the adoption of Islam by the Volga Bulgaria. Tatarstan began to prepare for this date in the early 2010s. So, the “White mosque” was built in the city of Bolgar. The snow-white and cream complex was erected in record-breaking time (2010—2012) by Sergei Shakurov, an architect from Kazan. The building of the mosque is crowned with three domes and two minarets with a height of 47 m. The inner height of the main dome is 17 m, its diameter is 9 m. The drum of the main dome is decorated with sixteen stained glass windows. The minarets of the Bolgar mosque largely repeat the style of the minarets of the Prophet's Medina Mosque. It was the first Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiev who insisted on this, saying that he wanted to create a mosque similar to the Medina one, “but cozier and less ambitious”.



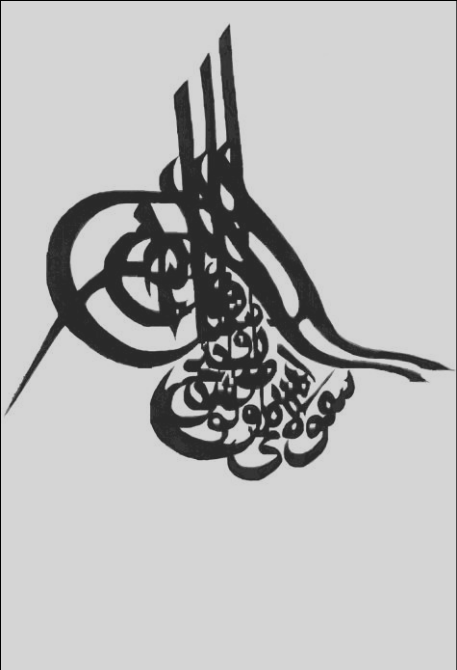


On the walls of the white mosque one can see the classic Islamic decorative ornaments (arabesques, *mukarnas*, tulips, geometric shapes). Thanks to the diffused lighting, a special prayer atmosphere is created in the two-level prayer hall. The area of the hall is 180 sq m. Here one can find a massive chandelier. The diameter of the chandelier is 25 m. All entrances to the building are framed by columns with the crescents on top of which. More than twelve hundred thousand tons of marble were used in the construction. The buildings of the mosque are built in the form of a square. Between them is an open area (*musalla*) with the area of 1.5 thousand square meters and surrounded by the park. The square in front of the mosque is paved with granite. It also has a symbolic meaning. **It is based on the image of Chahar Bagh, a Garden of Eden**, which is divided by rivers into four parts. An artificial pond has been created in the center of the square. It is mirroring the entire mosque. The square is framed by a kind of arcade, including 88 white marble columns. An open arcade allows mosque visitors to observe the excavations of the ancient city, the capital of the Volga Bulgarians. In 2016, the Bulgarian Islamic Academy opened its doors near the mosque. It is a scientific, theological and educational center of all-Russian significance established by leading Muslim organizations of Russia

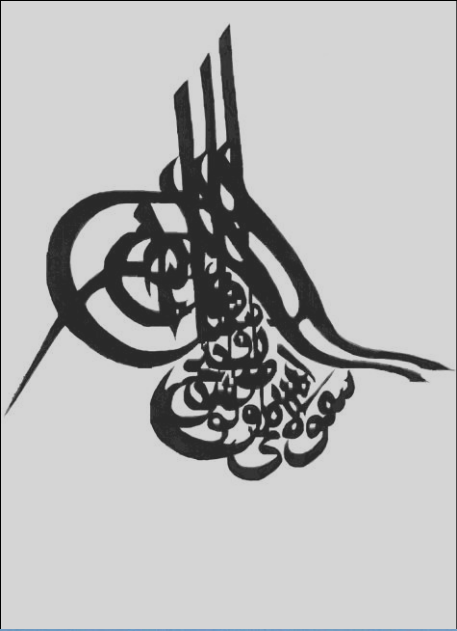




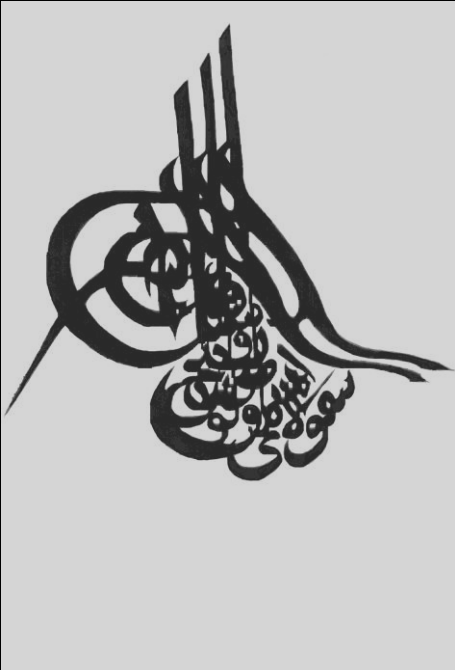
Both mentioned above mosques built in Tatarstan became symbols of the Republic's special position within Russia, which was virtually semi-independent during Yeltsin's reign. Here it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that **the symbolism associated with these mosques refers to the deep past of the history of the whole of Russia, and not to recent events, as in the Caucasus.** Within the Russian Empire, the Tatars played an important role, for example, in the islamization of the steppes of Central Asia and Southern Siberia. It was Tatar intellectuals who played a major role in the Islamic revival, which at the turn of the 19th—20th centuries gave to the world a galaxy of outstanding Islamic thinkers. In architectural terms, the largest mosques of Tatarstan are examples of mixing, combining and heterogeneous styles. It is important that they are designed by local architects.



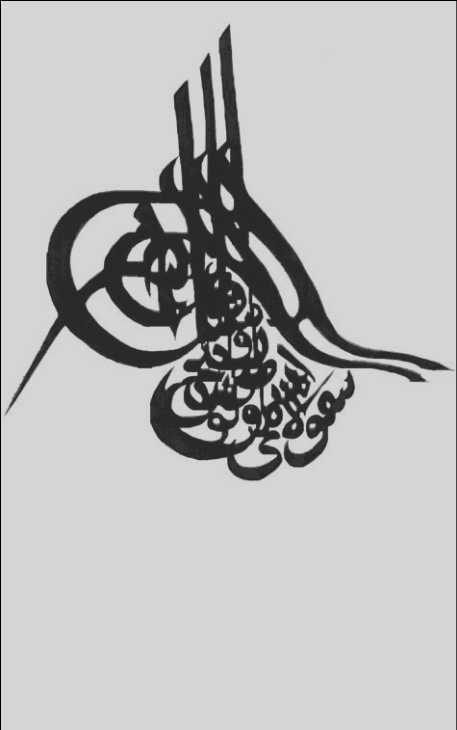
Nizhnekamsk Cathedral mosque is the central Muslim temple of Nizhnekamsk (238 thousand inhabitants). It was built in 1989—1996 and was opened on the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the city (architects R. I. Makuev and F. G. Khanov, designer I. Sabitov). The temple is a religious complex, which carries out additional cultural and educational functions. It includes a culture and history center, library, hotel and other services. The Cathedral mosque is located in an open square, next to a high-rise residential building. It belongs to the modern cult buildings with unconventional spatial composition and stands out for its original appearance: when choosing an architectural solution, R. I. Makuyev and F. G. Khanov leaned towards modern forms, organic for the city in which young people live. The mosque accommodates one thousand people and has one prayer hall, a gable roof (has no dome) and a corner setting of four minarets with a height of 66 meters, which makes it one of the highest in Russia. Square in plan minarets are cut by arched openings. In general, the mosque reflects the neo-romantic trend of modern Tatar architecture. The total area of the mosque is 2.5 thousand sq m, the area of the main prayer hall is 900 m.



Here it is necessary to mention **the mosque named after R. G. Galeev in Almeteyevsk** (about 158 thousand inhabitants). It is named after Rinat Galeev (1939—2007), former Chairman of the Board of Directors of JSC “Tatneft”, a large oil company that ranks fifth in Russia in terms of oil production. The company's headquarters is located in Almeteyevsk. Galeev made a great personal contribution to the creation of the mosque, built in 1990—1999 by the local architects A. M. Zakirov and F.M.Mavlyutov and engineers S. S. Abdullin, A.A. Gareev, V. I. Maslova. The mosque is located on a plot with a relief difference of 10 m. It belongs to the type of domed mosques with the main minaret on the roof. It is a three / four-storey brick building, in the southern half of which there is a prayer hall for 1200 persons, covered with a high dome. In the Northern half there is a conference hall and auxiliary rooms. Classrooms are located on the ground floor of both halves of the building. The main minaret with a height of 53.5 m rises above the Northern half of the building. At the building corners one can find octagonal minarets with a height of 36.2 m, and a gilded dome rises above the flat roof. In the interior of the hall, the walls, ceiling, and inner surface of the dome are ornamented with colored tiles. The second level windows on the dome drum are decorated with colourful stained glass.

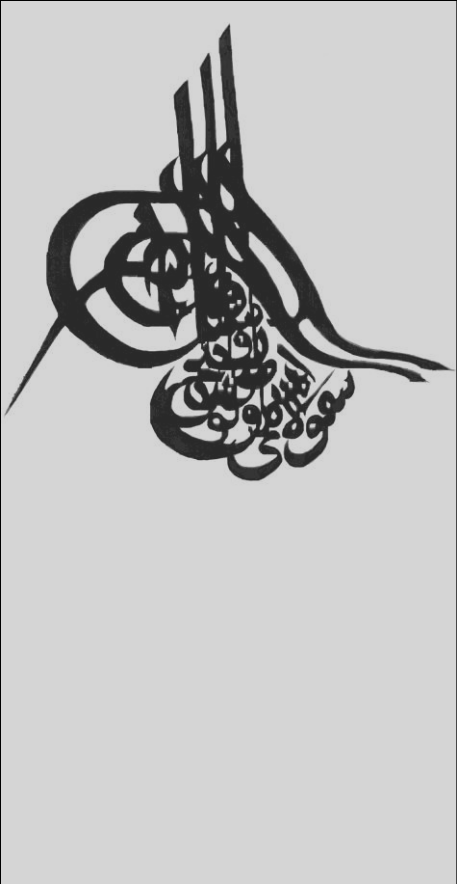


Bashkortostan is one of the most developed subjects of the Russian Federation, ranks 10th in terms of gross regional product in the country and first among Russian republics in terms of population (with Bashkirs — 29.5% and Tatars — 25.4%). One of the attractions of Ufa, the capital of Bashkortostan, is the **Cathedral mosque “Lala-Tulip”**. It was built in 1989—1998 by the local architect V. Davletshin. The building is at the same time laconic, elegant and very well inscribed in a park complex. The construction includes the main building (21 m) in the form of a blooming Tulip and two 53-meter white minarets, similar in appearance to the buds. The building consists of three floors. At the top there is a prayer hall for 500—600 persons, and a balcony for women (it can accommodate about 200—300 persons).



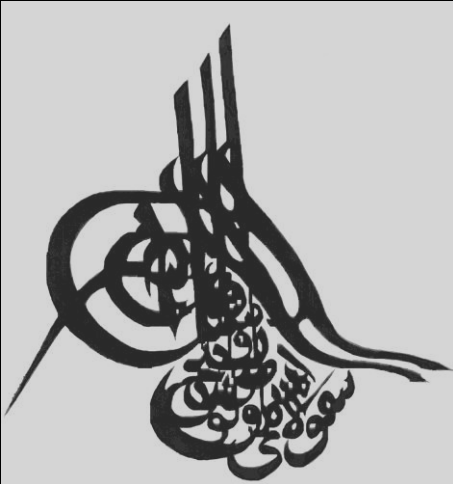
During major holidays it is possible to use all the space of the building giving the possibility to one thousand believers to take part in the common prayer. The entrances to the prayer halls for men and women are different. Stained glass windows are really well done. The walls of the mosque are covered with marble and serpentine. According to its architect the modern appearance of the temple should make it more attractive to young people. The original architectural form of the mosque “Lala-Tulip” is quite dynamic, but at the same time it is balanced. Especially unusual to the Eurasian view is the main volume, which gives rise to associations with the characteristic silhouette of “Finnish houses” (gable roof, starting from the ground) or bold avant-garde experiments with the form of modern Catholic churches in Europe and the United States. Some critics even saw in the plan of the building “a cross visible from the sky”.



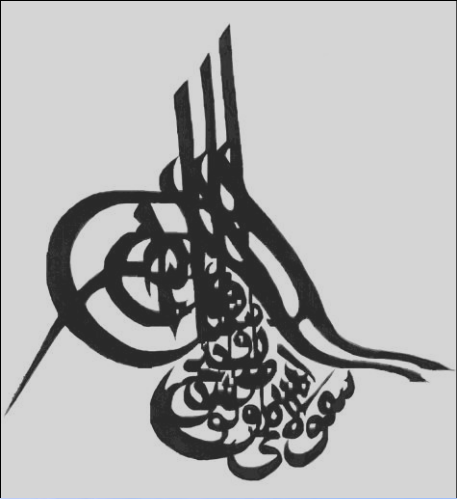


The construction of the second **Cathedral mosque in Ufa** continues today. The mosque named “Al-Rahim” was founded in the fall of 2007 in honor of the 450th anniversary of the entry of Bashkiria into Russia. In the summer of 2019 (after three years of downtime) construction work was resumed. The mosque is made with the use of local motifs in its design. The building is planned in the form of a huge Khan's tent with a gilded glass dome having the texture of honeycombs. Minarets symbolize spearheads or arrows. Elements of Bashkir ornament will be used in the design. The size of the building is impressive. The diameter of the dome is 23 m, its height is 46 m, the height of four minarets is almost 77 m. According to the plan the transparent gilded dome should look soaring between four minarets of impressive height, crowned with crescents. The men's hall is designed for 1200 persons, the women's — for 400. During major holidays, it is possible to use all the space: lobby, observation decks. Thus, the total capacity can reach up to five thousand believers.

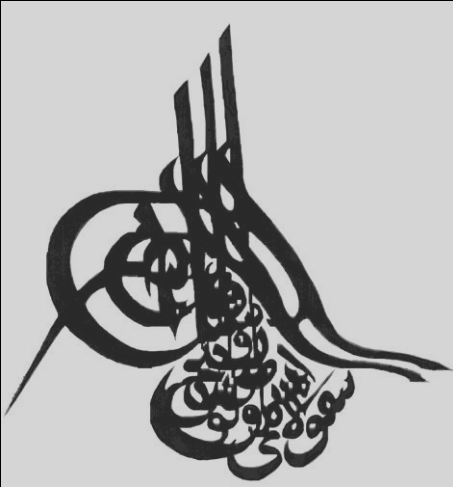




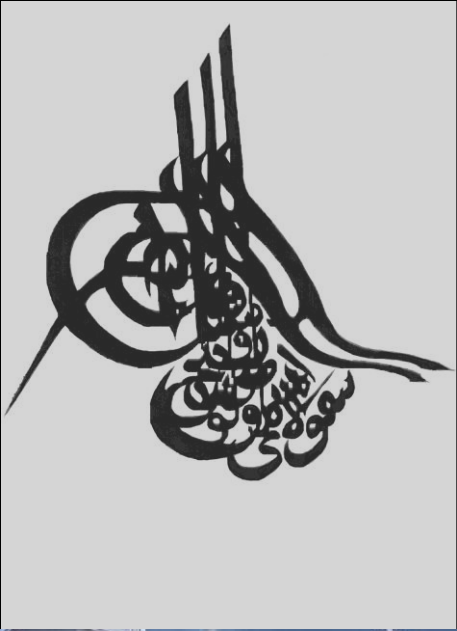
We have written above about mosques built in cities with predominantly Muslim populations, but huge projects of mosques have been implemented in Russian cities, such as Samara, for example. **The Volga Federal district also includes the Samara region.** Samara (more than 1160 thousand inhabitants in 2019, of which 90% are Russian) is one of the main scientific centers of the country (mainly in the space and aviation fields). But, in addition, the city is known for its research institutes, working both for the benefit of mechanical engineering, metalworking and the agricultural industry. Samara is a multi-confessional city. One can find in it many Orthodox, Old believer Christian, Catholic, Protestant and Armenian churches, houses of worship of Baptists and Pentecostals, mosques, as well as Jewish choral synagogue. The majority of believers in Samara are Orthodox Christians.



The first Muslims were settled in Samara at the end of the 16th century. The first mosque was built here in 1856. In 1907 the city Council decided to build a second mosque. The new **Samara Cathedral mosque** was opened on November 28, 1999. The project of a brick building was prepared by Rasim Valsin, the local architect. It is a parallelepiped with a minaret of 67 m high and a dome of 13.5 m in diameter. The mosques capacity is about five thousand worshippers. First of all the mosque visitors are struck by the embodiment of the idea of its *mihrab*, which is built of white marble. If you look from the prayer hall towards the *mihrab* in the daytime, you get the impression that it is illuminated by scattered rays. This effect is achieved by stained glass windows. The entrance to the prayer hall is decorated in the same way.

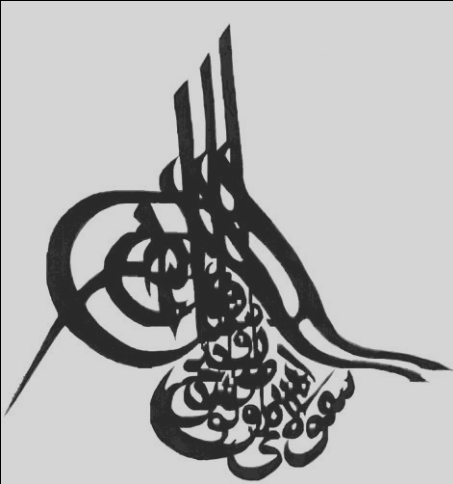


And finally, the **Moscow Cathedral mosque**, which is built on the site of the former, the creation of which dates back to 1904. The new building was erected in 2011—2015 by architect A. Kopenteev (chief artist is I. Tazhiev). It is a six-storey building in the Byzantine style with several different-sized minarets, turrets and domes. The height of the main dome covered with gold leaf is 46 m, the diameter is 27 m. The two main minarets have a height of 78 m. The small minaret which is located above the historical part of the complex is crowned by a crescent, preserved from the old building. The roof and turrets are painted in a bluish-green color, like the first Moscow mosque. The capacity can reach 10 thousand worshippers.

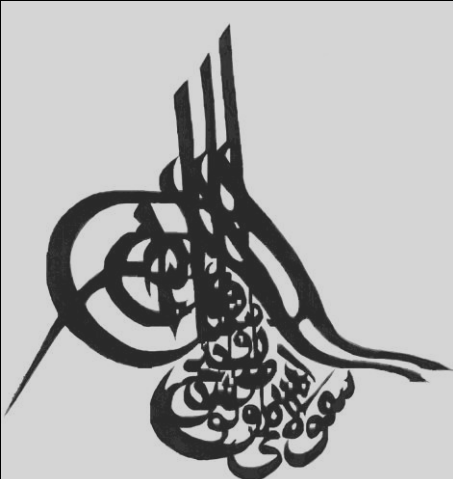


The unusual appearance of the mosque is the result of an original combination of techniques of Muslim and Old Russian architecture: the main **Golden dome of bulbous outlines introduces the mosque in a number of Moscow churches**, and the main minarets at the same time resemble the Syuyumbike tower of Kazan as well as the towers of the Moscow Kremlin. This symbiosis of different forms emphasizes the modern role of Moscow as the capital of a single multinational and multi-confessional state.



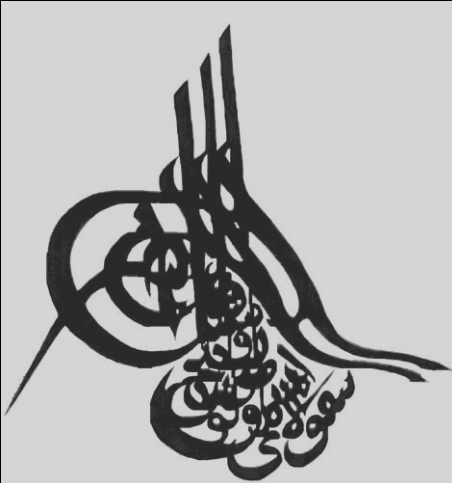


Similar directions in the search for the modern path in the religious construction of the two most widespread religions of Russia are the visible embodiment of this unity. This applies not only to huge projects, but also to many small mosques built in Russia from the Far North to the Far East. **Currently everywhere in the mosques construction the old and traditional local technologies proven for centuries in the construction of churches are actively used.** Returning to the projects presented here, it should be noted that, in the author's opinion, the most successful of them were those in which architects received the greatest possible freedom of expression (Argun mosque and "Lala-Tulip" mosque in Ufa), and those in which the local traditions of temple architecture were used to the greatest extent (Moscow Cathedral mosque, Central mosque in Alkhan-Yurt).



Even the short review of the newest and largest projects in Russia allows us to see the most significant trends in the development of this sphere of architecture, taking into account the existence of independent national traditions, the common cultural and historical heritage of the country and the corresponding global context. The rise of these projects was the result of the new administrative and financial capabilities of Russian Muslims and the assertion of their religious and national identity. The strengthening of ties with co-religionists around the world and the federal center support of large historical and cultural projects were of prime importance also. **We consider the stylistic diversity of the new Russian mosque architecture to be its most important feature.** It is the result of the history and cultural preferences of the inhabitants of the respective Russian regions, as well as of international cooperation. The implementation of construction projects of this kind is closely connected with the important political processes both in Russia as a whole and in the Muslim regions of the country.

In terms of its scope and objectives the proposed report does not pretend to be a comprehensive analysis of the relevant architectural solutions in their rich and diverse historical and cultural context. Its purpose is to attract the attention of colleagues to the study of the history and development of mosque architecture in Russia in all the entirety and originality of this phenomenon. It seems that this history, like no other, can illustrate the main topic of the conference: “Mosque: Building crosses cultures”.



Thank you very much for your attention!