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**BYLINE:** Rosemary Church, Matthew Chance

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**HIGHLIGHT:**

Racism and xenophobia have mushroomed in post-Soviet Russia.

**BODY:**

ROSEMARY CHURCH, CNN HOST: Racism in Russia. Chilling images of gangs of skinheads praying on immigrants. They leave behind the bodies of Africans, Vietnamese, ethnic Russians, even children, anyone whose skin color may be different.

Immigrants and ethnic groups have begun protesting the violence on the streets of St. Petersburg, and this punk band joined that protest. The band's guitarist was stabbed to death after criticizing the skinheads. All of this just ahead of the Group of 8 Summit scheduled there for July.

Hello and welcome to INSIGHT. I'm Rosemary Church.

Well, racism and xenophobia have mushroomed in post-Soviet Russia. President Vladimir Putin has described the trend as a threat to national security.

Matthew Chance takes a look at the disturbing trend in Russia and its potential impact on the future.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

MATTHEW CHANCE, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): She committed no crime; she hated no one, but Hasheeda Sultonov (ph) was the daughter of migrant workers from Tajikistan and in racist Russia even 8-year-old girls are killed for the color of their skin. Her death has left the deepest scars.

Her parents took me to the courtyard in St. Petersburg, where their little girl was killed. They'd just been iceskating, her dad told me, when they were attacked by skinheads.

"They knocked me to the ground and kept beating me, so I couldn't get up. I don't remember any of their faces," he told me. "Only after the attackers ran away, I noticed my daughter was lying on the ground. I ran over and started screaming for help. I held her as close as I could, but she died in my arms."

She was stabbed nine times in the stomach, arms and chest. A brutal and pointless death. But it's a far from isolated incident. Across Russia, every week there's news of more attacks, another beating, another killing.

African students are often targets, students like Samba Lamsa (ph) from Senegal, shot dead as he left a nightclub in St. Petersburg. Police say they found a shotgun nearby, emblazoned with a swastika.

In a high profile rampage earlier this year, a lone attacker entered Moscow's main synagogue with a knife. Caught on security cameras, he stabbed at least eight worshippers before being wrestled to the ground.

Racist attacks in Russian cities are now, according to Amnesty International, out of control.

(on camera): Well, I've come here to a makeshift memorial to just one of the victims of racist crime here in St. Petersburg. You see people have put a photograph of the victim, Timor Petrova (ph) here. Some of laid flowers out of respect. He was stabbed to death here on the streets, in the center of St. Petersburg. On the wall it's written, "Timor (ph), we will never forget you."

Across Russia, there have been at least 18 racist killings just like this, according to human rights groups. There have been some arrests, but critics say authorities are simply not doing enough to fight this type of crime.

(voice-over): There is no shortage of video evidence showing the crimes. Many skinhead gangs tape their vicious exploits themselves, like this attack in a St. Petersburg subway. The victims are heavily outnumbered and taken by surprise.

Some gang members, here demonstrating combat techniques, only agree to be interviewed wearing masks. But prominent self-described racists like Yuri Belayov, a leading extremist in Russia, have few concerns about meeting us. He openly supports the

wave of racist violence, even threatens more.

YURI BELAYOV, FREEDOM PARTY (through translator): I think that everything is just beginning in Russia. The confrontation will be very fierce and it will escalate very soon. What they are seeing now is just the beginning.

CHANCE (on camera): Many of the people who have been killed in this spate of racist crimes have been totally innocent people. How can you possibly justify that?

BELAYOV (through translator): There is really nothing to justify. We don't invite them. They just come here and commit crimes, so what should we Russians do. The fact some of them are killed, well, if you will excuse me, war is war.

CHANCE (voice-over): Many Russians may be appalled by this kind of hate, especially as innocents are being murdered in its wake, but many Russians also hold sympathetic views. The figures are staggering.

Recent polls by the independent Levata Center in Moscow found more than 60 percent of Russians fear a rise in crime because of immigrants. The same figure believes foreigners take the jobs of Russians. More than 30 percent said they prefer not to work with immigrants from China or Africa. Nearly half would rather people from the Caucasus didn't even live in Russia.

Sociologists explain these attitudes as the result of many factors, like the chaos of Russia's post-Soviet decline and its war in the breakaway republic of Chechnya. But one sociologist says blaming immigrants for Russia's ills is encouraged by a flawed democracy that makes people reluctant to hold the Russian authorities responsible for their problems.

PROF. VICTOR SHIRELMAN, INST. OF ETHNOGRAPHY: It's not safe because authorities are somewhere there, at the top, and they are very strong, they are very powerful. So, in this situation, it is better -- this is a psychological factor. It's better to transmit your anger to somebody who is weaker than you, who is probably more poor than you. And the best object for that is just immigrants.

CHANCE: And even mainstream political parties have fueled popular xenophobia. This, a campaign add from a recent Moscow election, inferring people from the Caucasus are like garbage on the city streets. The Kremlin banned the add and has spoken against racism, but critics accuse officials of encouraging nationalistic views to bolster national pride, allowing suspicion and contempt of non-Russians to run rife.

(on camera): But Russia's xenophobia could now pose a serious threat to its future. This vast country is facing an acute population decline, and while the Kremlin talks very publicly about the need for Russian families to have more children, it is also following a much more politically sensitive strategy.

(voice-over): Vyacheslav Postavnin, of Russia's Migration Department, is responsible for pursuing this strategy. To meet the need for workers, he told me, Russia must attract at least a million new immigrants every year, and he's now actively seeking them out.

VYCHESLAV POSTAVNIN (through translator): Our main sources are people from former Soviet republics like Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. They can bring us between 500,000 and 700,000 annually. There is a Azerbaijan too. And we shouldn't forget China, with their overwhelming population. They also have a lot of potential workers.

CHANCE (on camera): But what about the political consequences? Do you really believe Russians are ready to welcome even more foreigners into their country?

POSTAVNIN (through translator): Well, the positive point in our situation is that most of these people used to be citizens of one state, the Soviet Union. So there are plenty of family connections here. We're already used to seeing them and we simply know them, so that is why we think it would be easier for them to integrate into our society.

CHANCE (voice-over): But as Russia looks to new immigrants to its future, those already here face growing prejudice.

Hasheeda Sultonov's (ph) father told me those arrested for her killing weren't even convicted of murder, just hooliganism, a much lesser crime.

"It was a bad verdict," he told me. "A girl was killed, but those who did it were not properly punished, which means they can kill again."

And without much tougher action by the authorities, Russia's racist scourge may continue to thrive.

Matthew Chance, CNN, St. Petersburg.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

CHURCH: We're going to take a short break now. When we come back, we'll find out just how expensive this problem of racism in Russia is and what the police are doing about it.

CHURCH: Remember the young girl we told you about? The girl from Tajikistan who was stabbed to death by attackers shouting "Hail, Hitler"? Well, her attackers never went to jail for her death. The teenagers were acquitted of her murder and instead were convicted of the lesser charge of hooliganism.

Human rights advocates say hate groups become bolder every time they manage to beat the system.

And welcome back.

So, just how big a problem is racism and xenophobia in Russia? The country's president, Vladimir Putin, was so concerned he invited a United Nations representative to Moscow and St. Petersburg to assess just how extensive the problem is. The U.N.'s special rapporteur on racism and xenophobia, Doudou Diene, is in Russia all this week and sat down with our Matthew Chance just a short time ago in Moscow.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CHANCE: Russia has particular problems as well, doesn't it, according to the Sova (ph) Center, here in Moscow, which adds up the statistics about human rights abuses in this country. More than 100 racist attacks this year, 18 of those attacks resulted in killings. It's a terrible problem in Russia.

DOUDOU DIENE, U.N. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR: I came to Russia for two reasons. One, because of the very dark picture which we are receiving from outside and the information, the hiding of killings, manifestations of racism which are more and more violent, someone to detect that.

And, also, I wanted to check how a country, which has been profoundly multicultural during the Soviet Union and which has given up this ideology of friendship between people and has played a big role in inviting students from Africa, Asia, Arab countries, how come that society, profoundly multicultural, is now facing these terrible expressions of xenophobia and racism.

It is why I came to Russia.

CHANCE: How do these statistics compare to other industrialized countries? So many racist attacks in Russia. It's hosting the G8, a summit of world leaders, this year. How does it compare with the other G8 countries?

DIENE: Fundamental racism is general, and more general in the European countries now, which are facing, I think, what I call an identity crisis, because the national identity is no more confirmed, it is a multicultural relic of their societies.

But what makes the Russian case different, which I am here to assess, is the violence, the number of people killed in Russian incidents, in St. Petersburg and elsewhere. This we are seeing in some Western countries. As you know, two weeks ago in (INAUDIBLE), in Belgium, an African lady was killed with the white boy she was carrying.

But what makes the Russian case apparently different is the level of violence, which is why I came here to investigate it.

CHANCE: Do you think the Russian government does a good enough job of explaining to its people the benefits of immigration, the benefits that immigrants can bring, because

you go to St. Petersburg and I know you are on your way there, and you will see there is so much contempt held by ordinary people towards visible ethnic minorities and towards immigrants. Is the Russian government failing in explaining the benefits to its people?

DIENE: I will be able to answer that question on Friday, after the end of my visit, but after two days of visit and listening to political opinions, NGOs, national (INAUDIBLE) and foreigners, what I am realizing is something very dark and serious and profound.

For example, yesterday I met the African students. Two concepts, two things they told me. Those who are perpetrating this violence, the racist crimes, have reached their goal, because now what dominates us is fear. They are very profoundly fearful of getting out in the streets. And, secondly, loneliness. They told me that they don't feel protected, neither by the local authorities, the national authorities, by their embassies, and even by their fellow Russian students. So total isolation.

It is the same kind of testimony I receive from people from the Caucasus and Central Asia. So the picture is serious. Which means that certainly there are very profound causes, but I am going to try to understand not only the historical depth of this crisis. What is the linkage between the dynamic, multicultural setting of the Soviet Union with this situation of xenophobia and intolerance? And, secondly, it is quite clear that if these groups, known as skinheads, are acting in such an open way, free way, certainly something is going on in terms of policing them and recognizing the reality of racism in this community. So, these two, I am going to try to assess it.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

CHURCH: Doudou Diene, talking there with our Matthew Chance. Once Mr. Diene has investigated the extent of the problem in Russia, he does plan to submit his recommendations to the United Nations.

Well, we have to take a short break now. When we come back, Russia is not alone. With an increase in immigration across much of Western Europe, racism is also raising its ugly head there.

Do stay with us.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH (voice-over): It is a sporting event viewed by hundreds of millions of fans, and this year a record number of people are watching the World Cup. More than 20 million in the host country of Germany alone. But while fans enjoy the games, neo-Nazis are using the event to promote their message. More than 200 supporters of a German far right political group rallied in (INAUDIBLE), a city hosting World Cup matches. The demonstrators were met with chants of "Nazis out!" and were pelted with tomatoes.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE (through translator): This is our city and the Nazis must get

out of here. This is no place for the Nazis.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH: Welcome back.

Well, confrontations between extreme right marches and counter- protestors are a frequent event in Germany. In the run up to the World Cup, concern over racism was heightened by a spate of attacks on non- whites. And Germany is not alone in facing this problem. As much of Western Europe grapples with increased immigration from Africa and the Middle East, racist activity appears to be on the upswing.

Joining me now to discuss race relations in Europe is Nick Biziouras. He's a research fellow at the Belfar Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University.

Thank you, sir, for talking with us.

CHURCH: We saw earlier in the program the extent of the problem in Russia. But, of course, Western Europe isn't immune to this. We're seeing signs of racism. We've seen it at the World Cup this year. How concerned should Western Europe be about this?

**NIKOLAOS BIZIOURAS, HARVARD UNIV.:** I think that Western Europe should be concerned. I think the June 21 game of Iran against Angola has the possibility of bringing out the worst within the far right, in the united skinhead element, in the former Eastern Germany part of now united Germany.

However, I do think the situation is much more controlled and pales in comparison to both the frequency of violence and the intensity of violence in Russia.

CHURCH: Of course. But are we talking about skinheads? We certainly were with Russia. Are they the main perpetrators of these attacks across Western Europe?

BIZIOURAS: Partly. There has been a significant transition in Western Europe away from the type of violence that you see in Russia, the virulent xenophobic attacks on the street, the lack of coordination that you see among the skinhead groups in Russia. Now you see a much more organized and a much more politically oriented campaign that takes place among the rising far right parties that are using the normal political process to make the same types of claims that you see in Russia.

In certain ways, if you look at the figures, Germany has stabilized approximately around 500 xenophobic right wing extremist attacks on an annual basis, but if you look at Britain or if you look at France, those types of attacks against immigrants, against foreigners, against all types of ethnic minorities, have increased much more dramatically.

In Britain, racially aggravated assaults have tripled between '99 and 2004. In France, the same figures against immigrants, not including the French Jewish population, have gone

up by a factor of five between '99 and 2004.

CHURCH: Why do you think we're seeing that increase? Why is that happening? What is right at the heart of that?

BIZIOURAS: I think one of the main causes is the basic fact that Europe is becoming more and more a destination of immigration and right- wing political leaders are utilizing this major development to bring out support among urban, unemployed or underemployed, low skill males who feel that they're being left out of the European dream, unlike their parents or their grandparents, and at the same time you have an extreme concentration of ethnic and immigrant minority groups in specific areas throughout all of those countries that make them particularly amenable and opportune, in ways, to attacks by these groups.

CHURCH: So, what are the governments of the various countries of Europe doing about this? What are their police forces doing? Anything?

BIZIOURAS: I think they're doing quite a lot, but much more needs to be done. You know, if you look at Western Europe, you're going to see a major difference between Germany on the one hand and France and Britain on the other hand.

In Germany, there has been a very extensive political tradition, ever since the end of the Second World War, to maintain civil liberties and attack all forms of sort of right wing extremism or neo-Nazism of that kind. So, when you look at the Germany authorities, you see a very strong effort to break up skinhead groups, to shut down Web sites, to go after far right groups that do not fulfill the constitutional requirements for free speech and who do incite hate speech. So, there has been a very strong effort to try to suppress that and try to minimize that and punish to the full extent of the law.

Now, if you look at France and Britain, given the absence of that kind of right wing extremism in the more distant past, the states are now catching up with it. But we have seen much more extensive hate crime regulation, much more extensive hate crime legislation, attempts by the police and the state to crackdown on these forms of violence.

At the same time, they have been increasing and it has brought up to - - it has increased the attention that these states are now spending on this particular issue.

CHURCH: Is it your concern that it could get to the levels of what we're seeing in Russia if it is not kept under control?

BIZIOURAS: I think in certain parts, the rise of far right parties, if you look at the BMP I Britain, if you look at the NPB in Germany, sort of far right extremists, you know, the polished versions of the skinheads, they're opening up conversations, they're sort of flagging issues where there is a very strong xenophobic element to them, where there is a lot of attacks, veiled and unveiled, at least rhetorical attacks on immigrants, on immigrants as the basis of all the ills that affect neighborhoods in those particular



countries. And they're trying to build up organizational links with the skin heads to push the xenophobia.

So, I think we're reaching very closely and very quickly in certain ways a tipping point. If the British and the French and the German states do not intervene at this particular time, you will see the emergence of more volatile, more virulent, more action oriented extremist groups from the far right in all of those countries.

CHURCH: All right, Nick Bizouras, thank you so much for talking with us. Appreciate it.

BIZOURAS: Thank you.

CHURCH: And that's all for this edition of INSIGHT. I'm Rosemary Church. Thanks for watching.

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