

PUBLIC

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"Disappearance"/fear of torture
and extrajudicial execution

29 January 2004

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Eliza Gaitamirova (f) (born 1973)
Milana Kodzoeva (f) (age not known)

The two women named above are believed to have been abducted by Russian federal forces in the Chechen Republic.

On 1 December 2003 Eliza Gaitamirova, a mother of four from the village of Gekhi, in the Urus-Martan region of the Chechen Republic, received an order to come to the Urus-Martan district police station (ROVD). She apparently went there the next day, but did not return to her family that evening. On 3 December, the head of the Department for Criminal Investigations at the ROVD told her mother that Eliza had been detained, but did not say why. Eliza Gaitamirova was reportedly released from the ROVD in mid-December, but on her way home to Gekhi, she was apparently stopped by men in camouflage, thought to be Russian soldiers, who took her away. She has not been seen since. Her husband apparently "disappeared" as well, in 2001.

Milana Kodzoeva, a widow from Kotar Yurt in the Achkhoy-Martan region of the Chechen Republic, was questioned on 5 and 9 January by a member of the Russian federal forces, whose name is known to Amnesty International, about allegations that she wanted to become a suicide bomber and had plans to go to a training camp for Chechen fighters. She denied all the allegations and the man left. On 19 January several men in camouflage came to her house and forced her to go with them. Milana Kodzoeva has two children, one of whom is only two months old and still breastfeeding. The men would not let her take this child with her. She has not been seen since. Her husband is alleged to have been a fighter who died in a recent clash with Russian forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to independent human rights organizations gathering information in the Russian Federation, thousands of Chechen civilians have "disappeared" during the conflict after being detained by Russian forces. The bodies of some of the "disappeared" have been found in unmarked dumping sites or mass graves. Many appear to have suffered torture, including rape, or violent death.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Russian, English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to immediately make public the whereabouts of Eliza Gaitamirova and Milana Kodzoeva, and either charge them with a recognizably offence or release them immediately;
- urging the authorities to immediately initiate a criminal investigation into the "disappearance" of the two women and to bring those found responsible to justice in a court of law;
- urging the Russian government to immediately make public the names and whereabouts of everyone detained in the various detention facilities in Chechnya, and the charges against them.

APPEALS TO:

Procurator General of the Russian Federation

Vladimir USTINOV

General Procuracy of the Russian Federation

Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d15a,

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Russian Federation

Telegrams: Generalnomu prokuroru, USTINOVU V., Moskva, Russia
Faxes: + 7 095 292 88 48
Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Russian Federation Minister of Internal Affairs

Rashid Nurgaliev
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ul. Zhitnaia 16
117049 Moscow
Russian Federation

Telegram: Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russian Federation
Fax: +7 095 237 49 25
Salutation: Dear Minister

Procurator of the Chechen Republic

Vladimir KRAVCHENKO
Procuracy of the Chechen Republic
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Fax: + 7 8712 222000, +7 095 777 9226, +7 095 777 92 06 (if someone answers say "fax please"),

COPIES TO:

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and to diplomatic representatives of the Russian Federation accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 March 2004.