

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 446/94 (EUR 46/03/94, 15 December 1994) and follow-ups (EUR 46/01/95, 4 January 1995, EUR 46/02/95, 25 January) - Appeal for the respect of humanitarian law

RUSSIA Russian forces said to ill-treat detainees from the Chechen Republic

Allegations that Russian forces have beaten and otherwise ill-treated people detained during the conflict in the Chechen Republic are highlighting the urgent need for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to have full access to all such detainees.

Material collected by, among others, the Russian human rights group Memorial and the parliamentary human rights commission, includes reports that some detainees have been subjected to beatings and mock executions to extract confessions. Chingizkhan Amirkhanov, for example, reports that he sustained injuries including several broken ribs and a punctured lung during a seven-day period of imprisonment in which he was also subjected to two mock executions.

According to his account he was detained on 9 January at his home in Grozny by Russian special forces who had mistaken him for someone they believed had killed wounded Russian soldiers. He was taken by truck with other prisoners to a Russian military base in Mozdok. During the journey guards are said to have sat on the prisoners and clubbed any who moved. Other reports have alleged that prisoners suffocated during transport owing to overcrowding.

During his imprisonment in Mozdok, Chingizkhan Amirkhanov reports that he and seven other prisoners received, per day, a litre of water between them and 20 crackers each. He was beaten during interrogations but refused to confess to involvement in the fighting, and was eventually freed by a civilian investigator.

The Russian authorities have refused to release figures on the number of people detained by their forces and the ICRC, the organization mandated to work for the observance of humanitarian law, has yet to receive permission for full access to all prisoners held by Russian officials.

The work of the ICRC in visiting and registering prisoners is an important step in ensuring that the safeguards envisaged under humanitarian law are respected and observed, and Amnesty International is urging the Russian authorities to facilitate full and appropriate access by the ICRC. Amnesty International is also calling on Russian officials to conduct thorough and impartial investigations into all allegations of ill-treatment in detention; to make such findings public; and to bring to justice any perpetrators of such violations.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- urging a comprehensive and impartial investigation into all allegations of ill-treatment in detention, and that the findings are made public and any perpetrators of such violations brought to justice;
- urging that the relevant Russian authorities take immediate steps to facilitate all appropriate access by the ICRC to prisoners held in connection with the conflict in the Chechen Republic.

APPEALS TO:

Aleksey Nikolayevich Ilyushenko
Acting Procurator General
Rossiskaya Federatsiya
103760 Moskva K-31
Kuznetsky most 13
IO Generalnogo prokurora Ilyushenko A.N.
Telegrams: Rossiya, 103760 Moskva, Kuz. most 13, Genprok Ilyushenko A.N.
Faxes: + 095 224 79 39
Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Minister of Defence, General Pavel Sergeyevich Grachev
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Telegrams: Rossiya, 103175 Moskva, Ministru oborony Grachevu
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COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrey Vladimirovich Kozyrev
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Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergey Adamovich Kovalyov
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and to diplomatic representatives of Russia accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 March 1995.