

News Service 057/00  
AI INDEX: EUR 46/20/00  
24 March 2000

## **Real scale of atrocities in Chechnya: New evidence of cover-up**

In the run-up to Russia's presidential election, Amnesty International has obtained new evidence pointing to an official cover-up of the true situation in Russia's "filtration camps".

Amnesty International's field researcher has obtained three separate lists containing the names of 61 of the 300 or so people believed to have been transferred by the Russian authorities from Chernokozovo "filtration camp" to other detention facilities prior to the official visit to Chernokozovo by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) last month.

According to information collected by Amnesty International, on 25 or 26 February, just a few days before the CPT official visit to Chernokozovo, the Russian authorities reportedly removed about 300 men and women detainees - - almost the entire prison population of Chernokozovo - - from the camp to another location in the village of Stanitsa Chervlyonnaya in Chechnya.

It is believed that the 300 detainees were removed from the camp by the authorities in order to hide the real scale of atrocities committed in Chernokozovo.

Two of the lists of names obtained by Amnesty International are virtually identical, and contain names of detainees believed to have been transferred from the Chernokozovo camp to the Chechen village of Stanitsa Chervlyonnaya in four train carriages. The Russian forces reportedly built a fence of barbed wire around the train carriages. Relatives of the detainees have witnessed this makeshift camp, while trying to buy out their family members from the camp commanders. According to reports, the detainees were later transferred from there to the village of Kadi-Yurt, where they are thought to be currently held in detention.

One of these lists was reportedly smuggled out of the detention facility at Kadi-Yurt on 12 March by detainees who hid it in the pocket of a dead fellow detainee. The detainee's body was sold by the camp authorities to his relatives. The list arrived in Ingushetia on 19 March, having been smuggled through the border checkpoint.

On 22 March Amnesty International obtained a third list which includes the names of male and female detainees who were allegedly transferred from the Chernokozovo camp to the prison hospital at the pre-trial detention centre (SIZO) in the town of Pyatigorsk in Russia's Stavropol Territory. It is thought that these people were sick, injured or wounded, and therefore were not transferred to Kadi-Yurt. This second list includes the name of one detainee, Movladi Idrisov, who reportedly died in detention after being transferred to the Pyatigorsk prison hospital.

Other makeshift "filtration camps" reportedly include the pre-trial detention centre (SIZO) known as the "White Swan", (*Beliy Lebed*) in Pyatigorsk; the SIZO in the city of Stavropol; a makeshift detention facility in a school in the Chechen town of Urus-Martan; and other makeshift

camps in various locations, including a fruit warehouse in the Chechen village of Tolstoy-Yurt, a poultry processing plant and the basement of the “Chekhkar” café in the Chechen village of Chiri-Yurt. Other "filtration camps" are reported to be in the towns of Mozdok and Grigorievsk in Stavropol Territory, and in the Chechen capital, Grozny.

Reportedly, in preparation of the CPT delegation’s visit, some of the buildings in the Chernokozovo camp were freshly painted and new prison staff were sent to replace the previous guards who were reportedly contract soldiers in the Russian federal forces. On 28 February a busload of foreign journalists was given a chaperoned tour by the Russian authorities of the newly painted camp. Currently Chernokozovo "filtration camp" is open for visits by international observers and media.

**Background**

Former detainees at the Chernokozovo camp gave testimonies that have recently come to light, alleging that they were tortured and ill-treated in the camp. Amnesty International has documented reports of the following methods of torture being used in “filtration camps” during the current conflict: rape of men and women detainees, electric shocks, beatings with hammers and clubs, tear gas, sawing off the detainee’s teeth, and beating detainees so that their ear-drums burst.  
ENDS.../

\*\*\*\*\*

**For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on + 44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>**