

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 46/021/2008

02 June 2008

UA 152/08

Possible disappearance/fear of torture/incommunicado detention

RUSSIAN FEDERATION Isa Lechievich Khalitov (m)
(CHECHEN REPUBLIC)

At about 10 pm on 27 May, Isa Khalitov was reportedly detained by armed men in camouflage near the village of Goragorsk in the Chechen Republic. He has not been seen since and his family fear that he is being held in incommunicado detention by the police. Amnesty International is concerned he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Isa Khalitov is believed to have been detained by police from a department known as ORB-2, based in the Chechen capital Grozny. Prior to his detention, his father, Lechi Khalitov was held on the morning of 27 May by law enforcement officials from the ORB-2. They demanded that he telephone his son, Isa and ask him to travel to Grozny.

Lechi Khalitov telephoned Isa, who was unable to return to Chechnya immediately as he was undergoing a medical examination in a neighbouring region of Russia. Lechi Khalitov was made to telephone his son every hour until Isa was able to return later that evening. It was only then at 11pm that Lechi Khalitov was finally released. ORB-2 officials have since denied holding either Isa or Lechi Khalitov. The next day on 28 May, law enforcement officials arrived at the Khalitov home and confiscated Isa Khalitov's car, without explanation or documentation.

Isa Khalitov's family have hired a lawyer in an attempt to find out exactly where he is being held. A criminal investigation has been opened into his disappearance, but so far this has not yielded any results. On 2 June, his relatives demonstrated outside the ORB-2 premises and have pledged to continue demonstrating until his whereabouts are established. Lechi Khalitov is also demanding that a criminal investigation be opened into his 12 hour arbitrary detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International remains deeply concerned at the ongoing reports of torture in detention, including in secret detention, and the failure of the authorities in Chechnya to take effective measures to prevent and punish torture. The detention centres operated by ORB-2, as well as other detention centres in Chechnya, are notorious for torture and ill-treatment (see UA 45/06, EUR 46/008/2006, 27 February 2006). In March 2007, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture highlighted a number of detention facilities where detainees are at a high risk of torture in Chechnya. Their list included the ORB-2 premises in Grozny and in Urus-Martan.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Isa Khalitov;
- urging the authorities to establish what has happened to Isa Khalitov, and where he is being held;
- calling for him to be released immediately and unconditionally if he is found to be in detention and if he is not to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence in line with internationally recognized standards of fair trial;
- reminding the authorities that Isa Khalitov should be accorded full protection of Russian and international law, if he is being detained, including immediate access to a lawyer of his choice and for his family to be immediately informed of his detention and his whereabouts.

APPEALS TO:

Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic

Valery KUZNETSOV
ul. Garazhnaya 9 B
364000, g. Grozny,
Chechen Republic
Russian Federation

Fax: +7 8712 22 35 43 (if someone answers the telephone say 'Fax please')

Salutation: Dear Procurator

Head of the Operational/Search Bureau No. 2 (ORB-2)

Isa SURGUEV
Grozny
Chechen Republic
Russian Federation

Fax: +7 8712 22 31 39 (if someone answers the telephone say 'Fax please')

Salutation: Dear Mr Surguev

COPIES TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

Yuri CHAIKA
Ul. B. Dimitrovka 15a
125993 Moscow, Russian Federation

Fax: +7 495 692 1725

Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the RF in the Southern Federal District

Vladimir USTINOV
ul. Bolshaia Sadovaia, 73
Rostov-on-Don
344006, Rostovskaia Region
Russian Federation

Fax: +7 8632 40 39 40

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

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 July 2008.