

PUBLIC

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UA 145/00 Fear of torture and ill-treatment / Incommunicado

detention

5 June 2000

RUSSIAN FEDERATION: CHECHNYA Taisa Isayeva (f), journalist

Chechen journalist Taisa Isayeva was reportedly arrested by Russian forces on 2 June when she tried to cross the border from North Ossetia in the Russian Federation, into Georgia. Amnesty International is extremely concerned that she may be held incommunicado at a secret "filtration camp", where she would be at high risk of torture and ill-treatment.

According to Russian sources, Taisa Isayeva, who was reportedly working for the Chechen-Press news agency, based in Georgia, was detained at the "Nizhny Zaramag" border checkpoint because she was carrying a video camera and a portable computer.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Independent journalists and human rights monitors are still not officially allowed into Chechnya, and any recording devices or communication equipment, such as computers, tape recorders and video cameras, are confiscated at the border with Chechnya.

Russian forces are still reported to be constantly detaining people in Chechnya at checkpoints and in the territories under their control, either during so-called "cleansing operations" in newly-occupied towns or during identity checks on civilian convoys travelling from Chechnya to neighbouring Ingushetia. People are most often detained for not having proper registration and residence permits, or on suspicion of belonging to armed Chechen groups. Women are also detained on suspicion of being related to Chechen fighters. Although the Russian forces claimed to have rescinded the order announced on 11 January 2000 which allowed them to detain any Chechen male aged between 10 and 65 on suspicion of being a fighter, witnesses claim that children as young as 10 continue to be detained during "filtration".

People detained by Russian forces are then sent to various secret "filtration camps" where they are held without access to their relatives, lawyers, or the outside world. Amnesty International has collected testimonies from survivors of "filtration camps" which have confirmed that detainees - men, women and children - are routinely and systematically tortured: they are raped, beaten with hammers and clubs, tortured with electric shocks and tear gas, their teeth are sawn off and some are beaten around both ears simultaneously to burst the ear-drums.

Copies of the Amnesty International report on Chechnya, *For the Motherland*, were seized last week at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport as they were being brought into the country. Russian customs officials have not yet released the documents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Russian or your own language:

- urging the Russian government to immediately make public the whereabouts and state of health of Taisa Isayeva, and to explain the legal basis for her arrest and detention;
- urging the authorities to grant her immediate access to her family, a lawyer of her own choice and appropriate medical care;
- asking the authorities to release her, unless she is officially charged with a recognizably criminal offence;

- urging the Russian government immediately to make public the names, whereabouts, current state of health and the charges brought against everyone detained in the various "filtration camps".

APPEALS TO:

President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir PUTIN
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, g. Moskva, Kreml
Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Russian Federation
Telegrams:PUTINU V., Kreml, Moskva, Russia
Faxes:+ 7 095 206 6277
Salutation:Dear President

Director General of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation
Nikolay PATRUSHEV,
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 101000 g. Moskva
Bolshaya Lubyanka 1/3
Federalnaya Sluzhba bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Russian Federation
Telegrams:Generalnomu direktoru FSB, PATRUSHEVU N., Moskva, Russia
Faxes:+ 7 095 975 2470
Salutation: Dear Director General

Procurator General of the Russian Federation, Vladimir USTINOV
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103793 g. Moskva K-31
Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d15a, Generalnaya Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii
Russian Federation

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

COPIES TO:

Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Igor IVANOV
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, g. Moskva 121200, Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 32/34
Ministerstvo inostrannykh del RF, Ministru IVANOVU I., Russian Federation
Faxes: + 7095 230 21 30

Special Representative of the President on Human Rights and Freedoms in the Chechen Republic Vladimir KALAMANOV
Rossiskaya Federatsiya, 103132 g. Moskva, Staraya ploshad pod. 6,
Administratsiya Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii,
KALAMANOVU, V., Russian Federation
Faxes:+ 7 095 206 6277

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 17 July 2000.