

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 46/23/96

23 April 1996

Further information on EXTRA 34/96 (EUR 46/13/96, 7 March 1996) and follow-ups (EUR 46/14/96, 12 March; EUR 46/16/96, 19 March) - Fear for safety / Possible extrajudicial executions / Fear of torture

CHECHEN REPUBLIC - RUSSIAN FEDERATION Civilians under Russian bombardment

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New concern: Fear for safety of civilians in Shali

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety up to 50,000 civilians in the Chechen settlement of Shali.

It is feared that Shali is about to come under indiscriminate attack from Russian forces of the kind previously launched against the settlements of Sernovodsk and Samashki in March, as a result of which hundreds of civilians are believed to have been killed. Shali is currently reported to be surrounded by Russian forces, who are seeking the surrender of Chechen fighters whom they believe are sheltering there.

Russian commanders are said to have opened a "humanitarian corridor" to allow civilians to leave Shali, the population of which has been swollen by refugees from the neighbouring Vedeno district. However, during the Russian attack on Samashki in mid-March a similar "humanitarian corridor" was reportedly sealed before all civilians had been able to flee. There have already been unconfirmed reports that people trying to leave Shali along the "humanitarian corridor" have been fired upon by Russian forces.

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

- calling for all steps to be taken to ensure the safety of civilians in Shali, and to uphold basic principles of international humanitarian law in particular as regards the protection of the civilian population;
- calling on the Russian Government to comply with its commitments on respect for human rights, given to the Council of Europe upon Russia's acceptance to the Council in February 1996, including the commitment to "respect strictly the provisions of international humanitarian law, including in cases of armed conflicts on its territory";
- urging the Russian Government to comply with its commitments to protect human rights in times of armed conflict, given to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), when Russia signed the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security in December 1994.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin  
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya  
g. Moskva  
Kreml  
Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii  
Yeltsinu B.N.

**Faxes: +7095 206 5173**

**Telegrams: Rossiya, Moskva, Kreml, Prezidentu Yeltsinu**

**Salutation: Dear President**

President's Special Envoy in Chechnya, Oleg Lobov

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**Faxes: +7095 206 0717**

**COPIES TO:**

Russian Federation Minister of Defence, General Pavel Grachev  
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya  
103175 g. Moskva  
ul. Myasnitskaya, 37  
Ministerstvo oborony  
Ministru Grachevu P.S.

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 **25 May 1996.**