

Fear of further torture and ill-treatment

RUSSIAN FEDERATION Andrei Viktorovich Osenchugov (m), aged 16
Aleksei Vladimirovich Shishkin (m), aged 16

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of two 16-year old boys from Nizhnii Novgorod on the river Volga. Andrei Osenchugov and Aleksei Shishkin have reportedly been subjected to torture and ill-treatment in a pre-trial detention centre in order to force them to confess to a crime, which they claim they have not committed. They are at risk of further torture and ill-treatment as a consequence of speaking out about their torture.

Andrei Osenchugov and Aleksei Shishkin were arrested on 5 March 2002 on suspicion of robbery, and they have been detained in the Nizhnii Novgorod regional pre-trial detention centre since 7 March. It is reported that Andrei Osenchugov was repeatedly beaten, kicked, whipped and subjected to electric shocks over a three-day period in late July by two adult cell mates, allegedly on the orders of prison staff to extract a confession to a number of other crimes. Andrei Osenchugov ultimately did confess to these other crimes, naming Aleksei Shishkin as his accomplice. A prison guard allegedly witnessed part of the ill-treatment, but did not intervene. Later, Aleksei Shishkin was reportedly tortured by the same two adult prisoners as a result of which he reportedly confessed to other crimes.

On 1 August, a trial against Aleksei Shishkin and Andrei Osenchugov started in the local district court, where Andrei Osenchugov told the judge that he was in need of medical care. A doctor reportedly examined him and found numerous bruises and other ailments, and the judge postponed the trial so that the adolescent could be treated in the hospital of the detention centre. The confessions the two young men made under duress have not yet been submitted as evidence.

On 5 August, Andrei Osenchugov's parents and an aunt of Aleksei Shishkin filed a complaint to the Nizhnii Novgorod regional procurator as well as the director of the pre-trial detention centre, alleging ill-treatment of the two boys and calling for an investigation. Later in August both authorities informed the relatives that the claims had been checked but that they had not found sufficient grounds for an investigation to be opened. Prison officers reportedly interrogated Andrei Osenchugov and attempted to pressure him to ask his parents to withdraw their complaint. Andrei Osenchugov and Aleksei Shishkin remain in the pre-trial detention centre pending the outcome of the trial and are at risk of further ill-treatment in retaliation for their complaints.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under international human rights standards, children who are detained are entitled to special protection based on the duty of the state to secure the best interests of the child. Other international standards also require the state to ensure that children are not subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

Detainees, including children, in Russian pre-trial detention centres are crammed into dirty, badly ventilated and vermin-infested cells where many remain for long periods of time. They are often subjected to torture and ill-treatment in such centres, both by prison officers as well as by other detainees. In a number of detention centres prison officials and guards also use some prisoners

to control and ill-treat other prisoners, including children. The perpetrators of such ill-treatment are rarely held to account.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Andrei Osenchugov and Aleksei Shishkin and urging the authorities to ensure that they will be protected from torture and ill-treatment according to international human rights standards;
- urging the authorities to initiate an immediate and impartial investigation into their alleged ill-treatment and torture;
- urging the authorities to ensure that any perpetrators of torture or ill-treatment are brought to trial and that victims of such abuses receive adequate compensation.

APPEALS TO:

Vladimir DEMIDOV
Procurator of Nizhnii Novgorod Region
603600 Nizhnii Novgorod
Pl. Gorkogo 6
Russian Federation

Fax: + 7 8312 343 033

Telegram: Regional Procurator Demidov, Nizhnii Novgorod, Russia

Salutation: Dear Procurator

Mrs Marina GORBACHEVA
Chief Officer of the Nizhnii Novgorod Regional Department of Justice
603005 Nizhnii Novgorod
Ul. Bolshaya Pokrovskaya 17
Russian Federation

Fax: + 7 8312 339 775 (if someone answers, please ask for fax tone)

Telegram: Chief Officer Gorbacheva, Regional Department of Justice, Nizhnii Novgorod, Russia

Salutation: Dear Chief Officer

COPIES TO:

Yuri CHAIKA
Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation
109830 Moskva
Ul. Vorontsovo Pole 4
Russian Federation

Fax: + 7 0959 162 903

Vladimir USTINOV
Procurator General of the Russian Federation
103793 Moskva
Ul. Bolshaya Dimitrovka 15a
Russian Federation

Fax: + 7 0959 214 186

Colonel Sergei TOPANOV
Director of the Nizhnii Novgorod Regional Pre-trial Detention Centre IZ-52/1
603007 Nizhnii Novgorod
Prospekt Gargarina 26
Russian Federation

Fax: + 7 8312 345 469 (if someone answers, please ask for fax tone)

"Committee Against Torture" of Nizhnii Novgorod (human rights organization)

E-mail: torture@sandy.ru

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 2 November 2002.