

PUBLIC

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22 May 2003

Further Information on UA 98/03 (EUR 46/031/2003, 14 April 2003) Fear for Safety

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Ethnic and national minority groups in the Russian Federation

Amnesty International expressed concern for the safety of members of ethnic and national minority groups in the Russian Federation due to the anniversary of the birth of Adolf Hitler on 20 April. As in previous years, the anniversary did coincide with a number of racially-motivated attacks and incidents on ethnic minority groups.

On 20 April, a group of German children aged between 10 and 15 years old were attacked by shaven-headed men in the Gorkovskaya metro station in St Petersburg. The children, who were reported to be of Kurdish origin, were members of a Turkish youth club in Berlin who were in St Petersburg participating in a joint Russian-German cooperation program. According to an official statement issued by the German Consulate in St Petersburg, the children were attacked as they stepped out of a metro train by seven young people aged between 20 and 25 years old. One 15-year-old victim was hit in the face and another sustained bruises around the head, spine and ribs. The attackers reportedly dispersed at the command of an unidentified man, who did not appear to be a skinhead.

The police in the metro station reportedly took down a report of the attack but refused to search for the perpetrators. In their statement the German Consulate expressed serious concern about the incident and hoped that an investigation into the attack would be opened. They also stated that hundreds of people had witnessed the attack.

On 7 May, it was reported that the St Petersburg City Prosecutor had taken the case under his special control as a result of the failure of the internal affairs employees in the metro to deal with the attack. The City Prosecutor's office is also said to have opened an inquiry into the conduct of the metro police.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the lead up to the anniversary of Hitler's birth, and in the weeks that followed, a number of other ethnic and national minority groups in the Russian Federation were attacked. According to a report in a local newspaper called "*Prizvy*", around 20 men attacked and stabbed a Zambian student several times near his dormitory at the Vladimir State University on 8 April. The victim survived the attack, although the ambulance is reported to have taken 40 minutes to come to his aid. Three suspects were subsequently arrested, two of whom were said to have been released later.

On 25 April, 50-60 young men attacked Meskhetians, Armenians and other minority groups in the villages of Kholm'sky and Akhtyr'skaya in Krasnodar Territory. Thirty people were said to have received injuries due to the attack. For further details on this case and to take action, please follow this link to the Amnesty website: <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/rus-090503-action-eng>

Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. We will continue to monitor the situation and will be using other longer term campaigning tools. If possible please send a final round of appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or Russian or your own language:

- welcoming the fact that an investigation into the attack on the German school-children in the Gorkovskaya metro station in St Petersburg on 20 April 2003 has been opened;
- calling for the investigation into the attack to be carried out in a comprehensive, impartial and thorough manner with the results being made public;
- calling for anyone reasonably suspected as being responsible for the attack to be brought to justice in the course of a fair trial conducted in line with international standards;
- recommending the introduction of comprehensive and continuing training and performance monitoring programs to ensure that public officials are aware of their obligation to protect all people from discriminatory actions by others.

APPEALS TO:

St Petersburg City Procurator

Nikolai Vinnichenko
St Petersburg City Procuracy
Ul. Pochtampskaya 2/9
190000 St Petersburg
Russian Federation

Telegram: St Petersburg City Procuracy, St Petersburg Russian Federation

Fax: +7 812 312 9786

Salutation: Dear Procurator

COPIES TO:

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation

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General Procuracy of the Russian Federation
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103793 Moscow
Russian Federation

Fax: +7 095 292 8848

Salutation: Dear General Procurator

Minister of Internal Affairs

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Russian Federation

Fax: +7 095 237 49 25

Salutation: Dear Minister

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 3 July 2003.