

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: EUR 46/040/2004**

**Further Information on UA 46/04 (EUR 46/006/2004, 6 February 2004) Fear for safety 16 July 2004**

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION/  
CHECHEN REPUBLIC**

**Imran EZHIEV (m), aged 53, human rights defender  
Khamzat KUCHIEV (m), aged 53, human rights defender  
Other members of the Society of Russian-Chechen Friendship**

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Heavily armed police and security forces have raided the office of the Society of Russian-Chechen Friendship in Ingushetia, allegedly without a warrant, and planted explosives in an attempt to fabricate criminal charges against human rights defender Khamzat Kuchiev. Amnesty International remains seriously concerned for his safety, and that of other members of the Society.

More than 40 police officers raided the Society's office in the Ingush town of Karabulak on 12 July, at around 6.30pm. Most were in masks and camouflage, and carrying machineguns. They reportedly searched the office without identifying themselves or showing a warrant. They apparently confiscated six videotapes, four computer disks and files containing testimonies of victims of human rights violations against civilians by Russian federal forces in Chechnya, as well as the names of the alleged perpetrators, and details of vehicles used to abduct civilians.

Imran Ezhiev arrived during the search and told the police that their activities were illegal without a warrant. One officer apparently shouted at him: "It is illegal that you were born. It is illegal that you are a Chechen. Don't worry, we will make sure to find something criminal about you."

Shortly after that, the police claimed to have found two small plastic bags full of powder in one of the rooms, and reportedly claimed they had found explosives. Khamzat Kuchiev was detained on suspicion of involvement in terrorism, and was taken to the City Department of Internal Affairs (GOVD) in Karabulak. Imran Ezhiev called the head of the Presidential Human Rights Commission, Ella Pamfilova, in Moscow, and asked her for help. She reportedly called the President of Ingushetia, and asked him to intervene. As a result of this, Khamzat Kuchiev was released a few hours later, and the police apparently apologized to him, but asked that the NGO should not publicize the incident further.

The Society of Russian-Chechen Friendship has filed a complaint with the Office of the Procurator of Ingushetia. However, the authorities have not opened any official investigation into the search of the organization's office, or the arbitrary detention of Khamzat Kuchiev and the alleged fabrication of evidence against the organization.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has reported on human rights defenders being targeted by Russian armed forces in Chechnya on a number of occasions. Imran Ezhiev himself has been detained 18 times, most recently on 29 January 2004 when he, Khamzat Kuchiev and another member of the Society, Adlan Ibragimov were detained overnight and reportedly assaulted by police in Ingushetia. The three men were released when Ella Pamfilova intervened. The Office of the Procurator of Ingushetia has reportedly opened a criminal investigation into their detention and ill-treatment, but no results have been made public and Imran Ezhiev maintains that the investigation has already been closed.

Several other members of the Society of Russian-Chechen Friendship have been killed, allegedly by Russian forces, in what appears to be a deliberate campaign to target human rights activists in this organization. Most recently, on 16 January 2004, the mutilated body of human rights activist Aslan Davletukaev was found near the town of Gudermes in Chechnya. He had been working with the Society, and

had reportedly been kidnapped by Russian federal forces on 10 January. Criminal investigations into these incidents have been inconclusive and no one has been held responsible.

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

- calling on the authorities to end the persecution, harassment and intimidation of Imran Ezhiev and other human rights defenders, who are members of the Society of Russian-Chechen Friendship;
- expressing concern that Khamzat Kuchiev has been harassed and arbitrarily detained solely for his legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of expression;
- expressing concern at the allegations that police planted explosives on the premises of the Society during a search, in an attempt to fabricate a criminal case against the organisation;
- asking for an immediate investigation into these allegations;
- expressing concern for the safety of Imran Ezhiev, Khamzat Kuchiev, other Society members and their families.

**APPEALS TO: (Fax machines may be switched off outside office hours – GMT+4)**

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Vladimirovich PUTIN

g. Moskva, Kremlin

Russian Federation

**Fax: + 7 095 206 85 10 / + 7 095 206 51 73 / + 7 095 230 24 08**

**e-mail: president@gov.ru**

**Salutation: Dear President**

Procurator General of the Russian Federation

Vladimir USTINOV

General Procuracy of the Russian Federation

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103793 Moscow K-31

Russian Federation

**Fax: + 7 095 292 8848 (if someone answers say "fax please")**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator General**

Procurator of the Republic of Ingushetia

M.V. Belkhoroev

Procuracy of the Republic of Ingushetia

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Nazran

Russian Federation

**Fax: + 7 873 222 1724 (if someone answers say "fax please")**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator**

**COPIES TO:**

Society for Russian-Chechen Friendship

Imran EZHIEV, g. Karabulak

Republic of Ingushetia, Russian Federation

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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 27 August 2004.