

PUBLIC

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27 August 2003

Further Information on EXTRA 39/03 (EUR 46/069/2003, 12 August 2003) Freedom of Expression

RUSSIAN FEDERATION “School of Peace”, non-governmental minority rights organization

The hearing regarding the closure of the non-governmental organization “School of Peace” at the Primorskii District Court in Novorossiisk, Krasnodar Territory has been postponed until 15 September. This decision was taken because the director of the “School of Peace” has to undergo hospital treatment.

In a letter to Amnesty International, Vadim Karastelev, director of the “School of Peace”, expressed his gratitude for the support from Amnesty International and from other human rights organizations. He adds, that according to some of his contacts, the Krasnodar Ministry of Justice, which brought the law suit against the “School of Peace”, feels the weight of international pressure and has privately admitted to having made procedural mistakes when attempting to close the "School of Peace".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the past few years, the “School of Peace” has come under considerable pressure from authorities in the Krasnodar Territory of Russia, to stop its campaigning on behalf of the Meskhetian minority, thousands of whom live in the Krasnodar Territory. The closure of the “School of Peace” was requested by the Krasnodar Ministry of Justice on 22 July, on the basis that that it no longer employed three founding members, as required by law. Although two of the founders had in fact left the organization in 1999 and 2000, the “School of Peace” claims that it had been told by the Ministry of Justice in 1999 that it could continue working.

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

- expressing concern about allegations that the non-governmental organization "School of Peace" may be facing imminent closure in connection with its work to defend the rights of the Meskhetian community in Krasnodar Territory;
- expressing concern that the Ministry of Justice has requested the closure of the "School of Peace" on the grounds that it has less than three founders remaining, despite its reported guarantee to the “School of Peace” in 1999 that it could continue its activities on this basis;
- calling for a comprehensive and impartial investigation into reports that “School of Peace” and several other non-governmental authorities in the Krasnodar Territory have faced harassment and been threatened with closure for pursuing their lawful role of monitoring and reporting on human rights issues.

APPEALS TO:

Procurator of Krasnodar Territory

Mr Vladimir Ulianov

Krasnodar Regional Procuracy

Ul. Sovietskaia 39

350000 g. Krasnodar

Russian Federation

Fax: + 7 8612 629 802 (If someone answers, say "fax please")

Salutation: Dear Procurator

Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation

Yurii Chaika

Ul. Vorontsovo Pole 4

109830 g. Moscow

Russian Federation

Fax: +7 095 916 29 03/ 209 61 38

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Procurator General of the Russian Federation

Vladimir USTINOV

Ul. Bolshaya Dimitrovka, 15a

103793 Moscow, Russian Federation

Fax: +7 095 292 88 48

Head of the Main Department of the Ministry of Justice of Krasnodar Territory

Mr E M Kaminskii

Ul. Krasnaia 22

350003 g. Krasnodar, Russian Federation

Fax: +7 8612 626 155 (If someone answers, say "fax please")

Governor of Krasnodar Territory

Aleksandr Tkachev

Ul. Krasnaia 35

350014 g. Krasnodar, Russian Federation

Fax: +7 8612 683 542

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 8 October 2003.