

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial executions / Fear for safety

10 February 1995

GEORGIA

Ivan ANTILAVA, his wife and son-in-law (names not known)

Fears for the safety of ethnic Georgians in the disputed Republic of Abkhazia have been heightened by the reported extrajudicial execution of Ivan Antilava, his wife and their son-in-law by Abkhazian police at the end of January 1995.

The Republic of Abkhazia, a territory within the former Soviet republic of Georgia, has been the scene of bitter fighting in recent years.

According to a report in the New York Times of 5 February the killings were a revenge attack by Abkhazian police based in Tagiloni, Gali district, after several of their men were killed by unknown assailants in late January. Neighbours reported seeing police enter the house where Ivan Antilava and his family lived, and then discovering their bodies after the police had left. Ivan Antilava had been shot in the head, his wife in the chest and their son-in-law in the stomach and head.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Republic of Abkhazia is situated in the north-west of Georgia. Tension has long existed between sections of the Abkhaz population seeking greater autonomy, and the Georgian Government seeking to preserve Georgia's territorial integrity. Armed conflict broke out in August 1992 when Georgian troops entered Abkhazia and took control of the capital, Sukhumi. The main fighting ended when Georgian forces were eventually forced out of Abkhazia in September the following year, but peace talks have as yet failed to resolve the issue of Abkhazia's status. Hundreds of thousands of Georgians were estimated to have been displaced from Abkhazia during fighting. A small number have returned, mostly to the Gali district.

During the course of the conflict Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed its concern to both sides about allegations of human rights violations. These have included detention, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions on ethnic grounds.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/telegrams/express and airmail letters either in English, Russian or in your own language:

- urging an immediate, comprehensive and impartial investigation into the reported killing of Ivan Antilava and two other members of his family by Abkhazian police in Tagiloni at the end of January 1995;
- urging that the results of such an investigation be made public, with any perpetrators identified brought to justice within the norms of international law;
- urging that all appropriate steps are taken to ensure the security of all residents, regardless of ethnic origin.

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 15 per section.

APPEALS TO:

The three officials below, via the Abkhaz press office in Moscow, who will pass them on:

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya

125252 g. Moskva
 Novo-Peshanaya 16, kv. 69
 Press sluzhba Abkhazii
 Glave GULIA T.

Faxes: +7 095 187 49 87 Please note that this is a combined telephone/fax number and you may have to ask for the fax to be switched on.

Telegrams: Rossiya, 125252 Moskva, Press sluzhba Abkhazii

1. President of Abkhazia, Vladislav Ardzinba

Respublika Abkhazia
 g. Sukhum
 Apparat Prezidenta
 Prezidentu ARDZINBA B.

Salutation: Dear President

2. Procurator General of Abkhazia, Arni Dzhergenia

Respublika Abkhazia
 g. Sukhum
 Prokuratura Respubliki Abkhazia
 Generalnomu prokuroru DZHERGENIA A.

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

3. Head of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission in Abkhazia, Natalya Akaba

Respublika Abkhazia
 g. Sukhum
 Lakobi 21
 Verkhovny Sovet Respubliki Abkhazia
 Komissiya po pravam cheloveka
 Predsedatelyu AKABA N.

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Send these directly to the officials at the addresses provided:

The Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Abkhazia in Europe, Slava Chirikba

Slava Chirikba
 Faculty of letters
 University of Leiden
 Postbus 9515
 NL-2300 RA Leiden
 The Netherlands

The Chairman of the Parliament of the Republic of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze

Respublika Gruzija
 380018 g. Tbilisi
 pr. Rustaveli, 8
 Parlament Respubliki Gruzija
 Predsedatelyu SHEVARDNADZE E.

The Chairman of the Georgian State Committee for Human Rights, Aleksandr Kavsadze

Respublika Gruzija
 380018 g. Tbilisi
 pr. Rustaveli, 8

Komitet zashchity prav cheloveka
Predsedatelyu KAVSADZE A.

and to diplomatic representatives of Georgia, if any, accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 March 1995.