

# URGENT ACTION

## WOMAN DISAPPEARED IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

**On 22 December, Zalina Elhoroeva was taken away by armed camouflaged men wearing balaclavas in the North Caucasus, Russia, according to two witnesses. Her family has filed complaints with law enforcement agencies, but Zalina has not been seen since, and her whereabouts are unknown.**

**Zalina Elhoroeva** (Yelkhoroeva), aged 30, was travelling by taxi from Valdikavkaz in North Ossetia to Nazran in Ingushetia in the North Caucasus, accompanied by her brother's wife. According to her family who received information from Zalina Elhoroeva's brother's wife and the taxi driver, on the way through the village of Chermen the road was blocked by four vehicles (models UAZ and VAZ-2114) which are often used by law enforcement agencies.

Armed camouflaged men in balaclavas who spoke native Russian requested to see their papers, following which they took Zalina Elhoroeva into a silver-coloured VAZ-2114 and drove her away without any explanation. The driver was told to drive to "Chermenskii Krug" (a checkpoint on the administrative border between North Ossetia and Ingushetia, staffed by armed law enforcement officers) and wait for her. However, Zalina Elhoroeva did not appear.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Russian or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to establish Zalina Elhoroeva's whereabouts and ensure her safety;
- Expressing concern that she may have been subjected to enforced disappearance;
- Calling for a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into the circumstances of her possible enforced disappearance, including identifying and bringing to justice those responsible for it.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 04 FEBRUARY 2011 TO:

#### Minister of Interior

Lt-Gen A. F. Akhmetkhanov  
Ministry of Interior of North Ossetia  
Pushkinskaya street 10V  
Vladikavkaz 362004  
RSO-Alania, Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 8672 53 45 54  
Email: mvdosetia@rambler.ru

**Salutation: Dear Mr Minister**

#### Prosecutor of North Ossetia

Mr Vladimir Pavlovich Vekshin  
Prosecutor's Office of RSO-Alania  
Pushkinskaya street 8  
Vladikavkaz 362004  
Republic of North Ossetia - Alania  
Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 8672 53 23 72  
Email: info@procuror-osetia.ru

**Salutation: Dear Mr Prosecutor**

#### Head of UFSB RF for RSO-Alania

Maj-Gen Oleg Yatskov  
Directorate of the Federal Security  
Service for North Ossetia  
Mordovtseva street 6  
Vladikavkaz 362040  
RSO-Alania, Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 8672 53 41 76

**Salutation: Dear Maj-Gen Yatskov**

For all numbers above, if a person answers, say clearly "FAX".

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zalina Elhoroeva was travelling to Vladikavkaz to visit her brother, Timur Elhoroev, who had been transferred from a hospital to a pre-trial detention centre by a law enforcement agency earlier in December. He was in hospital following an incident on 18 November in Nazran when unknown men opened fire at a car in which he was travelling during which he was badly wounded and the driver killed. According to human rights centre Memorial, Timur Elhoroev's father is unaware of what charges have been made against his son.

Amnesty International has received numerous reports from Ingushetia, North Ossetia and across the North Caucasus in Russia of people being detained by masked members of law enforcement agencies who refuse to introduce themselves and explain the reason for the person's detention and where he/she is being taken to. In a number of cases, after a period of initial incommunicado detention the family later learns that their relative is under investigation and being held by police or other law enforcement agencies. In other cases, such persons' whereabouts have never become known to the family.

Enforced disappearance is a crime under international law violating the right to recognition as a person before the law, the right to liberty and the security of the person, the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right to life.

The security situation in the North Caucasus is volatile, with violence affecting Ingushetia and North Ossetia. Armed groups have been launching sporadic attacks against law enforcement officials, but have also targeted civilians indiscriminately in suicide bombings. In September, a car bomb in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia-Alania, reportedly killed at least 17 people and left over 100 injured. There are also regularly reported allegations that law enforcement officials use unlawful methods to combat armed violence which often involve violation of human rights. Alleged cases of disappearances, unlawful detention, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and extrajudicial execution are regularly reported from across the North Caucasus.

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