

Russia Briefing (EUR 46/023/2002) – Final Text

FRONT COVER TEXT:

Justice for everybody

Human rights in the Russian Federation

Amnesty International briefing

BACK COVER TEXT:

Amnesty International is campaigning to

- stop torture and ill-treatment
- end ‘disappearances’ and attacks on civilians in Chechnya
- combat impunity and ensure justice for the victims of human rights abuses
- increase protection for women, children and ethnic minorities in custody
- raise awareness of domestic violence and measures to combat it

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INSIDE TEXT:

***Justice for everybody: Human rights in the Russian Federation, an Amnesty International briefing* (AI Index: EUR 46/023/2002), first published October 2002, ISBN: 0-86210-317-7**

Front cover: A Chechen woman argues with soldiers as they check documents at a market in Grozny. © AP

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Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a worldwide voluntary activist movement working for human rights. It is independent of any government, political persuasion or religious creed. It does not support or oppose any government or political system, nor does it support or oppose the views of those whose rights it seeks to protect. It is concerned solely with the impartial protection of human rights.

Amnesty International's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

Amnesty International undertakes research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination. In this context it:

- seeks the release of prisoners of conscience: these are people detained for their political, religious or other conscientiously held beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour, language, national or social origin, economic status, birth or other status – who have not used or advocated violence;
- works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners;
- opposes without reservation the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- campaigns for an end to political killings and “disappearances”;
- calls on governments to refrain from unlawful killings in armed conflict;
- calls on armed political groups to end abuses such as the detention of prisoners of conscience, hostage-taking, torture and unlawful killings;
- opposes abuses by non-state actors where the state has failed to fulfil its obligations to provide effective protection;
- campaigns for perpetrators of human rights abuses to be brought to justice;
- seeks to assist asylum-seekers who are at risk of being returned to a country where they might suffer serious abuses of their human rights;
- opposes certain grave abuses of economic, social and cultural rights.

Amnesty International also seeks to:

- cooperate with other non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations;
- ensure control of international military, security and police relations, to prevent human rights abuses;
- organize human rights education and awareness raising programs.

Amnesty International is a democratic, self-governing movement with more than a million members and supporters in over 140 countries and territories. It is funded largely by its worldwide membership and public donations.

The Russian Federation

The Russian Federation emerged as a sovereign state from the collapsing Soviet Union in 1991.

A major nuclear power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and a member of the G8 grouping of wealthy industrialized countries, Russia remains an influential player on the international stage.

The Russian Federation is the largest country in the world in terms of area. It is divided into 89 federal administrative units, including 21 republics.

There are around 144 million people in the country from some 100 distinct ethnic or national backgrounds. These include ethnic Russians (84 per cent of the population), Tatars, Ukrainians, Chuvashians, Bashkirians, Belarusians, Moldovans and Kalmykians.

The majority religion is Russian Orthodox Christian. An estimated 19 per cent of the population are Muslims, while smaller numbers are Jews, Buddhists and members of other religious groups.

A new Constitution was adopted in 1993 and the Russian Federation became a federal presidential republic with a bicameral legislature. The current President, Vladimir Putin, was elected by popular vote in March 2000 and is serving a four-year term.

The Russian Federation has ratified numerous international human rights treaties including: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In 1991 the Chechen Republic (Chechnya) declared independence. Three years later, Russian forces were sent to Chechnya. The ensuing conflict lasted two years and cost thousands of lives. The Chechen capital, Grozny, suffered massive destruction. The Russian military crackdown failed to subdue Chechen forces and a compromise agreement was signed in 1996 to end a conflict that had increasingly lacked popular support in Russia.

In September 1999 the Russian authorities again sent troops to Chechnya. This followed attacks, reportedly by up to 1,000 Chechen fighters, in neighbouring Dagestan and a series of bombings of apartment buildings in Moscow and two other cities which were blamed by the Russian authorities on "Chechens". This second armed conflict in Chechnya is continuing to this day.

Campaign for Justice

The Russian Federation is in transition. Since 1991, profound changes have affected almost all aspects of life for the country's 144 million people.

Economic restructuring has been accompanied by dramatic increases in the level of poverty, as well as widespread corruption.

Politically, there is now greater freedom of expression. There has also been a rise in Russian and other nationalist and separatist movements.

The human rights landscape has been transformed since the 1970s. No longer are there thousands of prisoners of conscience languishing in gulags and psychiatric institutions because of their beliefs. The widespread use of the death penalty is also a thing of the past.

And yet human rights violations are still widespread, and the victims have little chance of seeing the perpetrators brought to justice. Torture and ill-treatment are virtually routine in police stations. Conditions in the country's disease-ridden and overcrowded pre-trial detention centres are generally so appalling that they amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. In the conflict in Chechnya, Russian forces have reportedly attacked civilians, and carried out "disappearances", extrajudicial executions, rape and other torture, without fear of punishment.

There have been a number of significant reforms, but much more remains to be done.

A moratorium on executions has been in place since 1996, but the death penalty has yet to be abolished.

Key international human rights treaties have been ratified, but are often not respected in practice.

A new Criminal Procedure Code, due to be introduced in July 2002, includes several positive changes to the justice system, but it is still unclear to what extent the new code will in practice improve protection for detainees.

As leaders of a major world power, the Russian authorities have a particularly important role in promoting respect for human rights. The Russian Federation is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. It is a leading producer and supplier of military, security and police equipment. It continues to exert considerable influence internationally, including in the development of human rights standards.

At this time of transition, Amnesty International is launching a major worldwide campaign to highlight the discrepancy between the human rights protection which those living in the Russian Federation have in international and national law, and the reality of widespread human rights abuses committed in a climate of impunity. Amnesty International members around the world will be urging the government to live up to its obligations to protect human rights, so that there is justice for everybody.

Torture and ill-treatment

Olga Staroverova was four months pregnant in December 1999 when she was reportedly tortured by police with electric shocks, beatings and cigarette burns. Her injuries and subsequent miscarriage were officially recorded in a medical statement, yet there has never even been an investigation into her allegations of torture.

Anyone, even a child, who is taken into police custody for questioning is at risk of torture and ill-treatment. Such gross violations of human rights are widespread throughout the country. One reason why these abuses are so persistent is that those responsible usually get away with their crimes.

People are at greatest risk of torture and ill-treatment in police custody during the hours immediately after arrest, before they are charged.

Methods of torture commonly reported include beatings, electric shocks, rape, the use of gas masks to induce near-suffocation, and tying detainees in painful positions.

The victims come from all walks of life, but members of ethnic minorities and the poor are most at risk.

Torture and the law

The Russian Federation has promised to uphold numerous international treaties that prohibit torture in all circumstances, including the UN Convention against Torture. The Russian Constitution states that international law takes precedence over domestic law. Despite this, the courts adhere to domestic law, which fails to criminalize certain acts of torture set out in Article 1 of the UN Convention against Torture. In February 2002 the Duma (parliament) voted against amending the criminal code to include a specific crime of torture.

Why torture happens

The poorly paid and inadequately trained police are under pressure to obtain confessions quickly. The authorities and society at large demand swift and tough action in response to rising fear of crime.

There is little to dissuade police from using torture. They often question suspects, including children, without a lawyer or any other witness in the room. The law does not require a lawyer to be present when a confession is signed. Suspects are rarely offered a medical examination before or after interrogation, and little is done to ensure that detainees are informed of their rights or that the constitutional requirement for a judicial review of detention within 48 hours of arrest is enforced.

In court, judges often in effect reward the police for their abuses by accepting confessions extracted under duress as valid evidence and dismissing allegations of torture out of hand.

No justice for the victims

Victims of torture rarely see justice done. Those who wish to lodge complaints must turn to the procuracy. However, the procuracy has had conflicting roles which has meant in reality that most victims have been denied the right to a fair and thorough investigation of their complaints and, ultimately, to justice.

The procuracy has been responsible for ordering arrests and pre-trial detention, conducting criminal investigations, and bringing cases to court. It is also responsible for ensuring that the rights and freedoms of suspects are respected. In practice, the latter role is subordinated to the first. There have been many allegations about collusion between the police and the procuracy to secure convictions using illegal means and to cover up complaints of torture and ill-treatment.

A new Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), due to be introduced on 1 July 2002, contains provisions that address some of these problems, such as the removal of the procuracy's power to order pre-trial detention. However, it remains to be seen what impact the new code will have in practice.

According to reports, only a small percentage of complaints of torture and ill-treatment submitted to the procuracy reach the courts. Most are rejected by the procuracy at the initial, informal investigation stage.

Torturers can also get away with their crimes because:

- Some victims do not make complaints because they do not know they can or because they fear retribution if they do.
- Delays in the complaints procedures mean that forensic and other evidence becomes unavailable or is lost.
- Officers accused of torture or their colleagues sometimes destroy or tamper with incriminating evidence.
- Witnesses as well as lawyers pursuing complaints about torture sometimes face intimidation by police.

All these factors combine to create a climate of impunity that allows torture to persist.

Some aspects of the new CPC may help to combat torture if the code is implemented as promised. What is needed is the political will to push through and monitor the necessary reforms to laws and institutions to ensure that the right of victims of torture and ill-treatment to an effective remedy is fully respected in each and every case.

Chechnya – human rights under attack

“... the current level of destruction suggests that Grozny has been the target of indiscriminate, disproportionate bombardment by the Russian forces.”

Lord Judd, member of the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, April 2000

Eighteen-year-old Kheda (Elza) Kungaeva was abducted from her home in the village of Tangi-Chu on the night of 26 March 2000 by Russian soldiers under the command of Colonel Yury Budanov. She died after Colonel Budanov took her to his tent for interrogation. Colonel Budanov confessed to killing Kheda Kungaeva, but alleged that he did so in a “state of temporary insanity”. The prosecution has ignored evidence that Kheda Kungaeva was raped before her death. Colonel Budanov was charged with homicide, kidnapping and abuse of power and was, to Amnesty International’s knowledge, the first Russian officer to be tried for crimes against civilians in Chechnya since the renewed conflict began in 1999. His trial, which started in February 2001, was still continuing at the time of writing.

Hundreds of people, including a 90-year-old man and several children, were detained by Russian soldiers during a raid on the town of Sernovodsk near the border with Ingushetia on 2 July 2001. The raid was reportedly carried out after five Russian soldiers were killed by a landmine. Many of those detained said that they were tortured or ill-treated; some said that the soldiers subjected them to electric shocks and set attack dogs on them. Most were released later that night, but about a hundred people were taken to a temporary detention facility. The fate and whereabouts of at least six people remain unknown.

Russian soldiers came to Rebaat Vakhaeva's home in Urus-Martan on 1 August 2000. They took her 25-year-old son, Kazbek Vakhaev, to the “Internat” detention facility. Rebaat Vakhaeva visited the facility every day to bring food and clothes for her son. Other prisoners told her that her son had been tortured during interrogation. On 13 August she was told that her son was no longer there. On 21 August Kazbek Vakhaev's decapitated body was found in the village of Goiskoe. Officials from the local procurator's office said that Kazbek Vakhaev had been kidnapped after his release on 14 August. The investigation into his death was reportedly closed because investigators could not establish who had detained or kidnapped him. Rebaat Vakhaeva is still waiting for justice; those responsible for her son's death have yet to be held to account.

The conflict in Chechnya has been characterized by widespread and credible reports that Russian forces have been responsible for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including "disappearances", extrajudicial executions and torture, including rape. These violations would be serious breaches of the Geneva Conventions and constitute war crimes.

Chechen forces have also committed abuses. For example, there have been reports that Chechen fighters have executed captured Russian soldiers. Such abuses would also constitute war crimes.

Some 300,000 people, the majority of them women and children, have fled their homes to escape the fighting. As at mid-2002, approximately 160,000 remained in temporary accommodation and in camps for internally displaced people, the majority in neighbouring

Ingushetia, where they faced severe overcrowding and harsh conditions. They have also come under pressure from the Russian authorities to return home whether or not it is safe for them to do so.

According to reports, Russian forces have arbitrarily detained, tortured or killed thousands of civilians. Most people who are detained by Russian forces are picked up during identity checks on civilian convoys travelling from Chechnya to Ingushetia or during military raids (so-called *zachistki* or "clean-up" raids) on populated areas. These raids are accompanied by widespread abuses against the civilian population. Civilians, including women and children, have reportedly been abducted, subjected to rape and other forms of torture, and killed.

Some military units reportedly black out the number plates or other identifying information on their vehicles during raids.

Detainees have been held in facilities that sometimes amount to little more than pits in the ground. They are denied access to relatives, lawyers and the outside world. Survivors have said that torture is routine and systematic. They have reported the rape of male and female detainees, beatings with hammers and clubs, electro-shock torture and exposure to tear gas.

The Russian authorities have proved very reluctant to provide information on the number of investigations and prosecutions. However, investigations into allegations of extrajudicial execution, "disappearances", torture and ill-treatment are rare. Those investigations that do take place are usually inadequate and hardly ever result in those responsible being prosecuted.

Far from holding the perpetrators to account, the Russian authorities are reportedly redeploying units widely believed to have been involved in human rights violations back to Chechnya for further tours of service.

Many Chechens remain deeply suspicious of the Russian authorities and have little faith that any complaint they bring will result in a prosecution. Many fear that making a complaint could expose them to further human rights violations. The Russian authorities have failed to take appropriate steps to counter this climate of fear and to encourage the victims of human rights violations to come forward and register complaints.

International criticism of human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law in Chechnya has often been muted, especially in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the USA and the subsequent US-led military intervention in Afghanistan, which was supported by the Russian government. The international community should encourage all sides to the Chechen conflict to abide by international humanitarian law and to take immediate steps to protect the civilian population.

The Russian authorities have allowed a climate of impunity to emerge in Chechnya which protects and encourages human rights abusers. For far too long the authorities have ignored their obligation to bring those responsible for human rights abuses to justice and to provide the victims with an effective remedy. It is time that the Russian Federation took steps to turn its paper commitments to human rights and justice into a reality.

Children's rights

Fourteen-year-old Olga Mazalova was covered in bruises when she spoke to an Amnesty International delegate visiting Tomsk prison colony for girls in July 1999. She said she had been beaten by guards in an isolation punishment cell a few days earlier.

Tens of thousands of children in Russia are languishing behind bars even though the authorities are obliged, under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to ensure that the "arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child... shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time." Children are routinely held for months or even years in pre-trial detention and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for relatively minor offences.

In mid-2001 there were more than 17,000 children serving prison sentences in 64 special colonies for juveniles, according to the Justice Ministry. Many more are held in pre-trial detention facilities. The vast majority of those in prison are poor or were living on the streets. Already victims of economic hardship or domestic violence, they are usually picked up by police on suspicion of petty crimes such as theft. Anatoly Semenov, for example, was 15 when he was sentenced by a court in Moscow in 1998 to five years' imprisonment for stealing a cigarette lighter.

Children who are detained are entitled to special protection based on the duty of the state to secure the best interests of the child. Yet children in Russian pre-trial detention centres are crammed into dirty, badly ventilated and vermin-infested cells.

Children are also entitled to special protection against torture and ill-treatment because their youth makes them particularly vulnerable to such abuse. Yet children are often interrogated by police after arrest without a lawyer or parent present. Amnesty International knows of a number of children who have been tortured or ill-treated in such circumstances. Children also suffer torture and ill-treatment in pre-trial detention centres and prisons. Those who abuse children's rights are rarely held to account.

A radical rethinking of the juvenile justice system is needed to restore the presumption of liberty for children, to make juvenile detention centres places of care and rehabilitation, rather than places of cruelty and retribution, and to safeguard all children in custody from torture and ill-treatment, in line with Russia's international legal obligations.

Violence against women

In February 2002 the helpline of Syostri (Sisters), a crisis centre for women, received a frantic call from neighbours of a woman living in Moscow. The neighbours had called the police to try to stop a fight between the woman and her violent husband, but the police had reportedly refused to come. Syostri contacted the police, but they still refused to intervene, saying it was a family matter and that no law was being broken.

Men who beat or rape their wives or commit other acts of domestic violence are unlikely to face prosecution in the Russian Federation. One reason for this is that the law does not recognize domestic violence as a distinct crime, and does not even allow officials to give perpetrators a warning through an administrative sentence or a fine.

The failure of the state to take measures to protect women from sexual abuse and violence in the home and to prosecute the perpetrators is particularly serious given the widespread reports of increasing domestic violence in Russia in recent years.

The Russian authorities recognize the prevalence of domestic violence – in early 2002 they stated that 14,000 women die every year at the hands of their husbands or other relatives – yet they have done little to address the problem. Nearly 50 versions of a national law to address domestic violence have failed to make any progress in parliament.

Holding the authorities accountable for abuses by non-state actors is crucially important in the struggle to protect and defend the human rights of women, children, racial minorities and others facing discrimination, including lesbians, gay men and bisexual and transgender people. Every day, discrimination manifests itself through violence, whether in the form of sexual or other abuse in the home or state institutions, in the trafficking of women and children, or racist attacks. Institutionalized discrimination in agencies involved in the administration of justice often means that the victims are unlikely to receive protection and support from the authorities, let alone see justice done.

Women also suffer violence by state agents. There are regular reports of the torture and ill-treatment of women in Russian police stations and prisons, and in the armed conflict in Chechnya women continue to suffer a wide range of abuses. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the abusers get away with their crimes.

In April and May 2002 a group of parliamentary deputies introduced a proposal to amend the Russian Criminal Code to criminalize male homosexuality and lesbianism. As at mid-2002 the vote in parliament was still pending. Institutionalizing discrimination can act as an official incitement to violence against lesbians and gay men in the community as a whole, whether in custody, on the street or in the home.

Ethnic minorities under attack

Six African asylum-seekers were attacked by a gang of “skinheads” wielding baseball bats and broken bottles in August 2001. The attack took place outside a refugee centre in Moscow run by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). One of the asylum-seekers, Massa Mayoni, an Angolan national, was beaten unconscious and died in hospital a few days later. In November 2001 a young man was remanded in custody in connection with the attack on charges of “serious, intentional wounding, leading to accidental death” However, by mid-2002, the charges had been reduced to “hooliganism”, on the basis of a second expert opinion on the cause of death, and the young man was released. The UNHCR's representative in Moscow called on the police and the authorities to take steps to stop the increasing number of attacks on members of national and ethnic minorities in the city.

People belonging to certain ethnic groups or nationalities, including Tajiks and Chechens, are commonly stereotyped by Russian law enforcement agencies as “terrorists” or drug dealers. The result of this “racial profiling” has been a widespread police practice of targeting certain people for checks of their homes and papers in relation to “registration”.

In 1991 the “propiska” system, under which people had to obtain official permission to register or change their place of residence, was abolished in favour of a system of simple notification. However, variants of the old system are still being enforced by some local governments, including in Moscow. People who fall foul of the “propiska” system – often members of specific ethnic groups and refugees from outside the former Soviet Union – are particularly vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and subsequently to torture and ill-treatment by police.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has expressed serious concern that members of “visible minorities”, particularly in big cities and some southern regions, appeared to be disproportionately subject to checks of their personal documents and homes. These checks were reported often to result in requests for bribes, extortion of money and the imposition of other arbitrary sanctions. The Commission also noted reports of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment and torture.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports that attacks on members of ethnic minorities by gangs, including “skinhead” gangs, are not promptly and thoroughly investigated. In several cases known to Amnesty International, police were reluctant to classify the attacks as racially motivated despite strong indications that they were.

The authorities have failed to take appropriate action to combat racially motivated violence and discriminatory policing. This creates a climate in which police officers and others believe they can abuse members of ethnic or national minorities with impunity.

What you can do

Amnesty International calls on the **RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES** to implement the following measures to improve the protection of human rights:

- Show a clear political commitment to respect, promote and protect fundamental human rights for everybody and to give an unequivocal message that violations of these rights will not be tolerated.
- Ensure that prompt, impartial, independent and thorough investigations of complaints are carried out and that those responsible are brought to justice in line with international human rights standards.
- Improve access to justice for victims of human rights abuses in the Russian Federation by publicizing widely the remedies available. Increase public awareness by making public the reports of treaty bodies including the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Criminalize torture in all its forms, and ensure that national law provides for appropriate punishments for these offences and for reparations for victims.
- Combat the conditions that facilitate torture in custody by, for example, ensuring that all detainees are informed of their rights and have prompt and unimpeded access to a lawyer, including during all interrogations.
- Establish an independent and impartial body to investigate allegations of torture and prosecute those responsible.
- Urgently address severe overcrowding and harsh conditions in pre-trial detention facilities which amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.
- Protect ethnic minorities from arbitrary detention, particularly in the context of checking residence permits or "propiska", and from torture and ill-treatment by police. Steps to be taken should include bringing to justice the officers involved in such abuses and instituting training and monitoring programs to ensure that police do not act in a racist or discriminatory way.
- Change current practice so that children are held in detention only as a measure of last resort, and introduce training for all law enforcement officials on the special needs and rights of children in custody, as spelled out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Make domestic violence a distinct criminal offence and introduce training for law enforcement officials to recognize and prosecute violence against women, including domestic violence and trafficking of women.

Amnesty International makes the following recommendations in relation to the conflict in the **CHECHEN REPUBLIC**:

- Amnesty International calls on the Russian authorities to conduct comprehensive and impartial investigations into "disappearances"; extrajudicial executions; torture, including rape; and other abuses committed by Russian forces and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials.
- Amnesty International calls upon both Russian and Chechen forces to end abuses against civilians and to abide by international humanitarian law.

Amnesty International is seeking the broadest possible mobilization of individuals, groups and community organizations to achieve these changes. We welcome comment and feedback on how we can most effectively make progress on these issues.

Please support our campaign for *Justice for everybody*, by:

- Helping to raise awareness about human rights violations in the Russian Federation.

Distribute Amnesty International's publications. Raise the issue with any relevant organizations you are in contact with. Write letters to the press about human rights violations in the Russian Federation.

- Urging the Russian government to respect and protect human rights.

Write to: Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, The Kremlin, Moscow, Russian Federation.

Urge him to promote respect and protect human rights in the Russian Federation by taking the steps outlined above.

Write to the Russian Ambassador or other Russian diplomatic representative in your country expressing Amnesty International's concerns and asking them to forward these concerns to the relevant authorities in the Russian Federation.

- Contacting Amnesty International's office in your country and joining the campaign for human rights in the Russian Federation.

- Visiting the campaign Internet website at: <http://www.amnesty.org/russia>

How to obtain campaign publications...

This Amnesty International briefing, *Justice for everybody: human rights in the Russian Federation*, is one of a series of publications produced by Amnesty International for its 2002-2003 campaign against human rights abuses in the Russian Federation.

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Russia Briefing (EUR 46/023/2002) – Photo Captions and Credits – final version

COVER

A Chechen woman argues with soldiers as they check documents at a market in Grozny.

© AP

Page 2 – MAP

© Courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, USA

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Demonstrators rally in support of NTV, Russia's only national independent television network, prior to its takeover by a state-controlled gas company. The sign reads 'Children of Russia for NTV'. Journalists, fearing that their independent voice was under threat, joined the rally. April 2001.

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Prison conditions

Inmates of Women's Prison No. 15 in Samara return to the prison from the sewing factory where they work. Up to a million men, women and children are in prisons and pre-trial detention centres in the Russian Federation, many held in conditions that amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Conditions are particularly harsh in the pre-trial detention centres owing to chronic overcrowding. Cells are filthy and pest-ridden, with poor lighting and ventilation, and contagious diseases are rife (over 100,000 inmates have tuberculosis). Food and medical supplies are inadequate and women are reportedly not provided with sanitary supplies. Prisoners are also beaten and otherwise abused by guards and fellow inmates.

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A photographer is restrained by police in Moscow's Red Square on 26 April 2002 during protests against the government's nuclear energy policies. Journalists covering the event were beaten and had their cameras confiscated.

© Vlad Tupikin

Page 5 – BOTTOM

Police officers specializing in tax offences use force in a Moscow street to arrest members of a group suspected of illegally selling cars in exchange for hard currency, 1998.

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Below: A woman in Chechnya grieves over the body of her son. Her daughter and granddaughter were also killed.

© Paul Lowe/Magnum Photos

Pages 6 and 7 – CENTRE

Centre: A woman in Chechnya clutches her keys in front of the remains of her home which was bombed by Russian forces. Her mother was killed in the attack.

© Paul Lowe/Magnum Photos

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Above: Chechen children in Karabulak refugee camp, Ingushetia, listen as an explosives expert talks to them about the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), and instructs them on what to do if they find a device. The loss of the lower limbs and of eyesight are the most frequent consequences of accidents involving these weapons.

© Reuters

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Below: A girl in Ingushetia stands at the entrance to a former chicken farm now used to house people fleeing the fighting in Chechnya. November 2001.

© Paula Allen

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Page and inset:

Boys look through the bars of a holding cell after being picked up by police for loitering in a train station in Orekhovo-Zuevo, Moscow Region, in February 2002. The number of children abandoned by their families or forced to run away because of poverty or domestic violence increased dramatically in the 1990s.

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Page 9 – TOP

Workers at the Center “Syostri” in Moscow which provides help and support to women who have suffered sexual assault.

© Center “Syostri”

Page 9 – BOTTOM

Below: A leaflet by the non-governmental organization ANNA, which is dedicated to the elimination of domestic violence in Russia.

© ANNA Center

Page 10 – TOP

At a Moscow market a police officer escorts street vendors, who allegedly did not have the correct registration documents, to a local police station.

© AP

Page 10 – BOTTOM

Adefers Dessu and his wife, Sarah, pictured here with their refugee documents, were beaten in Moscow in February 2001 by a group of young people armed with chains. Like many victims of racist attacks in Russia, Adefers and Sarah faced reluctance by both police and medical staff to register the incident as racially motivated. The couple, who came to Russia to escape political persecution in their native Ethiopia and Eritrea, work as volunteers in a soup kitchen in Moscow which helps provide hot food to the city's elderly and homeless people.

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