

URGENT ACTION

EVIDENCE AGAINST ACTIVIST LIKELY FABRICATED

Civil society activist Ruslan Kutaev has been detained by the authorities in Chechnya after organising a conference in commemoration of Stalin's deportations from the Caucasus, and reportedly tortured.

Ruslan Kutaev was arrested in Achkhoy-Martan in the Chechen Republic, Russian Federation, by some 30 armed men on the 20 February accused of possessing heroin. Among the men were reportedly the security guards for the Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, police and men with no identifying insignia. Ruslan Kutaev was delivered to a police station in Grozny at around 1am on 21 February. He told the lawyer who was subsequently able to see him that before his arrival he had been taken to the building of the Presidential Administration in the centre of Grozny, where he was placed in a cellar, and was undressed, beaten, and tortured using electric shocks. He was also issued with threats in relation to his family members. A member of the NGO, Committee against Torture, was able to visit Ruslan Kutaev on 24 February and documented his severe bruising. Amnesty International has also seen video footage taken in custody, in which Kutaev can be seen with large bruises on his body and a strangely angled rib sticking out under his skin.

Ruslan Kutaev informed his lawyers that he is suffering from severe pain in his head and jaw. A medical report issued on 13 March stated that he had damage to one of his ribs. When Ruslan Kutaev arrived at the police station he had already confessed to being in possession of three grams of heroin and later confirmed his confession in the courtroom. However, his earlier unofficial incommunicado detention and ill-treatment indicate that he had been under pressure to make such a confession. There are frequent allegations of police planting drugs on detainees in Russia in order to justify their arrest and subsequent prosecution, when there is no other criminal evidence against the accused. Ruslan Kutaev has no history of any drug use and in any case he would have been unlikely to have any illegal substances on his person because he knew he could be targeted by the authorities for his activism. He remains in a detention centre in Grozny.

Please write immediately in Russian or English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to ensure that Ruslan Kutaev is not subjected to torture or any other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to instigate an immediate, impartial and effective investigation into allegations that evidence against Ruslan Kutaev was fabricated, as well as allegations of his unlawful detention, torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to ensure that Ruslan Kutaev receives all necessary medical treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 01 MAY 2014 TO:

Prosecutor General

Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika

Prosecutor General's Office

ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a

125993 Moscow GSP- 3

Russian Federation

Fax: +7 495 987 58 41; +7 495 692 17

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Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Chairman of the Investigative Committee

Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin

Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation

Tekhnicheskii pereulok, dom 2

105005 Moscow, Russian Federation

Fax: +7499 265 90 77; +7499 265 97 75

Salutation: Dear Chairman

Fax: +7499 265 90 77; +7499 265 97 75

Salutation: Dear Chairman

And copies to:

Head of the Chechen Republic

Ramzan Akhmadovich Kadyrov

Administration of the President and

Government of the Republic of

Chechnya, Ul. Garazhnaia, 10. Grozny

364000 Republic of Chechnya

Russian Federation

Fax: +7 8712 223085 (if answered,

please say "FAX" or "PREEMEETI FAX")

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ruslan Kutaev is a well-known civil society activist from the Chechen Republic in the North Caucasus, in the Russian Federation.

Whereas the Chechen Ministry of the Interior has claimed that Ruslan Kutaev was detained on suspicion of illegal drug possession, on 25 February, the Head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov reportedly stated on public television that Ruslan Kutaev had been arrested because of his involvement in an unauthorized conference in memory of the victims of deportations from the Caucasus under Stalin 70 years ago.

Within several days from 23 February 1944 onwards, the entire ethnic Chechen population was forcibly transported from the Caucasus to the Central Asia and other distant parts of the then Soviet Union as a punitive measure for its purported support of the occupying German forces during the Second World War. Many other ethnic groups in the Caucasus and elsewhere shared this fate. Scores of people died as a result. They were not allowed to return until after Stalin's death.

The Head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, reportedly ordered that no activities commemorating the victims of Stalin's deportation be held this year. In other North Caucasus republics, such as Dagestan and Ingushetia, commemorative events were reportedly deferred to 24 February or forbidden by local authorities. Independent commentators suggested that this was done to avoid such events coinciding with the official closing ceremony of the Olympic Games in Sochi on 23 February, 2014.

In spite of the warnings, on 18 February Ruslan Kutaev and other activists and scholars held a conference titled "The deportation of the Chechen people. What it was and whether it is possible to forget?" The next day, 19 February, those who took part in the conference were summoned by a senior member of Ramzan Kadyrov's administration for a meeting with Ramzan Kadyrov at which he reportedly verbally reprimanded them. Ruslan Kutaev was the only one who did not go.

Name: Ruslan Kutaev

Gender m/f: m

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