

URGENT ACTION

NEW DEATH THREATS AGAINST DAGESTANI LAWYERS

Two lawyers in the North Caucasus Republic of Dagestan, Russia, continue to receive death threats in relation to their work on a high profile murder case. Their complaints are not being effectively investigated by the authorities.

Lawyers **Sapiyat Magomedova** and **Musa Suslanov** in Dagestan, Russia, are facing increasingly intense anonymous death threats in connection with their work on a case of five men killed in March 2012. The case involves allegations against some high profile individuals. On 3 May 2014 a man related to one of these individuals arrived at the office of Sapiyat Magomedova and made a thinly veiled threat, saying: "I do not want to learn that something has happened to you". Around the middle of April 2014 Sapiyat Magomedova posted an update on the Facebook group 'My Dagestan' (Мой Дагестан) and an anonymous person commented that she was being "restless" and that she would be helped to "find peace". The comment was removed by the administrator. Sapiyat Magomedova told Amnesty International that at the time of the Facebook post she and her colleague were told by a reliable confidential source that a hit man had been hired to kill them.

These are just the latest in a series of threats the two lawyers have received and of which they had previously informed the authorities. In response, in June 2013 the authorities opened a criminal case under Article 296 of the Criminal Code i.e. "Threats or acts of violence in connection with the administration of justice or preliminary investigation". However, in September 2013 the case was re-qualified as a less serious crime, under Article 119 as "Threat of death or serious physical harm" in relation to the general public. According to the lawyers, there has been no effective, if any, investigation of their complaint, and a year later no investigator has ever approached them to take any evidence or testimonies.

Please write immediately in Russian, English or your own language calling on the Russian authorities to:

- Promptly, effectively and impartially investigate the threats made against Sapiyat Magomedova and Musa Suslanov and ensure that anyone found responsible is brought to justice;
- Ensure the safety and security of Sapiyat Magomedova and Musa Suslanov and ensure they are able to continue their work;
- Ensure all lawyers in Russia are able to perform their professional duties without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference in accordance with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 JUNE 2014 TO:

Chairman of the Investigative Committee
of the Russian Federation

Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin
Investigative Committee of the Russian
Federation, Tekhnicheskii pereulok, d.2
105005 Moscow, Russian Federation
Fax: +7 499 265 9077

Salutation: Dear Chairman

Chairman of the Investigative Committee
of the Region of Dagestan

Eduard Valer'evich Kabuneev,
pr. Imama Shamilya, d. 70
Mahatchkala, 367015
Dagestan Region, Russian Federation
Fax: +7 872 262 0507

Salutation: Dear Chairman

And copies to:

President of the Federal Bar Association
of the Russian Federation

Yevgenii Vasilyevich Semenyanko
Sivtsev Vrazhek, d.43
119002 Moscow,
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 787 2836

Email: advpalata@mail.ru

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. This is the first update of UA 147/13. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/016/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sapiyat Magomedova and Musa Suslanov have long worked on cases involving corruption and allegations of human rights violations by members of law enforcement agencies, and have received repeated threats in connection to their work.

Human rights violations such as enforced disappearances, unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment are regularly reported from the North Caucasus. The Russian authorities systematically fail to investigate such violations effectively and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Criminal defence lawyers who represent victims of such violations, as well as lawyers defending individuals suspected of membership of armed groups, particularly those who report torture of criminal suspects, are often subjected to intimidation, harassment, improper interference and reprisals in connection with their work. On repeated occasions in recent years Amnesty International has raised concern in connection with death threats and physical violence which lawyers in the region have faced. Sapiyat Magomedova has been the subject of another previous separate Urgent Action after she faced criminal prosecution following her official complaint and demands for an investigation into a personal assault she suffered at the hands of police officials (see EUR 46/033/2011, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/033/2011/en>).

In March 2013, Amnesty International published a report *Confronting the circle of injustice: threats and pressure faced by lawyers in the North Caucasus* (AI Index: EUR 46/003/2013) which documents an atmosphere of intimidation and harassment of criminal defence lawyers in the region, and highlights numerous cases of threats and physical violence by members of law enforcement agencies against lawyers in the North Caucasus in connection with their professional activities.

Principle 16 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers states that “governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.” Also, “[w]here the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities” (Principle 17).

Name: Sapiyat Magomedova (f) and Musa Suslanov (m)

Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 147/13 Index: EUR 46/034/2014 Issue Date: 7 May 2014