

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 46/001/2004

UA 21/04

"Disappearance"/ Fear of torture and ill-treatment

14 January 2004

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Khamzat Osmaev (m), aged 50

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Khamzat Osmaev has "disappeared" after he was detained on 12 January 2004 in the republic of Ingushetia, apparently by members of the Russian federal forces. Amnesty International fears that he may be tortured or ill-treated.

According to the Russian human rights organization *Memorial*, at about 5pm a white vehicle with tinted windows and no number plates stopped outside the medical massage centre Khamzat Osmaev runs in the village of Plievo, on the outskirts of the Ingush capital, Nazran. Seven masked men in military uniforms got out, seized Khamzat Osmaev (who was outside the building, trying to start his own car), forced him into their vehicle and drove off in the direction of Nazran.

Witnesses say the men spoke Russian with no accent, and Amnesty International believes they may have been members of the Russian federal forces.

Khamzat Osmaev fled from the Chechen capital Grozny to Ingushetia in 1999, where he works as a physiotherapist. In Chechnya he had been a relatively well-known athlete, and it is alleged that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) has a picture of him from the early 1990s, where he can be seen at a ceremony standing next to a man now known to be a Chechen field commander. About a year ago, Khamzat Osmaev was warned not to go to Chechnya, as there might be an FSB warrant for his arrest.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the last few years, Amnesty International has received regular reports about arbitrary arrests and "disappearances" during the armed conflict in the Chechen Republic. People who "disappear" are often tortured and ill-treated. During the last year there have been more and more reports that military raids, during which serious human rights violations have been committed, have started to spread across the border from Chechnya to Ingushetia, where refugee camps, Chechen settlements as well as Ingush villages have been targeted.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Khamzat Osmaev;
- calling on the authorities to establish whether Khamzat Osmaev has been detained by federal forces and, if so, urging them to either release him immediately or charge him with a recognisably criminal offence in a court of law, in line with Russia's obligations under international human rights law;
- calling on the authorities to establish the whereabouts of Khamzat Osmaev and inform his relatives;
- if it is established that federal forces were responsible, urging the authorities to immediately initiate a criminal investigation into the "disappearance" of Khamzat Osmaev and to bring those responsible to justice in a court of law.

**APPEALS TO:**

Procurator General of the Russian Federation

Vladimir USTINOV

General Procuracy of the Russian Federation

Ul. B. Dimitrovka 15a

103793 Moscow K-31

Russian Federation

**Telegram:** Procurator General of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Fax:** + 7 095 292 8848 (if someone answers say "fax please")

**Salutation:** Dear Procurator General

Procurator of the Republic of Ingushetia

M.V. Belkhoroev

Procuracy of the Republic of Ingushetia

Ul. Fabrichnaia 3

Nazran

Russian Federation

**Fax:** + 7 873 222 1724 (if someone answers say "fax please")

**Salutation:** Dear Procurator

**COPIES TO:**

Director General of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation Nikolay PATRUSHEV,

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 101000 g. Moskva

Bolshaya Lubyanka 1/3

Federalnaya Sluzhba bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Russian Federation

**Telegrams:** Generalnomu direktoru FSB, PATRUSHEVU N., Moskva, Russia

**Faxes:** + 7 095 975 2470

President of the Republic of Ingushetia

Murat ZIAZIKOV

Administration of the President of the Republic of Ingushetia

366 720 Magas

Republic of Ingushetia

Russian Federation

**Fax:** +7 8734 55 11 55/ +7 8732 22 55 11

and to diplomatic representatives of the Russian Federation accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 February 2004.