

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 46/12/00
Distribution: PG/SC

To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / Europe Program
Date: 7 April 2000

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Detention four health professionals
Russian Federation (Chechen Republic)**

Keywords: health professionals / fear of torture / incommunicado detention / arbitrary arrest

Summary

Amnesty International is concerned by the reported detention of four health professionals in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. The four men - Abubakar Ismailov, Samrudy Djabrailov, Aslanbek Zelimkhanovich Djankhutov and Mussa Goitaev - are reportedly detained incommunicado in "filtration camps" where, Amnesty International fears, they may be tortured or ill-treated.

Recommended Action

Please send faxes or express/airmail letters in Russian or your own language to the addresses below:

- introducing yourself as a concerned health professional
- urging the Russian government to immediately make public the whereabouts and state of health of Abubakar Ismailov, Samrudy Djabrailov, Aslanbek Zelimkhanovich Djankhutov and Mussa Goitaev and to explain the legal basis for their arrest and detention;
- urging the authorities to grant them immediate access to their families, lawyers of their own choice and medical care;
- asking the authorities to release them, unless they are officially charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- asking the authorities to initiate an investigation into their reported incommunicado detention and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the Russian government immediately to make public the names, whereabouts, current state of health and the charges brought against everyone detained in all secret "filtration camps".

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 4 June 2000, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att.: medical team).

ADDRESSES

Please try to fax during office hours (06.00 to 14.00 hours GMT) when fax connections are more reliable.

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir PUTIN

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, g. Moskva, Kreml

Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii

Russian Federation

Faxes: + 7 095 206 6277

Salutation: Dear President

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

Faxes: + 7 095 975 2470

Salutation: Dear Director General

Acting Procurator General of the Russian Federation

Vladimir USTINOV

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103793 g. Moskva K-31

Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d15a, Generalnaya Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii

Russian Federation

Faxes: + 7 095 292 88 48

Salutation: Dear Acting Procurator General

Copies

Please send copies of your letters to the address below:

Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation

Igor Ivanov

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, g. Moskva 121200, Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 32/34

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del RF, Ministru IVANOVU I.

Russian Federation

Faxes: + 7 095 230 21 30

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

PUBLIC

Date: 7 April 2000

Detention four health professionals
Russian Federation (Chechen Republic)

Amnesty International is concerned by the reported detention of four health professionals in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation: Abubakar Ismailov, medical doctor at Hospital No 2 in Grozny, Samrudy Djabrailov, electrician, Aslanbek Zelimkhanovich Djankhutov, ambulance driver and Mussa Goitaev, ambulance driver. The four men are reportedly detained incommunicado in "filtration camps", where Amnesty International fears they may be tortured or ill-treated.

They were detained by Russian forces on 2 February 2000, together with surgeon Dr. Omar Khambiev, (the Chechen Minister of Health), and 20 other members of his medical team. Some 81 sick and wounded civilians in their care were reportedly detained with them, and all were said to have been ill-treated by the Russian forces at the time. They were apparently first taken to the Chechen village of Tolstoy-Yurt, where they were held for two days in a fruit warehouse. From there they were reportedly taken to Chernokozovo "filtration camp". Apart from the four men named above, all members of the medical team have reportedly been released. There is no information about the current whereabouts of the 81 civilian patients.

Aslanbek Djankhutov is reportedly held in a camp in the city of Pyatigorsk, in Russia's Stavropol Territory. Mussa Goitaev is in another camp in Stavropol Territory, in the town of Georgievsk. Samrudy Djabrailov and Abubakar Ismailov are also believed to be in "filtration camps", but there is no detailed information about their whereabouts and state of health.

Background information

Russian forces are reported to be constantly detaining people in Chechnya at checkpoints and in the territories under their control, either during so-called "cleansing operations" in newly-occupied towns or during identity checks on civilian convoys travelling from Chechnya to neighbouring Ingushetia. People are most often detained for not having proper registration and a residence permit, or on suspicion of belonging to armed Chechen groups. Women are also detained on suspicion of being related to Chechen fighters. Although the Russian forces claimed to have rescinded the order announced on 11 January 2000 which allowed them to detain any Chechen male aged between 10 and 65 on suspicion of being a fighter, witnesses claim that children as young as 10 continue to be detained during "filtration".

Location of "filtration" camps

People detained by Russian forces are then sent to various secret "filtration camps". Amnesty International has received reports of the following locations of such secret "filtration camps":

- the pre-trial detention centre (SIZO), known as the "White Swan" (*Beliy Lebed*), in the city of Pyatigorsk, in Russia's Stavropol Territory;
- the SIZO in the city of Stavropol;
- on the premises of a former school in the town of Urus-Martan (the so-called "Internat");
- a makeshift detention facility in the village of Znamenskoye, allegedly located in the basement of a building situated behind the the local government building;

- at the Russian army checkpoint in the village of Tolstoy-Yurt - it is apparently a pit dug in the ground;
- a fruit warehouse in Tolstoy-Yurt;
- in the village of Gorogorsk, on the premises of a former oil factory (known as "NGDU");
- four train carriages parked in the Chechen village of Stanitsa Chervloyonnaya;
- in the village of Kadi-Yurt;
- and a poultry processing plant and the basement of the "Chekhkar" café in the Chechen village of Chiri-Yurt.

Other "filtration camps" are reported to be in Chernokozovo, in the towns of Mozdok and Grigorievsk in Stavropol Territory, and in the Chechen capital, Grozny, including two detention facilities in the Leninsky district of Grozny, in the buildings of the car factory there (in buildings "PAP-1" and "PAP-5").

Amnesty International has the names of 31 people known to be currently detained in the train carriages at Kadyr-Yurt, who were transferred from the Chernokozovo "filtration camp", and the names of a further 30 men and women allegedly transferred from Chernokozovo to the train carriages and from there to the prison hospital at the SIZO in Pyatigorsk. One of this second group, Movladi Idrisov, reportedly died after he was moved to the Pyatigorsk prison hospital.

Amnesty International is concerned that people arbitrarily detained in such camps, without access to their relatives, lawyers, or the outside world, are especially at risk of torture and ill-treatment. Former detainees at the Chernokozovo camp gave testimonies that have recently come to light, alleging that they were tortured and ill-treated in the camp. Amnesty International has documented reports of the following methods of torture being used in "filtration camps" during the current conflict: rape of men and women detainees, electric shocks, beatings with hammers and sticks, tear gas, sawing off the detainee's teeth, and beating detainees on the ears so that their ear-drums burst.

Medical ethics and human rights

Medical personnel are widely regarded to be protected during conflicts in their capacity as medical practitioners. Violations of medical neutrality are prohibited by the Geneva Conventions and Protocols. Amnesty International has no details of any charges laid against the medical personnel listed above but fears that their arrests are not connected with commission of any crimes. It is seeking to clarify the situation of the detained health personnel and meanwhile is seeking assurances that their physical security will be guaranteed.

Publications

In December 1999 Amnesty International published a report on human rights abuses taking place in the context of the armed conflict in Chechnya: *Russian Federation, Chechnya - For the Motherland. Reported Grave Breaches of International Humanitarian Law. Persecution of ethnic Chechens in Moscow* [AI index: EUR 46/46/99].

<http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aipub/1999/EUR/44604699.htm>

In February 2000, the US organization Physicians for Human Rights also published a report on abuses perpetrated against Chechen civilians by Russian forces. The report gives details of a number of violations of medical neutrality. (*Random Survey of Displaced Chechens*, Physicians for Human Rights, Boston, 26 February 2000) For further information, please see:

http://www.phrusa.org/research/chechen_displaced.html