

PUBLIC

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UA 338/02

Health concern/  
Torture and ill-treatment

19 November 2002

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Sergei A.Semeikin, (m) aged 19  
Kliment S.Kokorin, (m) aged 19  
Ruslan S.Solodukhin (m)  
Vladimir Yu.Pisarev (m)  
Aleksandr Kireev (m)

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Amnesty International is concerned for the health and welfare of the five young students named above. They are being held in prison colonies in Belgorod, South West Russia, where due to the lack of appropriate clothing, food and medication, their health is deteriorating.

Sergei A. Semeikin, who suffers from serious kidney problems, underwent renal surgery in September 2002. According to reports, he has since been denied appropriate aftercare treatment and has been handcuffed to his bed in the Belgorod Regional Hospital for several weeks. Kliment S. Kokorin is also suffering from serious health problems and together with Aleksandr Kireev is said to be suicidal.

The five men plus Maksim Ovshcharov, whose current whereabouts are unknown, were detained between 10 and 11 February 2000. The students were accused of raping a young man in the toilet of their institute in February 2000. Information received by Amnesty International suggests that the rape did not take place. The young men were detained by the police, who reportedly tortured them in order to make them confess. None of the young men were accompanied by a lawyer when first interrogated. Their parents were not informed of their detention, even though two of the detained were under 18 at the time.

In April 2000 the six students were released, but five of them were re-arrested between 30 May and 1 June 2001. Maksim Ovshcharov heard about the arrests and went into hiding. During the time of their first arrest, Kliment S. Kokorin and Aleksandr Kireev signed a confession under duress which was later used during their trial in July 2001. The five students were each sentenced to between eight and eight-and-a-half years imprisonment.

The young men's case was reported by journalist and possible prisoner of conscience Olga Kitova (see UA 158/01 EUR 46/015/2001, 25 June 2001). It is feared that they were sentenced in order to silence her.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has received numerous reports that people in the Russian Federation have been forced under duress to confess to a crime they did not commit. The police often questioned suspects, including children, without a lawyer or any other witness in the room. In court, judges often accept confessions extracted under duress as valid evidence and dismiss allegations of torture out of hand.

Under international human rights standards, children (those aged under 18 years) who are detained are entitled to special protection based on the duty of the state to secure the best interests of the child. Other international standards also require the state to ensure that children are not subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

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

- calling for them to be given access to appropriate medical treatment and humane living conditions;
- expressing concern for the health and welfare of the young students, who are being held in poor conditions which is affecting their health;
- expressing concern at reports that the police allegedly tortured the young students in order to make them confess;

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- calling for a prompt and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture, for the results to be made public and for anyone found responsible brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation  
Vladimir Ustinov  
General Procuracy of the Russian Federation  
Ul. Bolshaia Dmitrovka d. 15 a,  
103793  
Moscow  
Russian Federation  
**Fax: +7 095 292 88 48**  
**Salutation: Dear General Procurator**

Presidential Representative of the Central Federal District  
G. S. Poltavchenko  
Staraiia Ploshchad d. 4  
103 132  
Moscow  
Russian Federation  
**Fax: +7 095 206 71 13 (if someone answers, please ask for the fax tone)**  
**Salutation: Dear Presidential Representative**

**COPIES TO:**

Presidential Human Rights Commission of the Russian Federation  
Ella Pamfilova  
Presidential Commission for Human Rights  
Ipatevskii per. 4/10  
103132  
Moscow  
Russian Federation  
**Fax: +7 095 206 48 55**

Head of the Regional Administration of Belgorod  
Ye. S. Savchenko  
Pl. Revolutsii 4  
308005 Belgorod  
Belgorodskaia Oblast'  
Russian Federation  
**Fax. +7 0722 22 33 43**  
**E-Mail: moscow@bel.ru**  
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 31 December 2002