

EXTERNAL

17 September 1992

Yevgeny LUKIN

Azerbaijani Republic

Moscow Radio announced on 9 September 1992 that Yevgeny Lukin, a Russian officer, has been sentenced to death in the Azerbaijani Republic. There is very little information on this case.

According to the report Lieutenant Yevgeny Lukin was sentenced to be shot by the military collegium of the Azerbaijani Supreme Court. The exact date of the death sentence is, however, not known, nor is the charge. The Defence Ministry and the Committee for the Affairs of Service Members and their Families of the Russian Federation are said to have addressed Abulfaz Elchibey, the President of the Azerbaijani Republic with a request to spare the life of Lieutenant Yevgeny Lukin. The Procurator General of the Russian Federation is reported to have informed the Russian President Boris Yeltsin of the death sentence and to have petitioned for help.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and without reservation, on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Amnesty International is appealing to the authorities in the Azerbaijani Republic to commute the death sentence passed on Yevgeny Lukin.

Background information

In a letter to Amnesty International in September 1991 the Azerbaijani Minister of Justice wrote that abolition of the death penalty in the republic would be premature. Nevertheless, the Minister indicated that Azerbaijan would endorse the recent reduction in the number of capital crimes under the then USSR law when it adopted "in the future" a new republican criminal code. This republican criminal code would reduce the number of offences carrying the death penalty from 18 in peacetime to five; high treason, premeditated murder under aggravated circumstances, rape of a minor under aggravated circumstances, serious crimes committed against peace and humanity; and the kidnapping of children entailing grave consequences. In a follow-up letter to the Minister of Justice in April 1992 Amnesty International asked if the proposed exemption of women and minors from the death penalty and the proposed reduction outlined by the Minister had now passed into law in Azerbaijan.

The last execution in Azerbaydzhan known to Amnesty International took place in 1990, although in the absence of official statistics it is possible that there have been other executions since then. Amnesty International currently knows of at least eight other people sentenced to death for murder in Azerbaydzhan.