

EXTERNAL

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Fear of imminent execution / Legal concern

21 June 1996

GEORGIABadri Zarandia

On 17 June 1996 political prisoner Badri Zarandia was sentenced to death by the Supreme Court in the former Soviet republic of Georgia. He has no right of appeal, and his only recourse against execution is to petition President Shevardnadze for clemency. Unofficial sources also claim that Badri Zarandia, who had a leg amputated in detention, and his five co-defendants were ill-treated in order to force a confession.

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. The denial of the right of appeal in this case also violates the internationally recognized right to appeal to a court of higher jurisdiction in capital cases.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Badri Zarandia is a supporter of Georgia's former President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who was ousted in 1992 but staged an abortive attempt to regain power in 1993.

The former president's supporters briefly took control of large areas in the west of the country at that time, before fleeing or surrendering. A former commander of the western town of Zugdidi when it was controlled by pro-Gamsakhurdia troops, Badri Zarandia was sentenced to death for treason in connection with the 1993 uprising. His five co-defendants received prison sentences of between 13 and 15 years.

Georgia imposed a moratorium on the death penalty in 1992, but resumed executions in 1994 and the death penalty was retained under the new Constitution adopted in 1995. That year, according to unofficial sources, at least 18 people were sentenced to death between January and October, and at least 8 people were executed. As of November 1995, 28 people were said to be awaiting execution.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or Russian or your own language:

- urging that the death sentence passed on Badri Zarandia be commuted;
- urging that all reports of ill-treatment of him and his co-defendants in detention be investigated swiftly and impartially, with the results made public and any persons found responsible brought to justice;
- urging that all those sentenced to death be granted the internationally-recognized right to appeal against their conviction and sentence to a court of higher jurisdiction;
- expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases.

APPEALS TO:

Eduard Shevardnadze
President of Georgia
Rustaveli 8
380018 Tbilisi
Georgia

Telegrams: Georgia, 380018 Tbilisi, Prezidentu Shevardnadze
Salutation: Dear President

Dzhomlet Babiashvili
Procurator General of Georgia
ul. Gorgosali, 24
380033 Tbilisi
Georgia

**Telegrams: Georgia, 380033 Tbilisi, Generalnomu prokuroru Babiashvili Dzh.
Salutation: Dear Procurator General**

COPIES TO:

Irakli Menagharishvili
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Chitadze 4
380018 Tbilisi
Georgia

Aleksandr Kavsadze
Chairman of the State Committee for
Human Rights and Inter-ethnic Relations
Rustaveli, 8
380018 Tbilisi
Georgia

and to diplomatic representatives of Georgia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 August 1996.