

## **Anna Politkovskaya remembered**

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People from around the world, including members and supporters of Amnesty International, are commemorating Russian journalist and human rights defender Anna Politkovskaya. One year ago, on 7 October, she was murdered outside her flat in Moscow.

This was almost certainly because of her work as a journalist, in which she exposed human rights violations throughout Russia. Amnesty International believes that the handling of the criminal investigation into her death to date shows that there is little political will to bring those who ordered the killing to justice.

After she began writing about the armed conflict in Chechnya and the North Caucasus in 1999, she was detained and threatened with serious reprisals, including death threats, on several occasions. She interviewed Russians, Chechens and members of other ethnic groups who reported being tortured or otherwise ill-treated, or to whom justice had otherwise reportedly been denied by the authorities of the Russian Federation.

Today, journalists and human rights activists, who themselves continue to face attacks, threats and intimidation, including death threats because of their work, remember Anna Politkovskaya.

**Svetlana Gannushkina**, Chair of the human rights NGO "Citizen's Assistance" and member of the board of the HR NGO Memorial:

"During the second Chechen war (1999- ), Chechnya became the main subject of Anna's work and the place she constantly visited. Chechnya transformed her and became the essence of her life. For many, her articles about the second campaign in Chechnya provided the only opportunity to learn the truth if they still wished to know it.

"However, she didn't stop writing. She interfered in people's fates and situations and demanded answers from investigators, prosecutors and the military. She received threats by telephone and letters, not only in Moscow, but also threats of immediate execution in Chechnya.

"I don't believe that Anna wasn't afraid. However, what was happening around her was so terrifying that her own fear was pushed to the back of her mind and became unimportant.

"Anna responded to every call for help, every cry of pain. And her voice was already so loud that she was heard in the farthest corners of our small world. And it continues to be heard today, as many people were gripped by it.

"I very much wish that many people will come to Moscow on 7 October, will carry her photo around the streets and will go to the cemetery. Just so that those who believed Russian President Putin, who said that her influence on the political life in Russia was minimal, will see that this is not true.

"She will continue to have influence, her articles will stand against indifference and passivity and her voice will be heard for a long time, as long as there are people who need protection, whose grief can not be ignored. Her articles will be read by other generations that will take responsibility for what is going on in this world."

**Osman Boliev**, human rights defender who was arbitrarily detained and tortured in November 2005:

"Anna Politkovskaya was one of the people who saved my life. Because of her articles, people knew what was going on in the North Caucasus and that is why I was released. But she lost her life because of this work. I think she was a real hero, she knew her life was under threat, but she continued to do her work anyway.

"She was also a real patriot, she did this because she cared for the people in Russia including for those in the North Caucasus. In a way, she carried the flag for those who care for human rights and we have to take it on from her now."

**Magomed Mutsolgov**, a human rights defender whose brother Bahsir Mutsolgov disappeared in 2003:

"Anna Politkovskaya's articles on abductions in Ingushetia exposed systematic human rights violations in the region. She was brave to reveal to the national and international public the extent of the lawlessness in the North Caucasus and this fact boosted the morale of the relatives of the abducted people.

"Anna managed to break through the curtain of silence imposed on the region and journalists from all over the world found their way to the Caucasus to tell the truth about the prevailing impunity there. The disclosure of the truth around the abductions and the impunity of the authorities led to the reduction of the number of abductions in Ingushetia for a certain period of time."

**Dmitri Muratov**, editor of Novaya Gazeta where Anna Polikovskaya used to work.

"The case of Anna Politkovskaya is falling apart; the intention is that it should come to nothing, to zero. This has been done by leaking information which should be kept secret. A couple of high-ranking people from different government structures, from the "siloviki" and special services, have leaked information about this case.

"They have distributed a list of the people detained. This is unprecedented. Why has this been done? Because there was an order to do it so that all the other participants in the case would be able to hide.

"All the photos and biographies, with police information about those detained, were published on the internet and in two tabloids."

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Amnesty International calls on the Russian authorities to clearly and unequivocally speak out in defence of journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders who talk openly about the human rights situation in the Russian Federation.

Amnesty International calls on Federal and Chechen authorities to take substantive measures to enable independent monitors and journalists, including foreign journalists, to report from Chechnya without fear of reprisals.

Furthermore, Amnesty International calls on the Russian authorities to protect journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers by vigorously investigating allegations of attacks on journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers, including, but not limited to, the murder of Anna Politkovskaya. Those who are found responsible for such crimes, including those who ordered or masterminded the attacks, should be brought to justice without delay.

**Read more:**

Russia: One year after death of Anna Politkovskaya - more action needed from the Russian authorities (Public Statement, 4 October 2007)

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR460422007>

Russian Federation: Tribute by Irene Khan, Amnesty International's Secretary General, to murdered Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya (Public Statement, 13 October 2006)

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGEUR460472006>

The murder of Anna Politkovskaya (Web Feature, 13 October 2006)

<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/rus-131006-feature-eng>