

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Briefing

AI Index: EUR 46/044/2006 (Public)
News Service No: 262
9 October 2006

Russian Federation: Journalists targeted for their work on human rights violations

Anna Politkovskaya is the latest in a number of journalists working in the Russian Federation who have been targeted because of their professional activities in independently reporting and exposing human rights violations. Amnesty International's members all over the world are expressing their condolences to Anna Politkovskaya's family and her colleagues and staging memorial events. They are calling for a thorough and impartial investigation into her death and continue to campaign for the right of independent journalists and human rights defenders in Russia, including in the North Caucasus region, to be able to work without fear of harassment or intimidation and, above all, without fear for their lives.

Stanislav Dmitrievskii

Stanislav Dmitrievskii is the Executive Director of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society (RCFS) and editor-in-chief of the *Pravo-zashchita* newspaper (Rights defence, a human rights-oriented newspaper) based in the town of Nizhnii Novgorod. He was convicted in February 2006 for publishing appeals by the late Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov and his envoy Akhmed Zakaev which were critical of Moscow's role in the Chechen conflict. Dmitrievskii was convicted for "...incitement of hatred or enmity..." However, Amnesty International considers that the two appeals published do not contain any incitement to hatred or enmity, or any form of violence.

Oksana Chelysheva

Oksana Chelysheva is deputy Executive Director of the RCFS, editor of the Russian Chechen Information Agency, and editor of the *Pravo-zashchita* newspaper. Together with Stanislav Dmitrievskii, she has been the victim of harassment and abuse. Leaflets circulated in their home town of Nizhnii Novgorod in the last several years have accused the human rights defenders of being "traitors" and supporters of "terrorists". Police investigations into the leaflets have been opened but no one responsible has yet been identified.

Andrey Babitskii

Andrey Babitskii was reportedly arrested in January 2000 by the Russian military authorities in Chechnya while working as correspondent for Radio Liberty. After weeks of speculation about his whereabouts and whether he was even alive, Andrey Babitskii resurfaced late on 25 February 2000 in detention in Dagestan in the Russian Federation. He was released after the intervention of the then Acting President Vladimir Putin. He told Amnesty International that he had witnessed torture and ill-treatment while in detention by the Russian security services. The organization was concerned that Andrey Babitskii's arrest was an attempt by the Russian authorities to silence him. His reporting about Russian attacks on civilians in the current conflict in Chechnya had apparently angered a number of Russian military officials, who had accused him of being pro-Chechen.

Larisa Yudina

Larisa Yudina, editor of the *Sovetskaia Kalmykia Segodnia* newspaper, was found dead on 8 June 1998 on the outskirts of the capital, Elista, in the Russian Republic of Kalmykia with multiple knife wounds and a fractured skull. Members of the liberal Yabloko party, to which Larisa Yudina belonged, and other opposition members and human rights advocates maintained that the killing was politically motivated. Larisa Yudina had often criticized Kalmyk President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, alleging in her articles his involvement in corruption.

See:

Stanislav Dmitrievskii talking to Amnesty International -- <http://emedia.amnesty.org/russia-091006-eng.ram>
Oksana Chelischeva talking to Amnesty International -- <http://emedia.amnesty.org/russia2-091006-eng.ram>

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