

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

AI Index: EUR 46/013/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 019
29 January 2003

Russian Federation: Amnesty International calls on the Russian Government to live up to its obligations to protect human rights

In a letter to President Vladimir Putin, Amnesty International is urging the government of the Russian Federation to live up to its obligations to protect human rights. The organization's members from around the world will be delivering the letter, accompanied by a petition to embassies of the Russian Federation on Friday, 31 January 2003.

Amnesty International and its supporters in different countries express their concern that accountability for human rights abuses and justice for victims of such abuses in the country remains an abstract. They say: "People have no confidence that state or judicial institutions will right the wrongs, and those who violate human rights do so with confidence that they have every chance of getting away with it."

In their letter accompanying the petition, Amnesty International's members and supporters are urging President Vladimir Putin to:

Show a clear political commitment to promote and protect fundamental human rights for everybody and to give an unequivocal message that violations of these rights will not be tolerated.

Ensure that prompt, impartial, independent and thorough investigations of complaints relating to human rights abuses are carried out and that those responsible are brought to justice in line with international human rights standards.

Protect ethnic minorities from arbitrary detention, particularly in the context of checking residence permits or "propiska", and from torture and ill-treatment by police.

Change current practice so that children are held in detention only as a measure of last resort, and introduce training for all law enforcement officials on the special needs and rights of children in custody, as spelled out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Make domestic violence a distinct criminal offence and introduce training for law enforcement officials to recognize and prosecute violence against women, including domestic violence and trafficking of women.

In only six weeks, since the start of Amnesty International's campaign on human rights in the Russian Federation "Justice for Everybody" on 29 October 2002, the organization's members collected over 150 000 signatures from around the world under the petition to President Vladimir Putin. Amnesty International is continuing to monitor the human rights situation in the Russian Federation, including in the Chechen Republic.

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Visit the Amnesty International Russia Campaign websites:

www.amnesty.org/russia

http://www.web.amnesty.org/mavp/av.nsf/pages/Russian_press_kit

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