

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 46/16/96

19 March 1996

Further information on EXTRA 34/96 (EUR 46/13/96, 7 March 1996) and follow-up (EUR 46/14/96, 12 March) - Fear for safety / Possible extrajudicial executions / Fear of torture

CHECHEN REPUBLIC - RUSSIAN FEDERATION Civilians in Sernovodsk

Additional Concern: Civilians in Samashki

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at recent reports of attacks by Russian forces on civilians in the village of Samashki. According to reports, on 15 to 17 March 1996 Russian forces attacked the village with rockets, grenades and planes. It is believed that there may be as many as 10,000 civilians in the town, many of them women and children.

A few thousand people managed to flee the village of Samashki on 15 March through a "humanitarian corridor" towards Sernovodsk. According to Russian human rights monitors, 86 young men, some as young as 14 years old, were arrested by Russian forces while fleeing Samashki at around 10am on 15 March. Amnesty International has a list of the names of the men, who, local people believe, were taken to the "filtration camp" at Assinovskaya station. In addition to concerns that civilian casualties might result from the attack on the village of Samashki, Amnesty International fears for the safety of these 86 men, in view of reports of beatings and torture in detention in "filtration camps" throughout the course of the armed conflict in Chechnya.

Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have not been permitted access to Samashki, nor have journalists or human rights monitors.

Amnesty International also remains seriously concerned at the situation in Sernovodsk (see original EXTRA and follow-up).

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

- calling for all steps to be taken to ensure the safety of civilians in Sernovodsk and Samashki, and to uphold basic principles of international humanitarian law in particular as regards the protection of the civilian population;
- demanding assurances that any men detained and taken to "filtration camps" will not be subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that immediate access to Sernovodsk and Samashki be granted to members of the ICRC in order to ensure safe passage of all civilians, especially the wounded, out of the town;

if possible, please also:

- call on the Russian Government to comply with its commitments on respect for human rights, given to the Council of Europe upon Russia's acceptance to the Council in February 1996, including the commitment to "respect strictly the provisions of international humanitarian law, including in cases of armed conflicts on its territory";
- urge the Russian Government to comply with its commitments to protect human rights in times of armed conflict, given to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), when Russia signed the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security in December 1994.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
g. Moskva
Kreml
Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii
Yeltsinu B.N.

Faxes: +7095 206 5173

Telegrams: Rossiya, Moskva, Kreml, Prezidentu Yeltsinu

Salutation: Dear President

President's Special Envoy in Chechnya, Oleg Lobov

Faxes: +7095 206 0717

COPIES TO:

Russian Federation Minister of Internal Affairs, Col.-Gen. Anatoly Kulikov
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Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del
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Russian Federation Minister of Defence, General Pavel Grachev
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and to diplomatic representatives of the Russian Federation accredited to your country.

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