

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Raid on the Glasnost Foundation by special police

Amnesty International is concerned that masked law enforcement officers allegedly ill-treated staff and visitors of the human rights organization Glasnost Foundation in a raid conducted on the foundation's office in Moscow on the evening of 29 August 2000. The purpose of the raid was not adequately explained, did not appear to be legally justified, and its effect was intimidatory.

According to information received by Amnesty International, seven or eight officers broke down the back door of the foundation's office at 22 Tsvetnoi Boulevard, building 5, apartment 40, after unsuccessfully attempting to break down the metal front door shortly after 7pm on 29 August 2000. All except one of the officers wore masks and were dressed in camouflage uniforms, armed with automatic weapons and pistols. They were led by an officer without a mask, who has been identified as a junior lieutenant of the 18th Moscow police precinct. One of the masked officers later showed a service card identifying him as A.D.¹ of the Public Security Militia of the Meshchanskoye Department of Internal Affairs (_____ _____ _____ _____ _____). Immediately prior to the raid the junior lieutenant had presented himself at the front door, but Glasnost Foundation Chairman Sergey Grigoryants did not admit him, as the officer reportedly identified himself incorrectly and failed to produce a search warrant.

Allegedly, the officers ordered at gunpoint everyone present in the foundation's office, who numbered about 12 people and included a 10-year-old girl, to lie face down on the floor with their hands behind their heads. The officers are reported to have sworn at the human rights activists and to have kicked some of them. An officer allegedly kicked Sergey Grigoryants in the head and back for not lying down quickly enough. The activists were kept lying on the floor for about 30 minutes before they were allowed to stand up again. While the officers had attempted to knock down the front door the Glasnost Foundation staff managed to telephone Sergey Grigoryants' lawyer M.F. Polyakova and some journalists. While the office was occupied by the law enforcement officers the lawyer and at least one journalist telephoned into the office. The law enforcement officers reportedly prevented Sergey Grigoryants from talking to his lawyer on the telephone, and themselves answered the telephone call and questions of a correspondent of Radio Liberty. At one point the junior lieutenant is reported to have talked to a colleague of his on the telephone, stating: "This Gevorkyan or Grigoryan who was in prison. Well [the name of another law enforcement official] has got the full low down on him", ("_____ _____ _____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____ [_____ _____ _____] _____"). This reported statement

¹ The name is known to Amnesty International, as is the name of the junior lieutenant of the 18th police precinct.

appears to indicate that the raid had been deliberately targeted as an action against Sergey Grigoryants and the Glasnost Foundation in the context and knowledge of Sergey Grigoryants' history as a prisoner of conscience and his Glasnost Foundation's ongoing work in defence of human rights. The junior lieutenant stated that he and his colleagues were conducting a check on the identity documents of everyone in the foundation's office. However, they did not check the documents of all the activists. Reportedly, he said that the raid was conducted on the instructions of both the chief of the Public Security Militia of the Meshchanskoye Department of Internal Affairs and the leadership of the 18th Moscow police precinct. After the arrival of a police captain and an additional 30 minutes the law enforcement officers gradually departed the premises one by one.

Amnesty International is concerned that the human rights activists may have been subjected to cruel or degrading treatment by the law enforcement officers, which is prohibited both under domestic legislation and international treaties to which the Russian Federation is a party, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 7. The implementation of the raid, as reported, was disproportionate to its stated purpose and intimidatory. The human rights activists may have been arbitrarily detained in breach of the Russian Federation's obligations under Article 5 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention) and Article 9 of the ICCPR. Amnesty International calls upon the Russian authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of the incident and to bring to justice any officers reasonably suspected of human rights violations. The organization wishes to be informed about the scope, methods and results of the investigation, and for the findings to be made public.

Background:

Sergey Grigoryants is a veteran human rights activist and former dissident, who was a prisoner of conscience during the pre-*glasnost* years of the Soviet Union. Among its activities the Glasnost Foundation conducts an annual conference entitled: "The KGB: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". On Tuesday evening the foundation staff and visitors were planning the ninth such conference, scheduled for late October or early November, together with other projected events such as a human rights defenders' conference.

KEYWORDS: HARASSMENT1 / HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS / POLICE / USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE / IMPUNITY / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT
