

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 46/045/2004

10 August 2004

Further Information on UA 210/04 (EUR 46/039/2004, 24 June 2004) - Fear for Safety/Torture and Ill-treatment/ Possible "Disappearances"/ Incommunicado detention

RUSSIAN FEDERATION 36 men from an unofficial settlement for internally displaced persons in Altievo, Nazran region, Ingushetia

All 36 Chechen men detained in Altievo, Ingushetia during a police and army raid on 23 June have been released, according to the human rights organisation *Memorial*. A representative from *Memorial* said that they very much appreciated the work of the UA network, which is thought to have contributed to the men's release. Many female relatives of the detainees asked *Memorial* to convey their thanks to those who campaigned for the release of their loved ones.

The men were detained when Ingush police, accompanied by Russian federal forces, raided a former dairy farm in Altievo, Nazran district, where over 1,000 people forced to flee their homes by the fighting in Chechnya had taken shelter. They reportedly ordered all the people living there, including women and children, to leave while they carried out an inspection. They reportedly used excessive force, and reportedly made some of the women partially undress in front of men. Among the police involved in the operation were officers from the Nazran district police department (ROVD), who had suffered heavy losses during coordinated attacks by Chechen fighters on 21 June. They claimed to have found grenades and camouflage uniforms during their inspection and reportedly told the Chechens that the settlement would be burnt down if they did not leave within two days.

The 36 men detained during the raid were reportedly taken to the police headquarters in Nazran. All but nine were released over the next week. Human rights groups who interviewed them reported that some had been beaten.

The remaining nine men, who were reportedly suspected of involvement in the attacks of 21 June, were formally arrested and brought to Nalchik, in Kabardino-Balkaria and held in a pre-trial detention centre (SIZO). They were released without charge on 23 July. Some said they had been beaten by FSB (intelligence and security service) officers during interrogation. One detainee told *Memorial* that he had been beaten all over his body and was unable to stand up or walk.

The settlement at the dairy farm in Altievo is now officially closed. The majority of the people living there have reportedly gone back to Chechnya, where the situation remains unsafe due to the continuing systematic human rights violations by Russian federal forces and Chechen forces under the command of Chechen First Deputy Prime Minister, Ramzan Kadyrov.

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.