

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: EUR 46/082/2003**

**26 September 2003**

**Further Information on EXTRA 39/03 (EUR 46/069/2003, 12 August 2003) and follow-up (EUR 46/072/2003, 27 August 2003) Freedom of Expression**

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
organisation**

**"School of Peace", non-governmental minority rights**

---

Following a number of postponements, the court hearing to decide the fate of the "School of Peace" non-governmental organization will take place on 6 October in the Primorskii district court in Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Territory. The organization may face closure as a result of its activities in defence of ethnic minority rights.

The "School of Peace" has in recent years come under considerable pressure from authorities in the Krasnodar Territory of Russia to stop its campaigning on behalf of the largely Muslim Meskhetian minority, thousands of members of which live in the Territory. The closure of the "School of Peace" was requested by the Krasnodar Ministry of Justice on 22 July, on the basis that that it no longer employed three founding members, as required by law. Although two of the founders had in fact left the organization in 1999 and 2000, the "School of Peace" claims that it had been told by the Ministry of Justice in 1999 that it could continue working despite this.

The court hearing on the enforcement of the closure of the "School of Peace" has been postponed three times.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Three other non-governmental organizations in Krasnodar Territory have also been subject to harassment by the regional authorities and through the state-controlled media during the past year. The local branch of the Meskhetian organization "Vatan" was forced to close down, as was the Krasnodar Human Rights Centre. The organization "Yuzhnaya Volna" (Southern Wave) has also been threatened with closure.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Russian, English or your own language:**

- expressing concern about allegations that the non-governmental organization "School of Peace" may be facing imminent closure in connection with its work to defend the rights of the Meskhetian community in Krasnodar Territory;
- expressing concern that the Ministry of Justice has requested the closure of the "School of Peace" on the grounds that it has less than three founders remaining, despite its reported guarantee to the "School of Peace" in 1999 that it could continue its activities on this basis;
- urging a comprehensive and impartial investigation into reports that "School of Peace" and several other non-governmental authorities in the Territory have faced harassment and been threatened with closure for pursuing their lawful role of monitoring and reporting on human rights issues.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Procurator of Krasnodar Territory  
Mr Vladimir Ulianov  
Krasnodar Regional Procuracy  
Ul. Sovietskaia 39  
350000 g. Krasnodar  
Russian Federation

**Fax:** + 7 8612 629 802 (If someone answers, say "fax please")  
**Salutation:** Dear Procurator

Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation  
Yurii Chaika  
Ul. Vorontsovo Pole 4  
109830 g. Moscow  
Russian Federation

**Fax:** + 7 095 916 29 03/ 209 61 38  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**COPIES TO:**

Procurator General of the Russian Federation  
Vladimir USTINOV  
Ul. Bolshaya Dimitrovka, 15a  
103793 Moscow, Russian Federation  
**Fax:** + 7 095 292 88 48

Head of the Main Department of the Ministry of Justice of Krasnodar Territory  
Mr E M Kaminskii  
Ul. Krasnaia 22  
350003 g. Krasnodar, Russian Federation  
**Fax:** + 7 8612 626 155 (If someone answers, say "fax please")

Governor of Krasnodar Territory  
Aleksandr Tkachev  
Ul. Krasnaia 35  
350014 g. Krasnodar, Russian Federation  
**Fax:** + 7 8612 683 542

and to diplomatic representatives of the Russian Federation accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**