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News Flash

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Russian Federation: Amnesty International condemns indiscriminate attacks

Recent bomb attacks in southern Russia and Moscow display a flagrant disrespect for civilian life, Amnesty International said today.

"Amnesty International unreservedly condemns such indiscriminate attacks," a spokesperson said today, "perpetrators of such crimes must be found and brought to justice." At the same time, the organization urges the Russian authorities to safeguard the human rights of all its citizens -- regardless of their ethnicity.

At just before 8am on Friday 5 December a huge blast ripped through a train which had just left the town of Yessentuki in Stavropol territory, not far from the Chechen Republic. The train was packed with rush hour commuters -- many of whom were students travelling to school or university. According to official reports at least 44 people have died so far as a result of the explosion. A further 156 people were injured and many of the victims have been hospitalized. Some are in a critical condition. The Russian security services have stated that one man -- whose body was found strapped with undetonated explosives -- and three women carried out the suicide bomb attack. Two of the female attackers are reported to have jumped from the train just prior to the blast.

At around 11am this morning a bomb explosion took place outside the hotel "National" in the very centre of Moscow, killing at least five people and injuring a further 12. Initial reports suggest that female suicide bombers - two of whom died at the scene - were behind the blast. According to officials, police are searching for a third attacker who is reported to have fled the scene.

In the past, research undertaken by Amnesty International has shown an increase in police harassment and intimidation of Chechens following incidents such as the apartment block bombings in Moscow in 1999. Amnesty International calls upon the government of the Russian Federation to ensure that such incidents do not lead to further human rights abuses - in particular against ethnic minorities.

Background

Following the theatre siege on Melnikov Street in Moscow in October 2002, bomb attacks have been taking place with increasing frequency. Such attacks include the car bomb blast at the main building of the Moscow-backed administration in Grozny in December 2002, the car bomb attack in Znamenskoye, Chechnya in May 2003, the two suicide bomb attacks at the Tishino airfield rock concert in Moscow in July 2003 and the Mozdok military hospital car bomb blast in August 2003.

Public Document

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