

URGENT ACTION

ABDUCTED MAN FOUND DEAD IN INGUSHETIA

The body of Ilez Gorchkhanov, 26 years old, was found on 19 April. He was abducted in Nazran in the Republic of Ingushetia, Russian Federation, on 21 March by around 15 men wearing masks, believed to be members of law enforcement agencies.

Ilez Gorchkhanov was last seen arriving in his car in the centre of Nazran, in the Republic of Ingushetia in the North Caucasus, on 21 March. His brother retraced his journey the same day and spoke to eyewitnesses, who told him that Ilez Gorchkhanov had been abducted by around 15 masked men. Some were camouflaged and holding protective shields, and others were plain-clothed, but none wore any insignia. The abductors drove away in four cars, and the eyewitnesses remembered the number plate of one of them. Ilez Gorchkhanov's car was also driven away, and was later found abandoned at a roadside several miles away.

The authorities promised the family that Ilez Gorchkhanov's disappearance would be investigated, but his whereabouts remained unknown until his body was found, and no law enforcement agency acknowledged that he was being detained. In the meantime, on 21 March, family members and their supporters organized a street protest in the centre of Nazran against his and others' forcible disappearances, and demanded a prompt and effective investigation into Ilez Gorchkhanov's abduction. According to eyewitnesses interviewed by Amnesty International, the protest was brutally dispersed by armed police.

Ilez Gorchkhanov's body was found on 19 April in the river Assa, about a mile away from the village Nesterovskaya, Sunzhensky District, in Ingushetia. Russian human rights organization Memorial reports that, according to Ilez Gorchkhanov's family, there were signs of strangling on his neck and one of his eyes was badly injured. He was buried the following day.

Thank you for sending appeals. The team will continue to work on the case through other channels. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the first update of UA 88/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/015/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ingushetia and the wider North Caucasus are affected by armed violence, and the security situation there is volatile. Armed groups have been launching sporadic attacks against law enforcement officials, but have also targeted civilians. The authorities' response is heavily reliant on the use of law enforcement agencies (police, secret services, and the military) whose members operate without transparency and public accountability, and often incognito, particularly during so-called counterterrorist operations. There are widespread and persistent allegations that law enforcement officials use unlawful methods to combat armed violence with impunity, and human rights violations are systematic in Ingushetia and across the North Caucasus. Cases of forcible disappearances, unlawful detention, torture and ill-treatment, and extrajudicial execution, are regularly reported from the region.

Amnesty International has received numerous reports from Ingushetia of people being detained, in their homes or in the street, by masked members of law enforcement agencies who wear no insignia and give no explanation of their actions. While in some such cases the authorities later acknowledge that these people were detained by members of law enforcement officials, in many cases these people are "disappeared" and never heard of again, with the authorities failing to investigate effectively and establish their whereabouts. The human rights NGO MASHR, based in Ingushetia, has documented at least 197 cases in Ingushetia between November 2002 and April 2011 in which people disappeared and their fate has remained unknown.

Sometimes the disappeared are later found dead. There have been cases when the authorities reported them as having put up armed resistance and killed in a shootout with law enforcement officials, although in some cases there is evidence suggesting that they may have been subjected to torture and then extrajudicially executed.

Further information on UA: 88/11 Index: EUR 46/019/2011 Issue Date: 21 April 2011

