

URGENT ACTION

CHECHEN MAN'S WHEREABOUTS IN RUSSIA UNKNOWN

Imran Salamov is a 39-year old Chechen man who was forcibly returned from Belarus to Russia on 5 September. His whereabouts are currently unknown and he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Imran Salamov, 39, is a Chechen man who was forcibly disappeared from Belarus to Russia on 5 September while in a detention facility in Brest, Belarus. He had been in the city of Brest, Belarus with his wife and four children and since March they had repeatedly left Belarus for Poland to claim asylum there. Each attempt had been unsuccessful and they were sent back to Belarus by Polish border guards, despite clearly expressing their intention to seek asylum. The Polish authorities' refusal constitutes a violation of international human rights law and defiance of Poland's duties as an EU member state. Imran Salamov claims he was tortured several times while in Chechnya and the reason for him and his family leaving was to escape further persecution.

During another failed attempt to enter Poland, Imran Salamov was detained on 13 April by Belarusian border guards and, on the same day, the local migration services made a decision to forcibly return him to Russia on the basis that he had been placed on an interstate wanted list issued by Russia on 5 April. He is accused of participating in an illegal armed group under Article 208 part 2 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code. He denies the allegations. In an effort to prevent his forcible return to Russia, Imran Salamov applied for asylum in Belarus soon after the decision to return him was announced but his appeal was rejected on 24 August. He had 15 days to appeal and was in the process of doing so when he was handed over to the Russian authorities and forcibly disappeared. When his lawyer went to visit him in detention in Brest on the morning of 6 September, he was told that Imran Salamov had been returned to Russia at 5pm on 5 September. Since 8 September, his whereabouts in Russia have not been officially confirmed by the authorities to his family in Chechnya or his lawyer in Russia.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language to the Russian authorities:

- Calling on them to immediately disclose the whereabouts of Imran Salamov to his family and lawyer;
- Calling on them to ensure that Imran Salamov is not subjected to torture and ill-treatment;
- Calling on them to give Imran Salamov immediate and unhindered access to a lawyer of his choice, who has already been privately appointed.

PLEASE SEND PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 OCTOBER 2017 TO:

Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Chechnya

Minister of Interior
Ruslan Alkhanov
Prospekt imeni H.Isaeva, 21
364024, Grozny
Republic of Chechnya

E-mail: odir_chr@mvd.ru

Salutation: **Dear Minister**

Prosecutor's Office of the Chechen Republic

Prosecutor
Sharpuddi Abdul-Kadyrov
Ul.Idrisova, 42,
364000, Grozny, Republic of Chechnya
Fax: +7 8712 22-33-56

Email: procurat-chech@mail.ru

Salutation: **Dear Prosecutor**

And copies to:

Minister of Interior
Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation
Vladimir Kolokoltsev
Ul. Zhitnaya d. 16
119049 Moscow, Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 667 05 98 (wait for signal)
Or use online form in Russian: https://xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/request_main

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ALEXANDER VLADIMIROVICH YAKOVENKO, Embassy of Russia, 6-7 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8 4QP, 020 7229 6412

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Torture and other ill-treatment is widespread in Chechnya in both official detention centres and unlawful secret detention centres used by Chechen police officers.

Since 2016, increasing numbers of asylum seekers have been trying to access Poland from Belarus at the Brest-Terespol border. The majority of them are from the Russian Republic of Chechnya although the numbers include people from Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Amnesty International has spoken with organisations in Poland and Belarus which claim that the Polish border guards are turning most of them. After only cursory interviews, during which claims for asylum are routinely ignored, most people are sent by train back to Belarus. Belarus lacks a functioning asylum system, leaving asylum seekers vulnerable to being returned to their countries of origin where they may be at risk of persecution. The failure of both Poland and Belarus to ensure adequate protection to asylum seekers who face such risk is a violation of their international human rights obligations including 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which states that: "No Contracting State shall expel or return (*refouler*) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

Both Belarus and Poland are state parties to the Convention. The practice of one country returning an asylum seeker to an allegedly 'safe' third country, which then returns them to their place of origin where they are at risk of persecution is known as 'chain refoulement'. It is this situation that Imran Salmov now finds himself in.

UA: 208/17 Index: EUR 49/7081/2017 Issue Date: 8 September 2017