

URGENT ACTION

CHECHEN ASYLUM-SEEKER FEARED DISAPPEARED

Chechen asylum-seeker Imran Salamov, who was forcibly returned to Russia from Belarus on 5 September, may have been subjected to an enforced disappearance. Although his lawyer and wife met with him at the City Police Headquarters in Grozny on 11 September, all subsequent efforts to locate him have failed and the authorities have recently claimed that he is not in their custody. There are serious concerns for his welfare.

Following **Imran Salamov's** forcible return to Russia on 5 September, a local Belarusian NGO sent an appeal to the Federal Service for the Execution of Punishments, requesting information on Imran Salamov's whereabouts. Its Chechen department responded on 18 October, stating that Imran Salamov was not and had never been in their custody. The Federal Service for the Execution of Punishments is responsible for pre-trial detention facilities.

Imran Salamov's lawyer and wife have made countless appeals to the Chechen authorities in an effort to establish his whereabouts. On 6 October, they took an appeal to the office of the Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic. On the same day, his lawyer and wife presented a copy of the appeal to the Investigation Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Chechen Republic, who told them to withdraw the appeal from the Prosecutor's office and warned them that problems would arise for Imran Salamov and them if they failed to do so. They decided for the safety of Imran Salamov and his family to withdraw the appeal. However, on 16 October, they lodged the appeal again with both places as well as with the Ombudsperson of the Chechen Republic. To date, none of the authorities' responses have disclosed Imran Salamov's fate or whereabouts.

Please write immediately in Russian, English or your own language:

- Urging the Russian authorities to order an immediate investigation into Imran Salamov's fate and whereabouts, keeping his family fully informed and updated at all times;
- Insisting if Imran Salamov is in the state's custody, that he is immediately released, or, if credible evidence of a recognized offence exists, is transferred to an official place of detention, charged promptly and remanded by an independent civilian court, in line with international human rights standards;
- Urging them to ensure that Imran Salamov's human rights are protected and respected at all time, including – if he is in custody – his right to life and freedom from torture and other ill-treatment, and that he is allowed access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and adequate medical care.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 DECEMBER 2017 TO:

Minister of the Interior
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
Salutation: Dear Minister

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Yuriy Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP- 3
Russian Federation
Fax: +7495 987 58 41/ +7495 692 17 25
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And copies to:
Human Rights Ombudsperson of the Russian Federation
Tatiana Moskalkova
ul. Miasnitskaia, 47
107084, Moscow
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 607 7470 / +7 495 607 3977
(to check if fax received: +7 495 607 1854)

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

Imran Salamov claims he was tortured several times while in Chechnya and the reason for him and his family leaving to seek asylum was to escape further persecution. By forcibly returning him to Russia on 5 September, Belarus violated the international principle of non-*refoulement* – where states are prohibited from returning anyone to a situation where they will be at real risk of serious human rights violations.

Enforced disappearances by state agents are shocking human rights violations that continue to be committed in Chechnya. Torture and other ill-treatment is widespread in Chechnya in both official detention centres and unlawful secret detention centres used by Chechen police officers. Appeals, submitted by the relatives of the disappeared to the local police and other authorities are consistently unresolved. In cases when the disappeared persons “re-appear”, it often transpires that they were held in incommunicado detention in a police station. No reparation for victims has ever been offered and no perpetrator has ever been brought to justice.

The Polish authorities are subject to increasing criticism of their failure to provide access to asylum procedures of asylum seekers coming via Belarus. On 15 November, the European Parliament adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution on “The situation of the rule of law and democracy in Poland” in which it noted “the Polish Government’s refusal to... respect the interim orders by the ECtHR on returns to Belarus are visible symbols of Poland not following the EU Treaties”. The European Parliament further called on the Polish Government to halt summary returns to Belarus so as to comply with the binding interim orders of the ECtHR of 8 June 2017, and to ensure that anyone who expresses an intention to seek asylum or international protection at Poland’s borders enjoys full access to the Polish asylum procedure in line with international obligations and EU law”.

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