

FROM THE CONFLICT ZONE

BULLETIN OF HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER "MEMORIAL"

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(the issue prepared by HRC "Memorial" in Nazran)

Dear colleagues

Human Rights Center "Memorial" in Nazran offers its ensuing information bulletin based on the results of monitoring the human rights situation in the Chechen Republic and the process of overcoming consequences of 1992 conflict in Prigorodny district of North Osetia.

Your questions and comments, please, send to:

386100 Republic Ingushetia, Nazran, Mutaliev, 46 Human Rights Centre "Memorial"

e-mail: memorial@southnet.ru

phone/fax + 7 (8732) 22 23 49

The Situation in the Chechen Republic and Republic Ingushetia: June 2004

I. Statistics

According to the data of HRC "Memorial" (We are able to carry out monitoring over a limited territory, 25-30 % of Chechnya, thus, the data below is incomplete) in June 2004:

1. *Killed*: 23 persons (7 civilians, 9 repres. of power agencies, 7 alleged fighters)

2. *Kidnapped* 15 persons

subsequently set free or released for ransom – 6

subsequently killed – 2

went missing - 7

NB! Due to the specificity of human rights monitoring in the Chechen Republic, it is important to take into consideration the fact that data for the two most recent months are usually incomplete and then updated the following months. Therefore, unfortunately, the figures for murdered and disappeared in June 2004 are likely to grow.

II. From the "Chronicle of Violence"

In the early hours of 2 *June*, armed men in military uniform burst into the Khamzatovs' house on Podgornaya Street in Starye Atagi, Grozny rural region. Some of them had their faces hidden by masks. It emerged later that these were soldiers from the SSG-2 Military Unit's base, situated on the site of an old windmill on the outskirts of *Starye Atagi*. They seized the head of the family, **Khasan Khamzatov** (born 1950), began to beat him, demanding to know the whereabouts of his son. Khamzatov's son has lived in Germany since 2000. Khamzatov asked the soldiers not to beat him, trying to explain that he recently underwent a major operation (at the end of May Khasan had a hernia operation in Baku), but the pleas of this elderly man did not stop the soldiers. Khamzatov suffered a broken rib and a badly damaged eye. During the beating his wife was held in a corner, threatened with weapons and taunted with insulting language. The elder son was held together with his wife and children in a separate house. For approximately three hours the soldiers carried out this unsanctioned search, overturning everything in the house but finding nothing. According to neighbours' accounts the soldiers arrived in an armoured personnel carrier, a UAZ car, a white Niva-Zhiguli and a Gazel' minibus without registration numbers. After leaving the house, the military column drove to the territory of the military unit.

On the night of **3 June**, in the village of *Guchum-Kala, Itum-Kalinski Region*, **Sultan Gazaev** (born 1964) was led away from his home by unidentified Russian soldiers. Gazaev's body, with bullet wounds, was found on the outskirts of Nikhaloi village in Shatoiski Region.

In the villagers' opinion, Sultan was detained by Russian Federation soldiers on suspicion of having taking part in an attack on a military column which had taken place the previous day. Local inhabitants asserted that Gazaev could not have taken part in the attack as he had been disabled since childhood.

On 4 June the body of **Mokhadi Yakaev** (born 1976), a resident of *Lenin Street, Urus-Martan*, was found on the south-western outskirts of the town on the road to the village of Roshni-Chu. The body showed signs of torture and a violent death.

It is known that Mokhadi had been detained in Ingushetia by members of the armed forces of the Chechen Republic, and taken to Urus-Martan a week before the discovery of the body. Examination of Mokhadi's body revealed multiple traces of severe torture, but no signs of gunshot wounds. It seems he died of injuries received from torture and beatings.

On 17-18 June at about midnight a group of armed fighters of the Chechen resistance entered the village of Achkhoy-Martan from the direction of Oshkho-Kotar (Staryi Achkhoy). Moving along Kh. Nuradilov Street, they launched a grenade and machine-gun attack on the bases of all the regional power agencies: the FSB, the Prosecutor's Office, the ROVD¹ and the local Army HQ. The attack lasted for three hours. During this entire time the Russian soldiers and police from the regional centre made no attempt to force out the members of the armed group. They left of their own accord, with cries of "Allah Akbar!" The buildings of the above-mentioned organisations were damaged. Insignificant damage was also suffered by nearby houses of local inhabitants. Fortunately none of the local inhabitants was injured.

On June 17, at about 4a.m. some 15-20 members of the armed formations of the Chechen Republic Ichkeria entered the village of *Yandi-Kotar (Orekhovo) in the Achkhoy-Martanovski District of Chechnya*. For a while the settlement was under their full control. No illegal actions were carried out against the local inhabitants, but the local administration building and the library were burnt down. The fighters mined the bridge on the outskirts of the village at the fork in the roads leading from Achkhoy-Martan to Yandi-Kotar and the nearby Oshkho-Kotar (Staryi Achkhoy). At the same place a trap was evidently set against the Russian military. However airborne troops were landed by helicopter in the fighters rear. Military action ensued, resulting in the death of two resistance fighters. Another was wounded and captured. According to information received, three Russian soldiers were killed, several received wounds of varying degrees.

On June 19, at approximately 5 a.m. sweep searches were carried out on addresses in the village of *Sernovodsk in the Sunzhenskii District of the Chechen Republic*. A large column of vehicles (URAL, Zhiguli 99, UAZ-469 and "Tabletka" UAZ -462) entered the village. Many of the vehicles were unmarked. On arrival in the village the column divided into two. One part drove to the upper village where the sanatorium is situated, while the other entered the village itself. The first group of soldiers carried out searches in the **Khachkaev, Sultanov, Gutsiev** and **Muzaev** houses. During the searches the soldiers behaved in an aggressive manner and failed to identify themselves. Some civilians were beaten up. For example, in the Sultanovs' house where Shamil Sultanov was being searched, the soldiers beat up his mother Zulai. During the search in the house they smashed crockery, broke the furniture and took money which was kept under the bed.

The other group of soldiers, sent to the upper village, entered **Zara Yunusova's** house. The soldiers beat up the houseowner herself, two of her sons **Mamed Salamov** (born 1984) and **Adam Salamov** (born 1986), her nephew Umar Yunucov (born 1985). Then Mamed and Adam Salamov were taken out to a UAZ-469 with darkened windows, where the question 'Is it them?' was asked, to which someone sitting in the car answered 'No. It is not them'. Then one of the soldiers made a call on his mobile phone and checked the brothers' passport details. Having received a reply, the soldiers left the brothers in the yard and drove off. According to Mamed Salamov, when he was led up to the car and the darkened window was lowered, he managed to notice that the car contained Magomed Nakaev, who had been abducted from the village two days before.

¹ Regional Department (Ministry of Internal Affairs)

The Basaev house was also subjected to a search. The soldiers seized **Albert Basaev**, aged 23. His mother, Tamara Basaeva, tried to intervene on her son's behalf, but she was knocked to the ground by a blow from the butt of a gun and was beaten and kicked. Albert was beaten up, then, with his hands tied behind his back and a sack placed over his head, was thrown into an URAL vehicle. **Ruman Paraulidze** was kidnapped in a similar way. In the upper village two brothers **Zaindi Nakaev** (born 1979) and **Adam Nakaev** (born 1985) were abducted. They had their hands bound, a sack placed over their heads and were thrown into an URAL car. According to Zaindi, when they were taken away, the soldiers asked them where the Vakhabites were and where the weapons were stored. Without waiting for an answer, the soldiers began to beat them with the butts of their weapons and kick them. From their voices Zaindi could tell that among the soldiers there were Russian and Chechens.

After the beating the Nakaev brothers were thrown onto the floor of the vehicle and driven somewhere for a long time. After a certain time the car stopped. Zaindi's hands were untied and he was thrown out of the car. He ran home, got into his car and drove after the military column in order to find out where his brother was being taken. Nakaev managed to ascertain that the column had driven off in the direction of Grozny.

At about 8 a.m. the next morning the relatives of the kidnapped, and other Sernovodsk villagers organised a spontaneous protest meeting and blocked the federal main road near the Sernovodsk-Assinovskaya crossroads. At 11 a.m. the protestors received a visit from the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs for Security Matters, Colonel Khizir Tepsaev, the Deputy Military Commandant of the Republic, as well as the Deputy Prosecutor of the Achkhoy-Martanovski Region Mr Aliamkin. They asked the people to disperse, promising that they would sort everything out. The relatives of the kidnapped were asked to make an official complaint to the Procurator's Office. In reply to the protestors' question to the official representatives as to who had given the order to carry out the sweep searches and why local authorities had not been informed, the Deputy Commandant replied that the Commandant's Office had itself not been informed, as special operations of this type were carried out at the instigation of the Russian Military Base in Khankala, which did not inform the Commandant's Office of its actions.

At 2 p.m. **Adam Nakaev** was freed and brought to the village. It was promised that the others would be released on Monday 21 June. After this the protestors removed the barricade on the road and returned to the village.

On the morning of 25 June the villagers of Sernovodsk held a further meeting in front of the Suzhenskii ROVD² building, and demanded the return of their fellow villagers who had been kidnapped. Those taking part in the meeting were addressed by the Head of the Sunzhenskii ROVD Major Imkhadzhiev who assured them that the three kidnapped men were at the Khankala Military Base and the matter was being personally handled by the Minister of Internal Affairs Alu Alkhanov.

On 26 June the parents of the kidnapped young men set out for Khankala, in the hope of finding out about the fate of their children. At Khankala could not find out anything definite, as the Minister was not present. Having failed to get any kind of reasonable answer, the relatives returned home. As they were driving out of Grozny at about 3 p.m. they were involved in a car crash which resulted in the deaths of Magomed Nakaev's father and Ruman Paraulidze's mother and aunt Roza Paraulidze and Nazu Paraulidze. All three were killed instantly.

On June 26 at dawn the village *Serzhen-yurt, Shalinsky district of Chechnya*, as a result of a direct hit of artillery shell in a house, was killed the **Kagermanov family**: **Lema Kagermanov**, born 1955, his wife **Rashana**, born 1963, their two daughters, **Kheda**, 1986 and **Dzamilya**, born 1987. The spouses Kagermanov were killed outright, their daughters died on the way to the hospital.

² Regional Department (Ministry of Internal Affairs)

When the first shell landed in the yard, Lecha, his wife and two daughters, tried to take refuge under cover of outbuilding. The second shell landed there. At the moment of the attack, in the house were also Kagermanova Mariam, born 1933 (grandmother), Lema's sister Zura and her daughter Linda. They stayed longer in the house, trying to help ill grandmother, which saved their life.

The next day minister of Justice, Baskhanov Bek, the relative of the victims, arrived to the site. Only thanks to him this tragedy received attention of the authorities. An investigation group arrived to the site and investigation was carried out.

According to the residents of the village and their relatives, the house of Kagermanov family was shoot at by the shells of SAU (self-repelled artillery gun). According to them, the entire week before the tragedy, Serzhen-Yurt was subjected to similar attacks. Thus, on June 24, early in the morning, an artillery shell landed in the yard of Yandaev family. Happily, nobody was hurt, but the house was damaged.

From the relatives "Memorial" found out that in the beginning of military operation in Chechnya Kagermanovs left the republic and lived in IDP camp "Tanzila" in Ingushetia. They returned home the day before. Slightly over 10 hours passed from the moment of their return home to the moment of their murder.

Later the military officially acknowledged their responsibility. According to them, during firing practice, several shells went off course. No information has been received regarding possible charges against officers, responsible for this carelessness which resulted in human death.

On June 28, at 2 p.m. in village *Samashki, Achkhoy-Martanovsky district*, allegedly the personnel of ORB (6th department of MVD of Chechen Republic) was abducted from his home **Zuzuev Ibrahim**, born 1981. During the detainment Zuzuev was heavily wounded. The mother and brother of Ibrahim Zuzuev witnessed his kidnapping.

Two days later the corpse of Zuzuev was found with marks of torture and violent death.

For full version of the "Chronicle of Violence" for June 2004 in Russian, please, consult our web site at <http://www.memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/caucas1/rubr/2/index.htm>

II. Armed Raid on Ingushetia

On June 21 at 10:45 the Ingush towns Nazran, Karabulak and Sleptsovsk were attacked by groups of armed fighters. The beginning of the raid coincided with the time for night *namaz* and continued till 3 a.m., the time of pre-dawn prayer. In the course of four hours the fighters controlled the republic, they subjected to fire the residential quarters of the above mentioned cities, and carried out tens of summary executions. This way Ingushetia, which until recently preserved fragile social peace, was finally involved in the armed conflict.

In Nazran the fighters simultaneously attacked 8 objects, including the buildings of MVD³, ROVD⁴, GUV⁵, FSB⁶, RUBOP⁷, the military base of frontier troops, local temporary detainment facility.

The assault started after the signal fire by one of the fighters from the tunnel near Nazran railway station. Very quickly the combatants seized most of the check points, located at crossroads, which allowed them to get hold of all major thoroughfares, and streets. The groups included Chechens, Ingushis, and Russians. They were dressed in camouflage uniforms; their faces and beards were covered with masks. The fighters used grenades and

³ Ministry of Internal Affairs

⁴ District Department of Internal Affairs (militia)

⁵ Municipal department of Internal Affairs (militia)

⁶ Federal Security Service

⁷ Department for Combat of Organized Crime

rockets. They stopped all the passing by cars, presented themselves as the personnel of GRU⁸ and Spetsnaz⁹ and checked everybody's IDs. Ingush civilians, being used to road check ups by persons in masks (the power agencies regularly carry out special operations in such a fashion), presented their documents. Those, who showed IDs of representatives of power agencies were shot dead on the spot. The fighters were particularly interested in the personnel of OMON¹⁰, FSB and UBOP. Some of the rank-and file militiamen were set free. There were cases when they were beaten up, forced to swear on Koran that they would give up work for power agencies (the fighters filmed their oaths) and then set free.

Apart from setting checkpoints the fighters attacked buildings of military and law enforcement agencies. The building of frontier troops, mainly manned by the Russian federal servicemen and some Ingushis was set on fire. The upper two floors were entirely burnt. Allegedly, tens of servicemen were killed.

The fighters occupied the storage with ammunition in the area of *Kommunalnaya* bus stop. Allegedly, two or three days before the operation, the warehouse received 2 big containers with weapon and ammunition.

In Karabulak, the second largest town in Ingushetia, the combatants attacked the base of OMON and the local GUVVD. A temporary residence center of Chechen IDPs from Grozny "Kooperator" was subjected to grenade fire and badly damaged. All the windows of the house were broken, the bullets were falling inside of the room where the people were sleeping, the walls and the doorways were destroyed. Similar was the situation in the compact settlement of Chechens IDPs 'Kolos'. Bullets were showering down on the settlement, and only by a lucky coincidence no one was killed. The attack on OMON stopped at 3 p.m. Five minutes later the fire ceased at the building of GUVVD.

According to the representatives of law enforcement agencies during the entire attack, which lasted for four hours, no help arrived from the federal forces, either from federal military bases in North Osetia or from Chechnya. According to their accounts, a long column of federal armed military vehicles arrived to the border of Ingushetia and North Osetia by 2 a.m. The personnel of Ingush MVD, who reside in Prigorodny District of North Osetia got there at the same time. However, the federal servicemen blocked their way to Nazran. The federal units remained at the border, 3-5 minutes drive from Nazran until morning, when the fighters retreated. Early in the morning this unit moved in the direction of the Republican capital Magas, where there were no serious fights. Later it became known that President Putin arrived to Magas for a meeting with the Ingush officials.

As of end of June 2004 no adequate political or legal assessment of the events of June 21 has been done. The motifs and the social make up of the insurgents remain unknown, no official explanations from the secret services, who acquiesced a full scale military operation in a peaceful North Caucasian republic, was verbalized.

VI. Check ups and Detainments of Chechen Forced Migrants in Ingushetia

No big tent camps are left on the territory of Ingushetia, however, there remained the so called places of compact settlement (PCS) for forced migrants from Chechnya. Here people live on the premises of former agricultural or industrial enterprises in plywood houses and tents. After the June 21 insurgency of

⁸ Military Intelligence Service

⁹ Special Forces

¹⁰ Unit of Militia for Special Assignments

fighters to Ingushetia, in compact settlements of Chechens IDPs check ups, raid operations and mass detentions were carried out.

In individual cases the check-ups went hand in hand with threats to immediately leave the territory of Ingushetia. As a result in many PCS the IDPs were seen to be in a state of panic. Many families are promptly returning to Chechnya, where they are not being provided with either adequate housing or social support.

PCS/number of residents	Special operation/ agency, which carried out operation	Date /time	Registered Human Rights Violations	Gas cut offs, electricity, water	Comments
Milk farm «Altievo» (Nazran) 1,300 persons	Mop ups/ joint unit of MVD Ingushetia and federal power agencies	June, 23 18:00 – 20: 30	Beatings, threats, about 50 persons illegally detained	Electricity, gas and water were cut off on 24.06. at 9:00	Seven of the detained were officially put under arrest, the rest were released. As of 3.07.04 all IDPs left the «Altievo» milk farm
		June, 24 17: 00-18: 00	Insults, threats, 1 person illegally detained, Took gold jewelry		
PCS «Logovaz» (Nazran) 812 persons	Passport control/ joint unit of MVD Ingushetia and federal power agencies	June 23	Insults, 2 persons illegally detained	Electricity and gas were cut off	The detained were released, IDPs en masse fled the camp
PCS «Kolos» (Karabulak) 300 persons	Passport control/ Ingush OMON	June 26 9:30 – 16:00	Threats, demands to leave Ingushetia	No cut offs	-
PCS «Agrosnab» (Karabulak) 224 persons	Passport control/ joint unit of MVD Ingushetia and federal power agencies	June 26 7: 00 – 8: 00	No violations registered	Nil cut offs	-
PCS «Kar'er» (Karabulak) 1,700 persons	Passport control/ Ingush OMON	June, 28 16: 00	No violations registered	Nil cut offs	Many families fled to Chechnya
PCS «Tsentr Kamaz» (Nazran) 138 families	Passport control/ joint unit of MVD Ingushetia and federal power agencies	June, 24 20: 30	8 persons detained, 3 had their passports taken away for passport control	Nil cut offs	All the detained released, 1 beaten up As of 3.07. 35 families left for Chechnya
PCS «SMU-4» (Septsovsk) 265 persons	Passport control/ joint unit of Ingush and federal OMON	June, 24 6: 00	Threats, 3 persons beaten	Nil cut offs	8 of 32 families filed applications for departure to Chechnya
PCS «Oskanovskie garazhi» (Septsovsk)	Passport control/ joint unit of Ingush and federal OMON	June, 28 8:30	1 person beaten	Nil cut offs	-

