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Chechnya: More of the Same

Extrajudicial Killings, Enforced

‘Disappearances’, Illegal Arrests, Torture

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF)

30 March 2005

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I - Introduction

The second Chechen war began over 5 years ago. How does the republic mark this sad date? How do people live and survive in a strange situation of “no peace, no war”, under the rule of no law?

There are a few signs of peaceful life. Compensations for lost housing are slowly beginning to be paid (on rare occasions, even without kick-back to relevant officials), separate islands of reconstruction are appearing in Grozny, and many cars are visible on the streets. The central open-air market is ever so busy.

But some other things have not changed at all: Abductions and illegal detentions of civilians by unknown armed persons dressed in camouflage are still pervasive. The only difference is that these people now do not arrive exclusively in military vehicles, but in regular cars as well. As a result, murders, torture and beatings have remained unchanged. And the prosecutor's office is still either unwilling or unable to provide effective investigation into those endless cases.

People are afraid. The work of human rights defenders and journalists is further complicated by the civilians' reluctance to communicate with them: “You cannot change anything, you cannot defend us. And we still need to survive here.” It is hard to argue with this logic.

It has become regular practice to illegally detain and abduct relatives of armed insurgents. Human rights defenders are trying to draw attention to this problem, but so far they have been unsuccessful. Authorities not only refuse to react to this lawlessness – they are actually trying to make it appear normal. On 29 October 2004, in his address to the Russian State Duma, Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation V.F. Ustinov officially suggested to legalize “counter-taking of hostages” as a method in the fight against terrorism.

Another trait of today's Chechnya is the increasing “Chechenization” of the conflict with various local armed formations being engaged in the “fight against terrorism” along with the multi-thousand Russian forces. These are not only “Kadyrovtsi”¹ and “Yamadaevtsi”², but also “Baysarovtsi”³, “Kakievtsi”⁴, etc. Often it is impossible to understand who exactly conducted an operation of detention or abduction. These groups are autonomous (or semi-autonomous), and many of them have their own illegal places of detention, to which the prosecutor's office, of course, has no access. People look for their missing relatives through arranged “black connections”. Hence, a time of “legal bandit formations” has come in Chechnya.

What authorities do they work with, are they coordinated among themselves, does their existence promote security in the republic? During a trip to Chechnya in September 2004, an IHF team managed to meet several members of Baysarov's formation located around the 15th milk farm of the Grozny Rural district of Chechnya. Here are excerpts from that conversation:

- Is it true that Ramzan Kadyrov and Movladi Baysarov have had an argument?

- *Yes. Ramzan visited Movladi after the death of Akhmad-Khadji Kadyrov and told him to dissolve this unit, to send everyone home. He said: ‘After the death of the President you are not part of the presidential Security Service anymore. I don't need your bandits round here.’ But Movladi refused to let us go. He said it was out of the question. He told Raman that we would*

¹ Members of the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic, headed by Ramzan Kadyrov.

² Members of the armed battalion “Vostok”, headed by Sulim Yamadaev.

³ Members of the armed formation, headed by Movladi Baisarov, formerly part of the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic.

⁴ Members of the armed battalion “Zapad”, headed by Said-Magomed Kakiev.

not budge because we killed many Vakhabits and they will be after us. So, if we return to the villages we'll be killed, one by one. They argued for a long time. And then Ramzan came out to us and said: 'It's OK, boys. Movladi and I have sorted everything out. You just stay where you are and wait. There will be some changes in the enforcement structures and I'll make sure to find a good place for you.' But he has not done this so far. We don't have any official cover yet. And we need it.

- In this case, what power structure do you belong to now?

- We work in close cooperation with our FSB, but we are not officially employed anywhere. Only two persons from our group are listed among the employees of Chechnya's power structures. Length of experience does not matter here. If someone is wounded, he receives no social assistance. If our fighter is killed, his family gets nothing. And our boys die often... We had situations when a fighter went to his home village to see his family and was murdered there by the Vakhabits.

Are people afraid of you?

(smiling) - It is more like they use us to scare each other. Once I heard a young man tell another during an argument: "I am from the Baysarov group, we will show you!" I knew that he had no connection to the Baysarov group, and so I asked him why he says such things. And he answered: "Everyone says that you are terrible people."

- When your cars are stopped at check-points, what documents do you show?

- No one has dared to stop us so far.

But it is certainly the "Kadyrovtsy," i.e. members of the so-called Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic headed by the Chechen Vice-Premier Ramzan Kadyrov, son of the late President Akhmad Kadyrov, that are feared the most by Chechnya's civilian population. The recent missions of the IHF researchers to the region clearly demonstrated that as far as Chechen civilians are concerned, today "Kadyrovtsy" are more dangerous to them than federal servicemen. It is worth noting that while some victims and their relatives are willing to elaborate on the violation of their rights by federal servicemen, they are far more reluctant to talk about the crimes of "Kadyrovtsy," lowering their voice to a whisper and trying to avoid any concrete facts. In fact, when the Human Rights Center "Memorial" reports that the number of disappearances decreased by 17% in 2004 if compared to the previous year, the IHF researchers are convinced that one of the possible explanations behind this is that now a great portion of human abductions is perpetrated by "Kadyrovtsy" and in those cases relatives of the victims are afraid to complain due to possible repercussions against themselves or other members of their families.

As far back as on 27 August 2004, the Acting Minister of Internal Affairs, Ruslan Alkhanov, issued an order forbidding representatives of security power structures to carry out special operations on the territory of Chechnya while masked. Speaking on local television, Ruslan Alkhanov said: "From now on, representatives of any power structures who wear masks on the territory of Chechnya will be regarded as criminal elements, and will be subjected to lethal fire. This order has been made clear to all sub-divisions of MIA and other power structures of the republic."⁵

But, as seen in examples below, people in masks are continuing to "watch the order" in the republic, without any fear of punishment. These cases were documented in the course of field missions during the period of November 2004 to January 2005. They are only a part of a bigger and most disturbing picture, a vivid illustration to the pattern of never-ending violation of human rights and humanitarian

⁵ See under <http://kavkaz.strana.ru/news/224670.html>

law in the Chechen Republic, to which the international community fails to provide an adequate response.

II – “Disappearances”, Extrajudicial Killings, Unlawful Detentions and Torture in the City of Grozny

10 November 2004. City of Grozny. Enforced “disappearance” of Mamed Akhmadov (b. 1982)

Between 9 and 10 November, at about 3 am, unknown armed persons in masks abducted Mamed Akhmadov (b. 1982), citizen of Grozny, who spent the night in the house of his relatives, the Dzhauev family in Grozny, 112 Lermontov Street.

Those unknown persons - according to witnesses both Russians and Chechens were among them - approached in two UAZ cars, quietly entered the house, woke up Alikhan Dzhauev (b. 1979) and Mamed Akhmadov, who were sleeping in the same room, and checked the young men's passports. They asked: “Whose car is parked in the yard?”, referring to a Zhiguli VAZ-2106 outside. After Mamed answered that it was his, they grabbed him and dragged him outside.

Then, they woke up Alikhan's brother, Khavadzhi Dzhauev (b. 1958), who lived together with his daughter Zulikhan (b. 1983) in another part of the house. They showed him two passports and asked, which one was his brother's? After he had given the correct answer his room was searched. When he understood that Mamed was taken away, Khavadzhi tried to interfere, but was told to keep quiet unless he wanted his brother taken as well.

The Dzhauevs later discovered that during the search two mobile phones, a video camera and 10.800 roubles were stolen from the house.

Relatives immediately wrote to the prosecutor's office about Mamed's disappearance, but they think that in order to make any progress they have to find assistants among the so-called “black connections”.

18 November 2004. City of Grozny. Abduction of Sultan Aliev (b. 1977)

On 18 November 2004 Sultan Aliev (b. 1977), resident of 51 Kirov St. apt 53, was abducted from the yard of a large residential building in the Grozny district ‘1st Microrayon’. In that yard, Sultan ran a video rental booth, which provided him with some basic income.

At about 9:30 pm a silver-colored Niva with tinted windows and without license plates drove up to the booth. Four camouflaged people without masks came out, forced Sultan into the car and drove away in an unknown direction. The young man's wife, Zulfiya, saw this from her apartment window. Zulfiya's mother, Svetlana Gamzatova, went together with her neighbors to inform Sultan's relatives about the situation. After 1 am they returned home. Near the entrance they were stopped by one more group of people carrying out another special operation.

From an interview with Zulfiya:

We have two children, born in 2000 and 2001. In 1999 we fled from the war to Kalmykia, but in the year 2000 we returned home. This is not Sultan's first detention. His mother lives on B Khmelnitskogo St. in the Ippodromny district of Grozny. Sultan is registered for permanent residence down there. On 18 April 2002, not far from that house, a car carrying employees of the Chechen OMON [special task police] exploded. Many people died. Sultan was in his mother's house at the time. Right after the explosion a mop-up operation was carried out in that area, and all the young men were detained. He was also arrested, although he had a passport and aroused no suspicion. For the next three days the family did not know where he was and where to look for him. Through some connections we managed to find out where he was held. They did let him go when his innocence was confirmed. But he had been beaten so badly that he spent some time in bed afterwards, unable to walk.

On that day, 18 November at 9:30 pm, he was about to close down the booth and was putting the videotapes in order. He probably understood what was going on, because he started saying very loudly, almost yelling, so I would hear: "What's wrong, what are you taking me for?"

I was in the kitchen. Quickly, I opened the window and saw that he was being dragged into the car by his collar. No one was in the yard at the moment. Usually so many friends are there. And it was empty at the time. Only one neighbor boy saw the car. It was a new silver-colored Niva without license plates and with tinted windows. There were four of them, without masks, Chechens. One had a beard. I definitely remember this, because when I started screaming, this bearded one looked up, saw me and quickly pushed my husband into the car. They were armed and wore camouflage. I saw everything through the window, but by the time I ran out the car was gone.

Neighbors ran out because they heard my screams. With one of the neighbors we drove to Leninsky ROVD. Police came back with us immediately, studied the place of detention, questioned witnesses and left. They also checked Sultan's video tapes, but did not find anything forbidden: American action films, comedies and dramas. The rental of these tapes brings us 100 roubles of income per day.

Then my mother with neighbors went to inform relatives. After 1 am they returned, but were stopped outside the building by a group of armed camouflaged people, who forced all the boys to stand against the wall. My mother started yelling: "Don't touch them! They are helping to look for our man!"

I heard the screams and ran downstairs. I was frightened that my mother was harmed. But mother managed to explain everything to them, and they allowed our boys to go. There were 15 of them, all Chechens in masks, and only one Russian without a mask. They had left their cars in the neighboring yard and quietly walked into ours. We found this out later. At the time, I jumped at them and screamed like a psycho: "You took my husband!"

The Russian, the unmasked one, said: "Calm down. Tell us who took your husband."

I started to explain what had happened, and they told me just as quietly: "It was not us, it was not our group. Those who took your husband have a higher standing than us."

After this they came up to the 2nd floor and knocked on the door of our neighbor, Said Shaipov (70 year of ages, prominent actor in the Chechen Republic). Together with other neighbors, who came out when they heard the noise, we screamed at them: "What do you need?"

One of them tried to calm us down: "Calm down, we're looking for someone!"

Said himself could hardly move. They did not wait for him to get up and open the door, they just broke it down. Said later told us that when he asked who they were and what they wanted, he was told: "Be quiet, old man."

One man, though, spoke Chechen to him and tried to comfort him. They were looking for his son Rizvan. Said told them that Rizvan -- he is a security guard -- was at work. So, they took some family videocassettes and left.

The same group of people also took away a boy from the adjacent yard, Zaur. I don't know his last name. Later he was released, but his family refuses to speak to anyone about it.⁶ We went to the prosecutor's office, but were told: "We have many reported abductions. We just cannot investigate them all. Wait for one month. Those who are abducted can be thrown out after a month anyway. Wait and see if they or he will contact you."

But what can we wait for? How will he contact us? What if he is beaten every day? Maybe he won't survive? I did not go to the prosecutor's office again – what's the point?!

We look for him ourselves everywhere. People tell us different things. Someone advised us to look for him in the detention facilities of the 6th department [department against organized crime also known as ORB-2]. He was not there. Then, with neighbors we traveled to Khosi-Yurt [also known as Tsenteroi -- located in the Kurchaloevsky district of Chechnya, the native village of the Kadyrovs, where Ramzan Kadyrov, according to numerous sources, has an illegal prison], to see the Kadyrovtsi. We asked them if he is there. They answered: "We detain only Vakhabits and those who make explosions."

It is good that our neighbors were with me. They started to explain how he was always in his booth, how he could be seen from morning till night, how he couldn't be guilty of anything. The man who was talking to us contacted someone, and then said: "He definitely isn't here. If he was here, we could have contacted you within days. We don't travel to the city at all."

Then, a woman told me that on that same day when Sultan was taken, here in our '1st Microrayon', in her yard, the same Niva car was seen; also four people in masks. They wanted to take one boy, but they were too late. Someone else already had him.

According to information from the Human Rights Center 'Memorial', Sultan Aliev was set free on the 21st day after his abduction. He was kept in the basement of an unofficial „prison“, in a narrow cell, a so called „mug“. According to Aliev, there were many such „mugs“ with grids instead of doors in the basement.

Aliev was interrogated by masked persons. During the interrogations he was beaten - mostly by a narrow tube, on the heels and the knee caps - and tortured with electricity. His interrogators were interested in how much he gained a day and who could pay a ransom for him. During all the days he was held captive, he was given water only once. He tried to overcome his thirst by drinking his own urine.

As he heard cries and moaning of people being beaten Aliev knew that there were other people in the neighboring cells, but he was unable to talk to them. When he tried, he was subjected to further beatings. He was judging the course of time by the crowing of the roosters, which also made him think that he was being held somewhere in a rural area.

On the 21st day after his abduction unknown people left Aliev close to the ROVD-building (Regional Department of the Ministry of Interior) in the Leninsky district of Grozny. There were policemen nearby the building, but without any reaction from their part.

During the time he was held captive Sultan lost about twenty kilos. He got serious health problems. He has great pain in the area of the kidneys and the knee-caps and also constant headaches. However, it is not possible for him to go and do tests in a hospital, as the abductors kept his passport.

⁶ According to Human Rights Center 'Memorial', on 19 November at 2 am in the adjacent yard, at 17 Kirov Street, 22-year-old Zaur Khadisov was detained. According to his father, a group of armed masked camouflaged persons entered their apartment wearing black spotted uniform. When owners asked questions, they threatened to shoot them. After the apartment was searched, the man who stood in the doorway said that Zaur needs to be taken, and they left. Zaur's father managed to follow the column of cars with soldiers (four VAZ-21099, a steel-colored Niva and a Jeep Landcruiser) to the 'RTS Microrayon', where power structures are located (patrol service, OMON). Then his pursuit was stopped: military men took away his car keys and broke the steering wheel. The next day they came again and told the father: "If your son is innocent, he will come back."

25 November 2004. City of Grozny. Unlawful detention and torture of Ramzan Edilbekov (b. 1950)

On 25 November at about 9 pm unknown armed people in camouflage and masks abducted Ramzan Edilbekov (b. 1950) from his residence at Grozny, 9 Olimpiysky proezd, apt 17. After 24 hours of detention Ramzan was released.

From Ramzan's story:

I graduated from a forest college. Now I am into commerce, trying to support my family. I have four children. On 25 November I was alone. My son went somewhere, and my wife with the other children was shopping in Nalchik. At about 9 pm someone knocked at my door and I opened it. Five or six people, all Chechens in camouflage and masks, entered the room. They checked my documents. Then they said: "Dress warmly." I got dressed. They put my hat low over my eyes and fixed it with scotch tape. I was terribly worried that no one was home, and no one saw that I was taken away.

They put me in a car and drove for a while. They were silent. We arrived at an unknown house, walked up the stairs and through some low entrance. Then, they put me on a bench, attached wires to my two big toes and started questioning me. All the time the hat was over my eyes. "When was the last time you went to Baku? When was the last time you saw Dokka Umarov or Akhmed [Zakaev]? Where are your children?"

My answers did not satisfy them. No matter what I said, they would beat me with sticks. Although they spoke Russian, they were all Chechens. Sometimes, I answered something in Chechen, but they pretended not to understand. They continued to speak Russian. There were a few of them, how many exactly – I don't know. They beat me on the back, in the heart area. They had different sticks. The one they used to hit me on the head was ringing. My scalp still burns.

This continued for about an hour. Then, I was taken first outside, then down the stairs, then to a cold basement. When we were walking down, the one who was escorting me told me in Chechen: "Someone has reported you. We will check it, and if everything is normal, we will let you go. And we will punish the one who told on you." It was for the first time that someone spoke Chechen to me.

In the basement, they removed my handcuffs. When I was alone, I took off the scotch tape and lifted the hat from my eyes. Later I worried that I would be punished for this, but they said nothing. I looked around and saw that I was in a boiler room. [In Chechnya, boilers are often located in special barns in the yard.] The boiler stood nearby, all rusty, with holes for pipes above the iron door. The floor, the walls, everything was made of concrete. The only piece of furniture was a legless couch. A road must have been nearby, because I heard the noise of passing cars.

I spent the night there. I was not bothered at all the next day, but someone brought some tea and bread for me. It happened like this. An order came from behind the doors: "Face away from the door." I turned my back. The door opened. They put a bag over my head. Then, someone entered and left the tea and the bread. After he left I could take off the bag.

After dark, I was again handcuffed and taken to questioning with a hat over my eyes. This time I was not beaten, only purposefully terrified. They told me: "Did you remember anything? This is the end. Time to finish this." One of them approached me: "I was fighting for you to survive. But you will be shot."

After this I was taken outside and put into a car. We were driving for a very long time. No one spoke, only Arabic music was playing. Then, the car stopped. They led me out of the car, took off my handcuffs, gave me my passport and told me to lie on the ground.

When they drove off, I got up and took the hat off my eyes. They left me in the Boronovsky bridge area, where the 3rd hospital once was. It was about 10 pm.

Later I found out that my son had realized I had been detained when he saw all the footprints. He ran for help. Some policemen live in our house, and they all began to look for me. The Leninsky district police replied that the police was not aware of my detention. Investigators checked our apartment.

My son was told that the prosecutor's office initiated a criminal case on my abduction.

21 December 2004. City of Grozny. A force operation in the premises rented by the Czech humanitarian organization "People in Need". Extrajudicial execution of Isa Sakayev (b. 1975)

On 21 December 2004 Chechen OMON police units carried out a special operation in the women's training center «Iman» (82 Vinogradniy Str., Grozny), which resulted in the death of Isa Sakayev (b. 1975), a native of the Belgatoy village (Shali district). Isa Sakayev was suspected of involvement with the illegal armed formations. Two other sisters, Lursa Sakayeva (b. 1961), who worked as a coordinator of the «Iman» center, and Khotmat Sakayeva (b. 1964), were detained at the site of the special operation, and later charged under article 33, part 2 (assistance to members of illegal armed formations) and article 205 (terrorism) of the RF Criminal Code. They are kept in the Grozny pretrial detention facilities pending a trial.

According to the official information, weapons, ammunition, fake IDs, letterheads and seals of the RF Interior Ministry have been found in the neighboring house, rented by the Czech humanitarian organization 'People in Need Foundation' (PINF), who used it as a warehouse for construction materials distributed within a UNHCR-funded program. The «Iman» center has been also created as a part of a PINF-sponsored initiative and provided computer and sewing courses to women. One computer, allegedly used for making fake RF Interior Ministry's Ids, was confiscated from the office of the «Iman» center.

When the main Chechen TV channels – the ChGTRK and the GTV - reported on the special operation in the evening of 21 December, they also showed an interview with the Chechen Interior Minister, Ruslan Alkhanov, who particularly focused on the alleged role of the 'People in Need Foundation' in this case.

The registration of PINF expired on 28 December 2004, and although the organization timely applied for a prolongation of the registration at the Moscow Registration Chamber and submitted all the required documents, the Chamber is not ready to comply "until the details of this case are clarified". The Chamber sent an inquiry to the prosecutor's office of the Leninsky district in Grozny and the prolongation of PINF's registration now depends on the response of the prosecutor.

PINF's director in the North Caucasus, Marek Vozka, acts a witness in this case, and was twice summoned to the prosecutor's office by the investigator Movladi Dukayev (on 18 and 20 January 2005). The investigator was interested in the objectives and methods of PINF's activities, as well as their personnel recruitment strategies. According to Marek Vozka, his answers were repeatedly recorded incorrectly in the protocol and he had to insist on their correction. Besides, he had the impression of getting pressured in order to testify against his staff, and in particular against Lursa Sakayeva. He emphasized that he had no information on her alleged involvement with the illegal armed formations' activities and had no idea about the weapons allegedly stored in the warehouse rented by his organization. He had hired Sakayeva in August 2003, shortly before the opening of the

«Iman» center in September. Up till December 2004, he met her once per week to discuss the center's activities and was quite satisfied with her work.

Vozka had to hand over a complete list of PINF's staff members, a total of about 200 persons, to the investigator, indicating their respective positions and passport data. He fears that due to the criminal case PINF's request for the extension of registration will be refused, and the organization, therefore, will be unable to render further humanitarian assistance to the people in Chechnya and Ingushetia.

Another sister of the killed Isa Sakayev, Gestam Sakayeva, a staff-member of the French NGO 'Handicapped International', strongly rejects the accusations against her brother and her two sisters.

From the interview with Gestam Sakayeva:

We are eight sisters in the family and Isa was your only brother, and the youngest child at that. Our father died when Isa was three years of age. When the second Chechen war began in 1999, the then 24-year old Isa, together with many young co-villagers, went to the mountains to join the armed fighters. We were all looking for him for two months, and after having found him in Vedeno, brought him back home. As far as we know, he did not participate in any military actions during that time. Back home, Isa told us that he was looking for purity when he had joined the rebels but soon realized that neither they nor the Russians were pure. After that, he lived in the village quietly, helped us around the house and studied at the economics faculty of the Chechen State University. We were so afraid for him. So, we watched his every step and always knew where he went. The federal forces regularly conducted "mop-up" operations in Belgatoy, but Isa was never detained. So, we were certain he was clean. In 2004, he graduated from the Chechen State University and enrolled in the Moscow Legal Academy by correspondence.

In summer 2004, he went to a birthday party of a co-villager and stayed there very late. At some point in the night, we heard a noise and thought that Isa was coming back home. One of us looked outside and saw that the house was being surrounded by a group of armed people in masks. We were scared that Isa would come back then and the armed people would take him away from us. The group searched the house, but discovered nothing illegal and left. Fortunately, Isa showed up a quarter of an hour later. We convinced him to move temporally to Dagestan. And he lived there till December 2004. From time to time he visited us but stayed away from Belgatoy. Instead, he met up with us Grozny. At that time, he was studying by correspondence at the Legal Academy in Moscow but did travel there twice to take examinations. His documents were regularly checked, especially during his trips from Dagestan to Grozny and to Moscow, but he never had any problems.

In mid-December he learnt that our mother was seriously ill. He was afraid that she could die without seeing him and a few days later he started from Dagestan directly to Belgatoy. He did not tell any of us about his visit fearing that we would object out of fear for his safety. He arrived to the village on 20 December, but did not find our mother there. By that time, I had already taken her to Nazran, where I could take a better care of her. Isa spent the night in the village and early 21 December went to Grozny together with our sister Khotmat. They came to the «Iman» center, where Lursa worked, and then wanted to go down to Nazran and see the mother. In fact, Lursa was in Nazran on that very day, but they were simply not aware of it and stayed till late night in the office waiting for her. She came in around 7 pm. As it was not safe to go anywhere at this time, they all decided to spend the night right in the «Iman» center.

When the special operation started, Isa was shot dead right in front of our two sisters.

You should also know that one of the neighbors saw how the Chechen OMON [special task police] brought the weapons into the warehouse themselves. He told me all about it. However, he refuses to testify – he is afraid of possible repercussions. I am convinced that my brother Isa

and my sisters, Lursa and Khotmat, had nothing to do with the fighters. This whole special operation with the 'discovery' of the weapons in the warehouse was probably a provocation of the power structures that want to control the activities of PINF.

20 January 2005. City of Grozny. Abduction of human rights lawyer Makhmut Magomadov (b. 1954)

On 20 January 2005, during the Muslim holiday Kurban-Bayram, the well-known lawyer and human rights activist, Makhmut Magomadov (b. 1954, living at Gorniakov street, Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny), was abducted in the city of Grozny. In the last two years, he actively cooperated with the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) and the Moscow-based International Protection Centre in preparing complaints to the European Court on Human Rights on behalf the victims of human rights abuses in Chechnya. After having interviewed some of his relatives as well as representatives of law enforcement agencies the IHF found significant grounds to consider that members of the Chechen enforcement agencies, particularly “Kadyrovtsy,” and the Federal Security Service (FSB) were involved into his kidnapping.

On 20 January 2005 at 6.30 pm, Makhmut Magomadov, his wife Elbika Shabazova, their daughter Iman (4 years of age) and son Arbalo (6 months) came by car to visit Abubakar Amirov, a friend of Magomadov, who lived in the same district of Grozny. Magomadov went upstairs to his friend's apartment together with his little daughter, while his wife and the baby stayed in the car waiting for them to come back.

Five cars rapidly drove up to the same house (among them a silver colored Niva with a license plate comprising the digits 863, a cherry colored VAZ-21099, a white VAZ-2107 with a license plate comprising the digits 008 95 RUS, and a GAZ-31029). Approximately 15 camouflaged men came out from the cars. They spoke Chechen. Some of them entered the house and went upstairs. Elbika became nervous, and after several minutes she also entered the building. She saw how the armed men escorted her husband down the stairs. Their daughter Iman seized her father by his trouser-leg. The kidnappers tried to tear her off but she held on with all her strength.

Elbika begged the men to release her husband. When they were approaching the cars, she rushed to them, threw herself at Makhmut and tried to hold on to him, but the abductors roughly pushed her to the side. (Abubakar Amirov later told Elbika that at first the men behaved quite politely, did not resort to violence and just proposed Makhmut Magomadov to follow them.) The kidnappers got into the cars, forced Makhmut into one of them and drove in the direction of the city center.

The Staropromyslovsky district prosecutor's office in Grozny initiated a criminal case on Makhmut Magomadov's abduction (article 126 of the RF Criminal Code), and the investigation was entrusted to investigator Ruslan Tsukumov.

No official information on Magomadov's destiny was available until 24 January, when a man, introducing himself as a representative of the law enforcement, came to the flat of the Magomadov family. At this time only Elbika's older sister was at home. The visitor asked her to inform Makhmut Magomadov that he had to come to the Staropromyslovsky district prosecutor's office at 9 a.m. the next day. The woman was shocked to hear that and answered that Magomadov would be unable to do so since he had been kidnapped, of which the prosecutor was well aware. But the visitor said that Magomadov should be at already home, since he was released, and that he should urgently see the investigator and prosecutor in order to close the criminal case on his abduction. Then the visitor asked the woman again to notify Magomadov as soon as possible about the necessity to come to the prosecutor's office. Elbika's sister referred to her bad memory and insisted on a written warrant. Unwillingly, the visitor gave her the warrant, but without a stamp. The warrant was signed by a certain

S.R. Murtaev, from the Department of Interior of the Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny. Asked who was this Murtaev, the visitor answered “It is me” and hastened away.

The next morning, when Magomadov still did not return, his family members went to the investigator Tsukumov, showed him the warrant and demanded to clarify the matter. Tsukumov replied that he had no idea about either the warrant or the identity of Murtaev, but promised to find out.

Then, on 26 January, his relatives went again to the investigator, this time together with representatives of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. Tsukumov said that he still had no idea, who Murtaev was. At the same time, he alleged that the warrant was in fact delivered by a man with the forename Saypuddi, an operative worker of the Department of Interior. The investigator did not remember his surname, though. He explained that he made an inquiry to the Department of Interior regarding the warrant and Murtaev, and then Saypuddi came to see him in his office and said that they had information about Magomadov’s release. Tsukumov wondered where the information came from and Saypuddi allegedly answered “from you” -- meaning the prosecutor’s office.

Investigator Tsukumov seemed unwilling to speak about the case. He said that he had asked the road police authorities (GAI) for a list of cars corresponding to the given license plate numbers and that he had extensively disseminated Magomadov’s photos among the law enforcement agencies in all districts in Chechnya. Magomadov’s relatives and the IHF representatives, though, got the impression that the investigator was not interested in seriously investigating the case and just imitated some activity by spreading out multiple copies of Magomadov’s photos on his own desk. (To note, when Magomadov’s relatives and the IHF representatives came to the prosecutor’s office they had to wait for Tsukumov for a relatively long time. And it is very likely that the investigator used that time to print the copies of Magomadov’s photos especially for their benefit.)

In order to obtain more information, the IHF representatives also went to the office of the Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic. Allegedly, Prosecutor Kravchenko and his deputies were away from the office. Later during the day, however, the IHF researchers were told by a representative of the Human Rights Center ‘Memorial’, who had managed to enter the premises owing to a personal acquaintance with one of the prosecutorial officials that the Prosecutor’s Office of Chechnya was not working on Magomadov’s case. The official added quietly: “You know, they are dealing with this case at *“the other place”*”.

Considering the traditions of the contemporary Russian language such wording may only mean the Federal Security Service (FSB). This allegation is backed by the private investigation of some of Magomadov’s relatives, who used their good connections at the Ministry of the Interior. From these credible sources they received information that the FSB and the “Kadyrovtsy” had orchestrated the kidnapping of Magomadov. At first, they kept him in Ramzan Kadyrov’s native village Tsenteroi, and then he was transferred to some place of detention managed by the FSB.

The IHF alleges that among the likely reason behind Makhmut Magomadov’s abduction were his activities as a human rights lawyer, particularly those relevant to his participation in the drafting of complaints to the European Court on Human Rights on numerous cases of enforced disappearances. Another possible explanation is that his abduction is part of the pattern of repression against persons (and their families) that held prominent office during the period between the two Chechen wars. At that time, Magomadov, an experienced lawyer, worked as Deputy Prosecutor General of the Chechen Republic and headed a special unit combating kidnappings. All together, the unit succeeded in liberating approximately 200 persons.

Magomadov’s abduction was protested by human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the IHF as well as the “Memorial” and other Russian organizations. It has also been the concern of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Court on Human Rights, and the European Union.

On 13 February 2005 Magomadov reappeared -- he telephoned the head of the “Chechen Committee for National Salvation”, Ruslan Badalov, and told him that he had returned home the previous evening. In that telephone conversation he indicated that his captors had held him for one night only. According to him, he was arrested by mistake instead of a person with the same name. Allegedly, the law-enforcers noticed the discrepancy between Makhmut’s age and the age of the man they took him for, and Magomadov was released. Once freed, he supposedly decided to take no chances, left the republic and stayed away for about three weeks.

Nevertheless, representatives of the Chechen NGOs strongly doubt Magomadov’s own version of the events. They emphasized to the IHF researchers that “evidently Magomadov was under threat and obliged to tell this particular story. Most likely, he was arrested and only released after numerous appeals by international and human rights organizations.”

The IHF is also convinced that Magomadov was freed only owing to consolidated pressure from a range of international organizations and cannot reveal the truth about his abductors, fearing for his safety as well as for the safety of his family.

III Cases from the Grozny Rural district of Chechnya

6-7 November 2004. Village of Starye Atagi, Grozny Rural district. Enforced “disappearances” of Bodrudi Kantaev (b. 1964) and Adam Demelhanov (b. 1983)

In the night of 6 to 7 November 2004, two local residents Bodrudi Kantaev (b. 1964) and Adam Demelhanov (b. 1983) were abducted from the village of Starye Atagi, Grozny Rural district of the Chechen Republic, by unknown representatives of the law enforcement agencies. In both cases the masked and camouflaged kidnappers, speaking predominantly Russian, arrived in armored vehicles, being apparently federal military troops.

Adam Demelhanov is a student at the Chechen State University. Previously, he studied mechanics, worked as a mechanic and helped his parents around the house, in which he was living with them in Starye Atagi, at Nagornaja Street 73. He is their only son.

On the night of the abduction, he was at home with his mother (Aina Gadaeva, b. 1944), his father (Aindi Demelhanov (b. 1952), his 80-year old grandfather (Alvi Gadaev) and his younger sister Maka (b. 1987), who became mute and acquired a severe developmental disability in the first war, when a shell dropped in their yard at the end of 1995.

On the night of 6 to 7 November, Aina Gadaeva got up at 3 o’clock in the morning to cook a meal for her family. (*Note: it was Ramadan where the meals are cooked and eaten after the end of the day and before dawn.*) At 3.15 am several armored carriers drove up to their house. Some 40 masked men in camouflage rushed to the yard. Aina went out and asked: “What has happened?” According to her, the intruders were running about “like madmen, like beasts”. One of them grabbed her, pushed her, forced her to lie flat on the porch, pressed her head with his foot and held an automatic rifle to her back. Some ten military men broke into the house. The rest waited in the yard. Several armed men entered Adam’s room. Gun shots resounded. Then the unclothed and bleeding Adam was taken out, dragged by his feet onto the porch and across the yard, and was then thrown into an armoured carrier.

The eighty-year-old Alvi Gadaev, who came out to see what the noise was all about, was hit several times in the face with the butt of a gun and thrown to the floor not far from the door, right into the pool of blood that collected while his wounded grandson was being dragged from the house by his feet. Alvi Gadaev lost consciousness.

Adam Demelhanov's father, Aindi Gandaev, was also immediately captured by the servicemen. He was blindfolded, his hands were tied with scotch-tape, and he was dragged into another armoured carrier, still in his underwear and barefoot. The vehicle pulled off, covered a short distance and then stopped. Aindi was taken out and left standing, blindfolded and with his hands tied. He thought he was going to be shot dead, but then heard that the vehicle drove away. He waited a bit, managed to untie himself and started walking away. It turned out that he was left at the crossroads to Mesker-Yurt, on the road to Novye Atagi. Somebody driving by in a "Volga" car gave him a lift back home, where he arrived at about 5.10 am. It was then that Aina Gadaeva and Aindi Demelhanov learnt that the same night, besides their son, the military servicemen also took Bodrudi Kantaev, who lived nearby.

Adam Demelhanov's parents, together with Bodrudi Kantaev's relatives went to the district police station, which is located in the village of Tolstoj-Yurt. They also went to see the officials of the Grozny Rural district prosecutor's office and the head of the administration of the village Starye Atagi. In the morning of 7 November, an operative group arrived from the village of Tolstoj-Yurt, composed of representatives of the district police and those of the district prosecutor's office. They inspected the Demelhanov/Gadaeva's home, found empty shells in Adam's room, took them and issued the respective procedural documents. The same group inspected Bodrudi Kantaev's home. By 3 pm the operative group handed over all materials on the case to the military prosecutor's office.

The story of Aina Gadaeva, Adam Demelhanov's mother:

Adam is my only son. He has nothing to be accused of. He always stayed at home, helped me around the household. They shot at him! Why? There was a pool of blood. And they dragged him by his feet straight by the iron pole which juts out of the gates. Why? On purpose? So that his back would be torn? He was bleeding profusely already. Also, a whole puddle of blood collected where they were forcing him in the armoured carrier. We never heard anything about him since...

The story of Aindi Demelhanov, Adam Demelhanov's father:

I was always making Adam study, so that he would not mix with bad company. At the beginning mechanics. Then at the university. Every single penny we had, we spent on his studies. So that he could graduate. So that he wouldn't be thinking stupid and dangerous thoughts. And here's what happened to him. Just think about it! A man who tries to lead a normal life cannot do so, because they don't let him! What sort of law is this?

I am afraid for my son. I am also afraid to complain. We were visited by the television people, but I refused to be filmed. Because in fact my son is in the hands of a real group of bandits, even though they wear military uniforms. What's going to happen if I do something and they get angry with me? What if they kill my son because of that? Because of me...

Bodrudi Kantaev (b. 1964) lives in the village of Starye Atagi. He suffers from an open form of tuberculosis. He did not take part in the hostilities, neither in the first nor in the second phase of the Chechen campaign. He makes his living by working as a carpenter.

On 7 November at 3 a.m., four armoured carriers drove up to Kantaev's house at 261 Nuradilova street. At that time Bodrudi, his wife Maret Kantaeva and their two children, aged six and seven, were at home. According to Maret, over 20 military servicemen entered the yard and more than ten of them broke into the house. They started beating Bodrudi in front of his wife and kids. They shouted to his wife: "Lie down!" When she refused, they hit her and threw her to the floor. Her seven-year old son was also hit several times. Then, the armed men dragged Bodrudi Kantaev outside the home, threw him in one of their armored carriers and drove away in the direction of the neighboring village Novye Atagi. The abductors took with them Bodrudi's passport and also stole several jars of vegetable and fruit preserves.

As soon as the kidnappers had left, Maret Kantaeva informed her brother-in-law, Ruslan Kantaev, about the incident. He immediately met with the head of the administration of Starye Atagi and then proceeded to the Grozny Rural district police department. From the police department he drove together with the operative group to the house of the Demelhanov and Gadaev families, where Adam Demelhanov had been kidnapped approximately at the same time as Bodrudi Kantaev.

Suleyman Idigov, another inhabitant of Starye Atagi, came into the house during the examination by the operative group. He said that he too had been detained in the night by federal servicemen who arrived in armored carriers. According to Idigov, it was a special operation aimed at the detention of a certain Beslan Gadaev, suspected of participation in an illegal armed group. Suleyman Idigov was forced into one of the armored carriers. In that vehicle, there was, among others, a colonel of the Army of the Russian Federation, addressed by his subordinated as San-Sanych. They went to Beslan Gadaev's house, situated at Nagornaya St., in front of the house of the Demelhanov and Gadaev families. The military men started shooting. A number of them entered the house, but did not find Beslan Gadaev. Then, the armored carriers moved away in the direction of the village of Goity. Suleyman Idigov got off from the armored carrier close to the mill near Starye Atagi.

Ruslan Kantaev, Bodrudi Kantaev's brother, told the IHF researchers that his brother and Adam Demelhanov were most probably taken instead of Beslan Gadaev. Ruslan Kantaev explained: *"Some bandits or rebels lived in the neighborhood with my brother. They bought some weapons for themselves in 2002. That is why my brother was taken away. They cannot catch the real bandits, so they just take away their neighbors."*

On 8 November, Bodrudi Kantaev's and Adam Demelhanov's relatives together with some classmates of Adam Demelhanov came to the Governmental House of the Chechen Republic and demanded the return of the disappeared. President Alu Alkhanov met with them and directed them to his law enforcement advisor, Vakha Nasukhov, who indicated that he knew the whereabouts of Bodrudi Kantaev and Adam Delemhanov and promised that they would be soon returned to their respective homes. On that day, the materials regarding the abductions were transferred to the Military Prosecutor's Office.

According to information from Memorial, by 27 February 2004 it is still unknown what happened with the abducted Demelkhanov and Kantaev. Their relatives were informed that based on the facts of their abduction, a criminal case has been opened and the place where the crime has taken place has been inspected by a group of investigation experts from the prosecutor's office. However, their relatives have not yet been informed either about the progress of the investigation, or its results.

28 November 2004. Village of Sovkhoz Alkhanchursky, Grozny Rural district. Attack on and beating of Murad Aziev⁷

On 28 November at about 10 pm, in the village Sovkhoz Alkhanchursky (Grozny Rural district) unknown armed camouflaged people brutally beat Murad Aziev. A local police worker who tried to stop the attack was also beaten.

From the interview with Murad Aziev:

I work in the city (Grozny) in a security service. During the weekend I went home to sovkhos and found out that young people have been afraid to stay there for the last week. Four times during the week unknown Chechen persons arrived in 2-3 cars, grabbed young men on the streets, beat and humiliated them, and left. That night, on 28 November, I was standing near the marketplace close to the center when a car without plates approached me. It slowed down, and someone asked me: "How do we get to the center?" I said: "Why do you need to get there?"

⁷ Last name changed.

That's when it started. They jumped out: "You think that if you wear a uniform, all is your business!" I tried to find out, who they were, where they came from. They answered: "We are from the 15th sovkhos." (meaning Movladi Baysarov's formation). I replied: "I know the Baysarovtsi." They said: "Then, we're from Ramzan!" (meaning Ramzan Kadyrov's formation). With these words they pushed me to the ground and began to beat me. There were a few of them, I couldn't do anything. Our local policeman saw this and ran to help me. But they beat him too. Women who worked nearby in the marketplace started yelling and ran to us, but they were stopped by gun fire at the ground in front of them. Then the unknown persons quickly jumped into their car and drove off. When the Chechen OMON arrived, it was too late. The attackers had already left the village.

18 January 2005. Village of Chechen-Aul, Grozny Rural district. Unlawful attack at the Isayevs' house, beating of the family members and abduction of the disabled Saikhan Isayev (b. 1984)

On 18 January 2005 at 3 am, unidentified armed people in masks and grey camouflage, allegedly federal servicemen, broke into the Isayevs' house in the village Chechen-Aul, Kirov St. 34. Having beaten all family members, they left and took the 20 year old Saikhan Isayev, disabled since childhood, with them.

According to the family's head, Said Isayev (b. 1957), he was awakened at 3 am in the night of 17 to 18 January from the scream of his seventeen-year old daughter-in-law, Markha. Armed servicemen in grey camouflage and masks, who spoke unaccented Russian, opened the gate and entered the dark house using flashlights. Having passed through the hall and the living room, they came into a room where Said's eldest son Rustam Isayev (b. 1980) and his wife Markha were sleeping. To note, Markha was seven-month pregnant. They bound hands and feet of both Rustam and Markha and glued scotch tape over their lips. Then they knocked Markha from the bed with their feet, took Rustam into the living room and started beating him by feet and gun butts. After two-three minutes, Markha managed to free her mouth from the scotch tape and screamed. Said Isayev, who slept with his two younger sons in the back room came out and, still standing in the doorway, asked: «Who are you? What do you need? ». Instead of a getting a reply to his questions he was asked for his last name. When the intruders made sure it was Isayev, they ordered Said: «Go back to your room. Why are you screaming here? Go to bed!». He pushed away the nearest intruder and tried to switch on the light. After that they threw Said to the floor and started beating him like his son. He had three ribs and most of his teeth broken and suffered a brain concussion as a result of the beating. Then, his middle son Mamikhan (b. 1982) came out and was also brutally beaten. The beating of the Isayevs took six-seven minutes. During that time, Said's youngest son Saikhan, disabled since childhood, stayed in the bedroom. He became handicapped during the first war when he suffered a heavy shell wound in his belly. Since then he needed constant medical care. He could not lift and transport heavy weights and was strictly prohibited to run and to make rapid movements. Having found Saikhan in the bed, the servicemen also beat him. Said is convinced of that, because when the intruders were taking Saikhan out, he could not move by himself and the abductors had to carry him. Because the street was narrow, the officers failed to park all their vehicles near the house. Their four-door «Taiga» vehicle and VAZ-469-«tablet» were parked in the next street, which was somewhat wider. Mamikhan rushed out of the house following the abductors but the night was very foggy and he could see only their silhouettes in the end of the street. When he reached the spot where the cars were parked, the abductors were already gone.

One of the Isayevs' neighbors gave Mamikhan a ride to the check-point run by the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic located on the outskirts of the village. The Security Service officials confirmed that both the «Taiga» and the «Tabletka» had passed the check-point, but they had not thought that it is necessary to stop them. On Mamikhan's demand, they started their UAZ car and followed the abductors, but after a while they stopped the pursuit explaining that they were only three and the powers were not equal. (It should be pointed out that those three were on the night patrol but

about 20 armed officers were nearby, in the building belonging to the Security Service adjoining to the check-point. All of them were dispatched from the Gudermes district to serve in Chechen-Aul.)

The Isayevs have not filed an official complaint to the prosecutor's office, because they know that it can harm them, on the one hand, but will be of no help to Saikhan, on the other hand. They have orally reported about the incident to the police, the village administration and the FSB. The FSB officers have checked the Isayevs in their computer database and informed them that «you are all clean and we have nothing against you».

On 23 January, the mother of the abducted, Bella Isayeva, who had stayed with her relatives during the night of the incident, organized a little demonstration. With the support of some other women of the same village and from the neighboring village Belgatoy, where two local residents had been kidnapped by some unidentified officers from power structure the same day they blocked the main road leading to Shali and Vedenno. Local police officers asked the women to disperse and promised to find the abducted people within a few days.

Later, Zulai Suleimanova (Muskhadjiev) and her husband's relative Muskhadjiev (first name unknown), both of whom had been abducted from Belgatoy, were released. Suleimanova was pushed out of the car by her kidnappers in the village of Dzhalka (Gudermes district) and Muskhadjiev in the settlement Petropavlovskaya (Grozny Rural district).

The destiny of Saikhan Isayev, however, remains unknown. In order to draw attention of the officials to his protracted disappearance, Bella Isayeva decided to organize another blocking of the road. As law-obedient citizens, Bella and her supporters found it necessary to inform the police of the planned action. Police officers pleaded with them: «Please, don't do that, because they yell at us from Moscow, if there are such protests». Bella answered: «I don't care that they yell at you. Give my son back to me!»

IV Cases from the Vedenno district of Chechnya

14 November 2004. Village of Vedenno. Abduction of Magomed Ayubov (b. 1981). Unlawful detention of Arbi Pashaev

On 14 November armed camouflaged people in masks abducted Magomed Ayubov (b. 1981) and Arbi Pashaev from one of the streets in the village of Vedenno (Vedenno district). Pashaev was released the next day.

In the beginning of the second Chechen war, Ayubov moved to Ingushetia, where he lived with his family in a tent camp. After the camp was closed down, he came back to Chechnya and stayed in Grozny, in the Temporary Accommodation Center (TAC), on 15/4 B. Dudaeva St.

On 13 November, as the holiday of Ramadan was about to start, Magomed went to Vedenno to congratulate his relatives. On 13 November, he and Arbi Pashaev were driving Ayubov's car through the village, when a UAZ vehicle suddenly blocked the road and stopped them. Armed people in masks jumped out and dragged the two young men into the UAZ in front of many witnesses. They drove away, taking Ayubov's car with them. Later, the plundered automobile was found on the village outskirts.

Relatives of the abducted addressed the authorities on the same day, but were told that the fate and the whereabouts of the young men were unknown. The following day, Pashaev returned and explained that he and Magomed had been held in a pit. When the night ended, he was dropped off on the outskirts of the village Argun. He also reported that the people who abducted them were all Chechens.

When he asked, why Magomed was not freed together with him, he was told to be grateful for his own release.

This is not the first illegal detention of Magomed Ayubov. At the end of October 2004, he and his brother were taken from their work and held for 4 days in an unknown location, where they were questioned about some of their acquaintances, who were allegedly involved with the armed insurgents.

According to information from the Human Rights Center 'Memorial', received on the 15th March, Ajubov was set free after 21 days of being held captive. He said that when he was abducted, he was taken in a car for about an hour and a half, then put in a small cell, completely devoid of light. He was given warm bedcovers and given food once a day. Two military men interrogated him regularly, but he was unable to see their faces for he had to sit with his head bent when being interrogated. Besides, a blinding hand-held torch was kept focused on his eyes. He states that the interrogators spoke unaccented Russian.

From his interrogations Ajubov could conclude that some informer had reported him as a helper for the fighters (claiming that he allegedly helped with their transportation). The military promised Magomed that he would be released as soon as they were convinced he was innocent. No physical violence was used against him.

On the 21st day of his detention the young man was thrown out in the outskirts of the town of Argun (he was taken out blindfolded, then made to lay on the ground and was ordered not to make attempts to take off whatever was used to blindfold him until the car had driven away). The Vedeno prosecutor's office opened a criminal case on his abduction. Following his release Magomed himself wrote a declaration and the case was closed.

The situation in the Vedeno district of the Chechen Republic as of January 2005. Consequences of bringing into the district additional subdivisions of the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic

Around 20 January 2005, additional subdivisions of the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic ("Kadyrovtsi") were brought into the Vedeno district of the Chechen Republic. The Chechen authorities declared that this would "finally bring order" into the particularly troublesome mountainous area, and would help control the situation in Vedeno, Shamil Basaev's native village.

On 29 January, the IHF researcher traveled to Vedeno. Their work was affected by a high concentration of federal servicemen and "Kadyrovtsi," which complicated the process of interviewing local civilians. Nevertheless, the IHF staff managed to talk to a number of villagers and to examine, how their living conditions were influenced by such a massive presence of "Kadyrovtsy".

According to several residents of Vedeno, who preferred to remain anonymous, two large convoys of "Kadyrovtsi" entered the village around 20 January 2005. Their cars consisted of "Niva" jeeps, new "Volga", and of UAZ, UAZ-469 ("tablet"), and VAZ-99 vehicles. The convoys, with probably over 500 servicemen, seemed to be endless; it took them 20 minutes to pass by. When the IHF researchers were in the village, they noticed that here were more people in military uniform in the streets of Vedeno than peaceful civilians. This, however, included not only "Kadyrovtsi", but a large number of federal servicemen as well.

According to the villagers, "Kadyrovtsi" are combing through nearby woods. All day they walk through Vedeno in groups of 3 to 20 people, check yards and houses, and ask civilians what they know about the rebels. During the day, they behave "normally", speak "politely", even if they don't introduce themselves when entering private yards. But at night "they put on their masks, and everything changes."

It is worth noting that as soon as “Kadyrovtsi” entered the village, Shakhb Moguev, head of the Veden district department, was fired. He was replaced by Musa Dekhiev, who arrived together with the “Kadyrovtsi”. Twelve other policemen were fired from the Veden district police department at the same time. They were forced to sign voluntary resignation forms under explicit threats to prosecute them for alleged connections with the rebels if they refuse to sign. This form of pressure turned out to be effective – all twelve immediately resigned, even though originally they had to give big bribes to obtain their positions at the police department. Kadyrovtsi then put their own people on the job.

One of the employees of the passport-visa desk at the Veden district police department, who was also fired, tried to get her job back through the court. The next day, several “Kadyrovtsi” visited her and explained that her only nephew would suffer unless she changed her mind. The woman preferred to obey them and took her complaint back.

As far as local civilians are concerned, today “Kadyrovtsi” are more dangerous to them than federal servicemen. “They abduct people more than Russians do,” as people say. It is worth noting that while some villagers are willing to talk about violations of their rights by federal servicemen, they are far more reluctant to talk about “Kadyrovtsi”, lowering their voice to a whisper and trying to avoid any concrete facts.

The IHF researchers nevertheless found out that in January, approximately on the 22nd, a group of “Kadyrovtsi” abducted a distant female relative of Shamil Basaev, Louiza, resident of Veden and mother of two small children (three and five years of age). Louiza was dragged from her house barefoot. When her children tried to hold on to her, they were beaten with rifle butts. In the morning, she came back badly beaten and in a very distraught condition and immediately left the village together with the children.

On 22 January “Kadyrovtsi” abducted a number of women from the village Deragoy. All these women had family ties with some of the rebels. The IHF researchers received hints about several other similar incidents, but it is impossible to document them, because the victims’ families refuse to share any information out of fear for their safety. Such fears seem well-grounded.

For example, when the financial manager of the Veden district police station, a woman named Malika, was advised by Kadyrovtsy to resign from her job within forty eight hours, but did not do so, she was abducted, and her current fate and location are unknown.

The situation in the Veden district has certainly aggravated. While it is difficult to predict if the “Kadyrovtsi” will be successful in their efforts to destroy the rebels, one thing is clear: their increased presence in the district represents a threat to the civilian population, particularly to women and children. Moreover, residents of Veden are afraid of possible complications in the relationships between the federal forces, the “Kadyrovtsi”, and the “Yamadaevtsy,” who used to control the district before the arrival of the “Kadyrovtsy”. As a result of such conflict in the territory of the district, civilians are likely to suffer more than anyone else.

October 2004 – January 2005. Veden district. Enforced “disappearance” of Makka (Bariyat) Akhyadova (b. 1981) and an attempt at the abduction of her minor children

On 6 October 2004 at 4 am, two cars – an UAZ and a VAZ-496 (so-called “tablet”) – approached the house of the Akhyadov family, located at 31 Lugovaya Street in the village of Veden. Seven unknown armed people emerged, wearing light-colored masks. One wore green camouflage, others wore gray camouflage.

At that time Khedi Akhyadova and her husband Lom-Ali were inside the house, as well as their children, Makka (Bariyat by passport, b. 1981), Khalimat (13 years of age) and Adam (11 years of

age). Two daughters of the widowed Makka were also there: Eset Sabirova (three years of age) and Ramnat Sabirova (two years of age).

One of the cars, the “tablet”, drove into the yard. The man in green camouflage placed himself in the entrance doorway, closing the exit for those inside the house. The other six people entered the room where Khedi slept with her daughter Khalimat and her grand-daughters. One of the men directed his automatic gun at the 13-year-old Khalimat and ordered Khedi to get up. The attackers then entered the adjacent room, where Lom-Ali slept with his son Adam. Khedi followed them and asked them not to awaken the boy. One of the soldiers aimed his automatic gun at Lom-Ali and ordered him to stay still. After this, two soldiers walked into the room where Makka slept. They studied her face attentively and then woke her up with loud orders: “Get up! Get dressed!”

They both spoke Russian without any accent. Makka did not get up right away: she was wearing only her nightgown. They asked her: “Where are your clothes? We will help you.” Finally she got up, in order to avoid being touched by the men, and began to dress herself. Makka’s mother asked where they would be taking Makka, and told the soldiers that she would not let her daughter go alone, especially since Makka was ill and running a high fever. The soldiers answered: “Don’t worry, we will cure her. We’ll take her to a hospital.”

Makka put a thin black shirt over her nightgown and stood still again. Then, one of the soldiers came to her, picked her up, threw her over his shoulder and walked out of the house. At the same time, Makka’s elder daughter, three-year-old Eset, woke up from the noise. She walked out of the bedroom and saw the abductors carry her mother out of the house. The abductors ignored her cries.

Khedi ran out of the house after the soldiers and at the last moment managed to throw a skirt over her daughter. When Makka was taken into the “tablet”, Khedi began to scream and beat at the car with her hands. The abductors did not react to her screams. The car drove out of the yard.

There was no search in the house. Passports of the family members were not checked. All of Makka’s documents, including her passport, remained at home.

In the morning, Makka’s parents found her skirt in the yard. The Akhyadovs reported their daughter’s abduction to the local police station.

At noon on 8 October, an UAZ car approached the Akhyadovs’ house again. Two Russian military servicemen in green camouflage without masks knocked on the door. At the time, the only people in the house were the thirteen-year-old Khalimat and her small nieces, Eset and Ramnat. Khalimat opened the door. The military men asked for the two girls, explaining that they wanted to take the children to their mother. Khalimat started screaming and calling for help. Neighbors heard her shouts and ran to assist her. They were able to prevent the abduction of Eset and Ramnat. The military servicemen retreated when they realized that the people were ready to show active resistance.

At the same time, not far from the Akhyadovs’ house, a group of neighbors saw an armored carrier, which was performing strange maneuvers, circling in the same place for about ten minutes. Sounds of music came from inside the vehicle.

On the same day, many residents of Vedenno organized a spontaneous protest rally in front of the military prosecutor’s office of the Vedenno district. They demanded freedom for Makka Akhyadova. The military commandant of the district walked out and told the people that there was no need to worry, because “Makka got married”. The crowd disbanded after this explanation, because some of the protestors believed that Makka could have been indeed abducted as a bride. Her parents strongly denied it, though.

Later that day, Makka’s daughters were taken to some distant relatives in another village to live with them. Their grandparents turned to the prosecutor’s office with a report about the girls’ attempted abduction. For several days without any success they tried to get help from government and security

organs, writing to the district prosecutor's office and the prosecutor's office of the Chechen Republic, the military commandatura and the administration of the Vedeno district, as well as the FSB.

Meanwhile, one and a half month after she has "disappeared", a criminal case on the fact of the abduction of Makka (Bariyat) Akhyadova was initiated. During one of the questioning sessions the investigator from the prosecutor's office suggested that Makka might have been abducted because she, possibly, "seemed attractive to someone from the military." Moreover, he added that Makka might have been inside the armored carrier noticed by the neighbors on the day her children were nearly abducted from the house. According to him, the music was probably turned on in order to tune out her shouts.

Since then, Bariyat Akh'yadova's parents have received no new information about the fate and the whereabouts of their daughter. They addressed a petition to V. Kravchenko, Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic, and received an answer dated 17.01.2005, signed by the Deputy-Prosecutor A. Mazhidov. The letter informed them that a criminal case had been initiated by the prosecutor's office of the Vedeno district, and therefore they "should turn to the Vedeno district prosecutor's office" with all further questions regarding their daughter's fate.

V – Cases from the Shali district of Chechnya

26 November 2004. Village of Germenchuk, Shali district. Murder of police workers Rizvan Abzatov (b. 1963) and Khabib Guduev (b. 1980)

On 26 November at about 1 pm, on the Lenin street of Germenchuk, Shali district, two people were shot dead: police colonel Rizvan Abzatov (b. 1963) and his employee Khabib Guduev (b. 1980). Their killers shot at them from a car. Then, they came out of the vehicle and finished off their victims with control shots in their heads. Since the killers were unmasked, several witnesses could recognize one of them. He turned out to be Salambek Mezhidov, officer of the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic. Later, the identity of the three other killers was also established: Ruslan Ikiev (also a "Kadyrovtsi") and two alleged criminals wanted by police, Rizvan Osmaev and Alvi Tasuev.

According to the victims' colleagues, the reason behind the murder was the victims' strong professional commitment. Recently, on request of the ecological services of the district and in cooperation with the military, the police force worked on closing down illegal factories that produced oil products. The witnesses reported that Abzatov's department was offered a certain sum of money in exchange for closing their eyes on the illegal oil business in the district. In spite of multiple threats, Abzatov refused the offer and promised to bring to justice everyone involved with the illegal enterprise.

Mezhidov and Ikiev were later detained by servicemen of the special department of the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic and, according to unofficial information, killed.

2-3 December 2004. Duba-Yurt, Shali district. Enforced "disappearance" of the disabled Rasul Mikaev (b. 1979)

On 3 December 2004, unknown representatives of enforcement agencies abducted the disabled Rasul Mikaev (b. 1979) from his village Duba-Yurt, Shali district. The armed kidnappers wore camouflage uniforms and masks, spoke in unaccented Russian and apparently were federal military servicemen.

At 5 am some eight to ten armed men in black facemasks, camouflage uniforms and with automatic rifles, broke into the home of the Mukaev family in Duba-Yurt, shattering the front-door. At that time

Roza Mukaeva, Khamzat Mukaev, and their two sons, Rustam and Rasul were at home. The armed men started shouting “All lie down! Don’t move! On the floor!” and ran about in the rooms. They threatened the family with their guns, shouted obscenities, rummaged throughout the house and undid the floors, looking for weapons or ammunition.

In total, the attackers spent about twenty minutes in the house. They stole 500 \$, hidden under Roza Mukaeva’s pillow, some 3,000 roubles (approximately 100 \$) out of Rasul and Rustam’s pockets, and Khamzat Mukaev’s mobile phone.

The parents were not allowed to enter their sons’ room, and for some time they had no idea what was happening in it. According to Rustam Mukaev, the men who went into the room, seized both of them and immediately asked them what their names were. When the brothers gave them their names, one of the men pointed at Rasul and said: “This one?” The second man nodded, and Rasul was immediately handcuffed. When the intruders took him out of the room, handcuffed, unclothed and with a black T-shirt wrapped over his head, Roza Mukaeva cried: “*Young people, you are also human beings! Let us work this out like humans! Introduce yourselves – who sent you? Whose documents would you like to see?*” They answered: “*We were sent by Putin. We are here on the orders of VVP [Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin]*». Roza pleaded with them to let her son go, insisted that he had been checked earlier and his documents were fully in order, tried to show the military servicemen his documents, but they did not take a single look at his passport or at the certificate about his handicap. The mother explained that Rasul was severely disabled and suffered from epilepsy. She tried to prevent them from taking away her son. In response, the men yelled: “Get away, bitch! We’ll kill you!” and shouted obscenities at her. They did not even allow Rasul to dress – only let him put the shoes on and took him away. At the last moment, the mother managed to throw a coat over his shoulders. Khamzat and Roza parents did not see how their son Rasul was driven away. According to their neighbors’ testimonies, he was dragged to the neighboring street, where the armoured carriers of the military were waiting, as well as several UAZ vehicles.

In May 1995, during the shelling of Duba-Yurt, three shells fell in the Mukaevs’ yard. Rasul was wounded in the head and the brain, had a strong concussion and a perforated wound of the right thigh. The lower third of his leg was smashed in pieces. His parents did not believe he would survive, but the soldiers took him to Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia, with a military helicopter, and there the young boy’s life was saved. Still, afterwards he limped so much he could hardly walk. Besides, he suffered strong headaches and often fainted. Once a month, on average, he had epileptic seizures. He was on strong medications and could not live independently.

Rasul was very frustrated about his handicapped condition. So, during the second war, at the very end of 2000, he went to join the armed rebels with several other village teenagers. His parents found him two months later and took him home. During those two months, he never participated in any military action.

In 2001, federal servicemen were carrying out a mop-up operation in Duba-Yurt. Rasul Mukaev was arrested and released only two months later with a written confirmation that there was nothing against him.

In the spring of 2002, in April, the federal military carried out another massive mop-up operation. They were taking away men, who, according to the lists of the military, had been involved in the hostilities. Roza Mukaeva heard the military servicemen mentioning the name of her son. She took them home herself, showed them the certificate about his handicap and explained the situation. The military said that, as he was in the list, they had to take him anyway and to make a thorough check again. Rasul was taken to the Russian main military base in Khankala, where he was kept for a month and three weeks. During that time it was established that he had not been involved in any criminal activity. With the assistance of the family friends working with the military, Rasul was released and no charges were brought against him.

Roza Mukaeva stressed to the IHF researchers:

“When Rasul came home, he said nothing about how he had been treated down there. But probably he was tortured. His hands were shaking. His eyes were inflamed, tearful. And he was limping even more than usual. He could barely move.(...) Since then, he never left home. He is not capable of working. He spent all the time studying Arabic and reading books. He was mostly reading the Koran. Everybody knows him as a pious boy. At funerals, they ask him to read prayers.”

On the morning of 3 December, Khamzat Mukaev, Rasul’s father, went to the Shali district police department and the Shali district prosecutor’s office. During the day, a group of investigators, including policemen and representatives of the prosecutor’s office, came to inspect the scene of the abduction. A criminal case was instituted on the kidnapping of Rasul Mukaev.

So far, there has been no official information about Rasul’s fate. The enforcement structures of the Chechen Republic and the federal forces deny any knowledge of his fate or whereabouts. But through some connections in the security services, the parents learnt that their son was again kept at the Khankala military base. Roza and Khamzat Mukaev fear that this time Rasul will not be able to survive a prolonged imprisonment.

VI – Cases from other districts of Chechnya

30 November – December 2004. Village of Oiskhara, Gudermes district. Enforced “disappearance” of three female members of the Murdashev family. Destruction of the family’s house and property

On 30 November, unidentified armed persons, most likely members of Security Services of the President of the Chechen Republic (“Kadyrovtsy”), alongside with some specially seconded members of the Shali district police, burned down the house of the parents of Vakhid Murdashev (b. 1955), at 38 Karl Marx St. of the Oiskhara village, also known as Novogroznenskiy. They furthermore abducted his mother, Asmart Murdasheva (b. 1935), his sister Tamara Murdasheva (b. 1958) and his wife Zoya Dankaeva (b. 1958). Some days later, presumably members of the same armed structures burned down Vakhid Murdashev’s own house at 53 Sovetskaya St. All the family’s belongings were burned as well. It should be mentioned that Vakhid Murdashev had occupied a high ranking position within the administration of Aslan Maskhadov between the two wars.

On 30 November, Vakhid Murdashev’s sister, Lisa Mushkaeva, a Russian language and literature teacher at a school in Oiskhara, returned home later than usual, at around 7 pm. She had to work late due to an official school inspection. At home, she was surprised to see her elder sister, Tamara Murdasheva, and her brother’s wife, Zoya Dankaeva. Zoya lived in the village Bachi-Yurt (Gudermes district) and visited her husband’s relatives very rarely. She explained her unexpected arrival saying that a 7-9 year-old boy came to Bachi-Yurt and urged her via her neighbours to come to Oiskhara on 30 November, alleging a strong request from her relatives. Lisa Mushkaeva replied that she had never sent any of her children to summon her sister-in-law. She had no idea, who could have sent for her. When Lisa’s sons returned home, they confirmed that they had not been to Bachi-Yurt and that they had not received any messages to confer to Zoya Dankaeva.

It should be noted that Zoya’s husband and Lisa’s brother, Vakhid Murdashev was, during the first war, commander of the village self-defense unit, and later became a field commander. From 1997 through 1999, he headed the state personnel department within the administration of Aslan Maskhadov. The family had no information on his whereabouts and supposed that he was abroad from the start of the

second war. Vakhid's and Lisa's mother was content that her son did not try to establish contact with the family, fearing negative consequences for everyone.

Lisa's husband, Magomed Mushkaev, was well respected by the local population and thus entrusted to settle conflicts between the federal forces, the rebels and the civilians. Neighbors reported that Magomed Mushkaev had a strong and independent character and was an effective mediator in such kind of negotiations. On 8 February 2002, when he drove home from Gudermes, members of armed forces, presumably federal military, abducted him. A criminal case was initiated on his kidnapping under article 126, part 2 of the RF Criminal Code but suspended on 25 November 2004. Lisa stayed alone with three children to care for, at the present time, her daughter is five years of age, and her two sons, 14 and 18 years old respectively.⁸

On 30 November, Zoya Dankaeva and Tamara Murdasheva left Lisa's house at around 8:30 pm. They were going to spend the night in the home of Asmart Murdasheva, Tamara's and Lisa's mother, located 30 minutes by foot from Lisa's home. At 9:10 pm some teenagers from the neighborhood came running to Lisa and told her that her mother's house was on fire and that they had hidden her eldest son, just in case. Firstly, Lisa did not want to go to her mother's house out of fear for her children. Yet, two hours later she changed her mind, concerned with the fate of her relatives. Upon arrival, she saw many persons in uniforms standing around the burning house. Some of them were throwing grenades into the flames. Explosions could be heard from inside the house. Later she learnt that among the incendiaries there were "Kadyrovtsy" as well as some members of the Shali district police department, renowned for their close ties with the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic. The neighbors were all in their homes, as they were told not to go out and try to put out the fire. A fire brigade stood idle nearby. They were given orders to interfere only in case the fire would spread to the other houses. When Lisa shouted: "Where is my mother?" there was no reaction. One of the incendiaries was filming the fire on a video-camera.

The next morning, Lisa's brother-in-law took her and her children to a safe place. In ten days or so, he told her that she could return home, but advised her elder son not to come back to the village at all. The family did not submit any complaints regarding the disappearance of Asmart and Tamara Murdasheva and Zoya Dankaeva out of concerns for the safety of the other family members.

During Lisa's absence, two more houses were burnt down by representatives of Chechen enforcement agencies – the one of her brother Vakhid Murdashev and the one of the Turlaev family, whose two sons allegedly fought on the rebels' side. It is noteworthy that Vakhid's house was rented to the sister of Aslanbek, the commander of the local "Kadyrovtsy" group. Aslanbek managed to get his sister out of the house shortly before the arson, but they did not even have the time to collect her personal belongings.

Lisa Mushkaeva's friends and relatives made use of their contacts in the law enforcement agencies and found out that her mother, sister and sister-in-law had been initially kept in detention in Tsenteroi, the Kadyrovs' native village, and subsequently transferred to Gudermes. When Lisa returned home, she received telephone calls from relatives residing in Western Europe, who expressed their condolences and told her that they have seen the video tape showing her mother's house on fire.

Soon after Lisa's return, around 10 December, a man came by car and stopped in front of her house. Lisa had never seen him before. He was approximately 40 years old. He asked whether she was indeed Lisa Mushkaeva, the one whose mother, sister and sister-in-law had been abducted. As Lisa confirmed

⁸ Mushkaeva strived for a resumption of proceedings and wrote letters to different institutions. On 23 November, she was summoned to the investigator S.R. Esenbulatov of the Gudermes District state persecutor's office, who was charged with the case of her husband's abduction. He expressed his discontent concerning a letter calling for support, which she wrote to Aslanbek Aslankhanov, an adviser to the President of the Russian Federation. He said to Lisa: "It would appear that your husband was innocent as Allah, but innocents are not taken away". With those words he confirmed that Magomed was abducted by some state authorities. The investigator advised her not to cause turmoil, if she does not want to face difficulties.

this, the man told her that the three women were being questioned by the FSB and advised Lisa not to look for them for safety reasons. He added that he saw them passing, but still could describe them quite precisely. Lisa told him that her seventy-years-old mother was very sensitive to coldness, and that her elder sister suffered from thyroid cancer and therefore needed to take her medications on a regular basis. The man assured Lisa that the detained women were treated well and that they were even given camouflage jackets to keep them warm. Afterwards the “informer” warned Lisa that the abductors “just might be out for money”.

The dialogue that followed this hint is reproduced word to word:

Lisa: Even if they bring me three corpses, I wouldn't even have the money to bury them!”

Informer: “Don't fear, we won't kill them.”

Lisa: “We? Then, that's you?”

Informer: “I was forced to do this; I did not want the same thing to happen to my family. I know that they are out for money and wanted to warn you. If they find out that I spoke to you, they will tear me to pieces.”

Since the mediator's visit, Lisa Mushkaeva has not had any additional information about her abducted relatives. Out of fear for her children and other family members, she refrains from taking any steps -- official or informal – to search and liberate her mother, sister and sister-in-law.

18 January 2005. Davydenko settlement in the Sunzha district. Unlawful detention of Chechen power structures' officers Aslanbek Shovlakhov and Anzor Kaimov by federal servicemen. Extrajudicial execution of Aslanbek Shovlakhov

On 18 January 2005 at about 4 pm at the exit from the Rostov-Baku highway to the village of Davydenko of the Sunzha district, not far from the administrative border with Achkhoy-Martan district, an armoured carrier was overturned. Representatives of the Achkhoy-Martan district police and those of the Sunzha district, administration's heads of the neighboring villages and commanders of 49 OBRON (units of special purpose intelligence - engineering intelligence) all came to examine the scene of the incident. Federal military servicemen asserted that the incident had occurred as a result of a mine explosion and shelling. However, the police officers and the administration heads stood their ground firmly and insisted that it had been merely an accident. They pointed to the absence of a crater as well as to the absence of any traces of shooting in the area, and insisted that the driver had just lost the control of the vehicle. Finally, the military servicemen had no choice but to accept their arguments. No criminal case was initiated, since the accident had caused neither human casualties nor significant damages. Military servicemen said that they needed no police assistance, and further presence of the local authorities was also pointless. They promised to remove the armoured carrier from the highway before dusk.

However, for one reason or another they failed to do so. About ten Ossetian military servicemen with a Russian commander and two other armored carriers were put around the overturned vehicle for the night.

At approximately 11 pm, Aslanbek Shovlakhov (b. 1976) and Anzor Kaimov (b. 1977), natives of the village of Noibery (Kurchaloy district) registered for permanent residence in Grozny (11 Djakov St., apt. 54) arrived at the Davydenko crossroad in their VAZ-2106 vehicle (license plate number C326XB – 95 RUS). Both were servicemen of the Chechen enforcement agencies, most probably of the «Vostok» armed battalion under Sulim Yamadayev's command.

By that time, all the military guards were quite drunk. Shovlakhov and Kaimov came out of the car and showed their IDs of «The Security Service, Main Intelligence Department Ministry of Defense». (It should be noted that such structure actually does not exist. However, identification documents of

this kind are frequently used by the officers of various Chechen power structures.) Federal military servicemen aimed their automatic guns at Shovlakhov and Kaimov and ordered them to lay down their weapons. In response, the Chechen enforcement officials also aimed their guns at the federal servicemen. Federal and Chechen servicemen were standing opposite each other for a while without lowering their respective weapons. Then the federal soldiers suggested solving the case amicably, upon which the Chechens lowered their guns and were immediately forced down to the ground and captured. Two Stechkin pistols and two AKSU (Kalashnikov Collapsible Short Rifle) were taken from them.

First, the federal servicemen started to beat Shovlakhov and Kaimov, including with the butts of their guns. Then, their commander ordered them to stop the beating of the detainees. He directed his servicemen to take Shovlakhov and Kaimov to the nearby check-point at the Achkhoy-Martan crossroad and pass them on to the servicemen of that check-point for further investigation. The detainees were forced into their own car, and the federal soldiers drove that car with the escort of an armoured carrier across the bridge over the Assa River.

Soon after the bridge, both vehicles turned right and continued along the river. Then, Shovlakhov and Kaimov were taken out of the car and saw the servicemen dividing among themselves the weapons that had been taken from them. Then, they took Kaimov to the river bank and threw him to the ground at gunpoint. Shovlakhov remained where he was. The detainees realized that they were going to be killed. Shovlakhov tried to resist. The military servicemen jumped at him, thus leaving Kaimov under the supervision of one gunman only. Kaimov had nothing to lose, so he grabbed at the gun butt, which was aimed at him, directed it upwards, pushed the serviceman aside and jumped into the river. He was swept along by the current for some distance and then managed to crawl out of the water near the village of Noviy Sharoi. He started knocking at the gates of the nearby houses but it was about 3 am, so no one was ready to open the door. Finally, a particularly brave person unlocked his gate and came out. When he saw a man in camouflage covered in blood, the host inquired what he wanted. Kaimov explained the situation and asked to be brought to the village administration's head or to the local police station so that he could make a telephone call to his colleagues. The host took him to the house of the village administration's head, but due to the late hour the security guards refused to open the door. Then, the man took Kaimov back to his house and assisted him in cleaning his wounds. They succeeded in seeing the village administration's head at around 7 am. But, the head of the village administration proved to have no telephone at home, so he took Kaimov to the nearby village Samashki, from where Kaimov finally telephoned his friends.

Then, Kaimov together with the administration's head went to examine the place of the incident. They found Shovlakhov and Kaimov's car with traces of an unsuccessful attempt to set it on fire. They started to search the area for Shovlakhov and to shout his name. Soon, they found his dead body. At this time, Kaimov's colleagues arrived in their cars.

By 10 am, the Achkhoy-Martan district police department and the Sunzha district police department were both informed about the incident, since the crime had been committed directly at the administrative border. The police established that the case territorially belonged to the Sunzha district. Having prepared the necessary documents, the Sunzha district police forwarded them to the inter-district Achkhoy-Martan prosecutor's office, which in turn forwarded the case to the military prosecutor's office at Khankala.

VII. The Abduction of relatives of Aslan Maskhadov

In the suburbs of Grozny on 3 December 2004, between 8 and 9 pm, five relatives of Aslan Maskhadov were abducted by unknown armed persons, most probably belonging to the Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic (“Kadyrovtsi”). These relatives are: Buchu Abdulkadyrova (sister, 67 years of age), Lecha Maskhadov (brother, 68 years of age), Lema Maskhadov (brother, 55 years of age), Adam Reshiev (distant cousin, 54 years of age), and Ivkhan Magomadov (nephew, 35 years of age). On 28 December, three more relatives of Aslan Maskhadov were abducted under similar circumstances: Khadizhat Satueva (niece, 40 years of age), Usman Satuev (son-in-law, 47 years of age) and Movlid Aguev (son-in-law, 35 years of age).⁹

From the interview with Kemisa (Lisa) Maskhadova, wife of Lema Maskhadov, from the village of Pervomayskaya:

On the 3rd December, in the evening, at about 7:30, Lema came home. He works as a tractor driver. All his life he had this job, because he isn't educated – he can hardly write. He did a 'namaz' [Muslim prayer ritual] in one room; I did mine in another room, just like it is meant to be done. Then he asked me for a cup tea. But he did not even have a chance to drink it – someone knocked at the gate.

I came out and asked: “Who is there?” They answered: “Open the door!” I opened and they entered. There were 50 of them. They had arrived on 10 or 12 cars. They spoke Chechen and did not wear any masks. They could not all fit into our yard, so some stayed in the street. I asked: “What do you want?” They approached my husband: “Are you Lema?” “Yes.” He did not tell them anything else. He left with them silently.

I asked them: “Who are you?” “We were sent by Ramzan [Kadyrov].”

I did not want to let them leave – how will I stay alone without my husband? They threatened to take me as well. Then, their leader told me to go into the house, where there was a search. They did not want me to complain afterwards that something was missing and therefore demanded from me to check if everything was at its place. I went into the house. They really had turned it upside down. They took two videocassettes, both with the recording of Chechen concerts. We had no other videotapes.

While I was distracted by the search, they dragged Lema away. He wore sports pants and a sweater. They did not beat anyone, did not curse. The whole thing took about 20 minutes. When they began to drive off I tried to stop them, but they pushed me away. They went towards Sobachevka [Podgornoye village], but their leader told me that they were going to Khosi-Yurt [Tsentsoroy village of the Kurchalovsky district, the native village of the Kadyrovs]. Relatives, who later went there, were told not to come again, unless they wanted to get killed or also abducted.

Kemisa Maskhadova chose not to lodge any complaints on the abduction of her husband, because in private conversations police officers directly told her and her relatives that it was useless.

From an interview with Petimat (Fatima) Vakhaeva, daughter of Buchu Abdulkadyrova:

I was not at home when my mother was abducted. I found out later, from the neighbors. They arrived at about 9 pm, 8-9 cars, about 30 persons. They stood on the crossroads and along the street. They opened the gate and the doors themselves. Neighbors were not allowed out of their houses. Mother was taken away. Right from her bed. I found out at night, at about midnight, but I was afraid to go there, it wouldn't make sense anyway. I went in the morning, at about 5 o'clock. There was no search or anything like that. Everything was in its proper place. They did not take anything. My mothers' medications were also in their usual place, and my mother has a

⁹ See “IHF open letter to President Putin about the abduction of relatives of Aslan Maskhadov...”, 19 January 2005.

stomach illness, she needs these medications with her all the time. They went towards the city, but were stopped at the check-point by the “Kakievtsi” [servicemen of the “Zapad” armed battalion, the so-called Chechen GRU, commanded by Said-Magomed Kakiev], they are all from our village, they watch over us against abductions. They did not want to let the cars pass, but the abductors started shooting in the air, a fight began, one of our boys was hit in the head. Then, the fight stopped and they called Kakiev himself right from the check-point. So, Kakiev called Ramzan Kadyrov directly. And Ramzan seems to have said: “This is a special operation conducted on my personal order. Let them pass!” So, they complied...

There are rumors that my mother and the other relatives are now in Khosi-Yurt, kept by Ramzan Kadyrov, but no information comes from there. No one offered us to buy them out for ransom or to exchange them. I think they were taken in order to force Aslan [Maskhadov] to give up.

To note, this was not Buchu Abdulkadyrova’s first detention. On 3 September, during the tragic events in Beslan, she and her seventeen-year-old grandson Rustam, along with several other relatives from the Nadterechny district, were abducted by federal servicemen on armored carriers. They were held at the Khankala military base for two days and then released. Also, at that time, two of their male neighbors were abducted along with Aslan Maskhadov’s relatives. During the detention at the Khankala the prisoners were beaten. The 67-year-old Buchu was not beaten as badly as the others, probably out of consideration for her poor health. After these events, her grandson Rustam immediately left the territory of the Chechen Republic, declaring that he feared for his life and physical integrity.

After the 3 September events, Buchu Abdulkadyrova’s relatives chose not to lodge any official complaint because they feared they would endanger her again. However, in January 2005 they decided to file a complaint with the district prosecutor’s office about the 3 December abduction.

VIII - Conclusion

The IHF emphasizes that the human rights situation in the Chechen Republic remains catastrophic and calls upon the international community, particularly, the Council of Europe and the United Nations and their member states, to insist that the Russian government adheres to its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law.

The intergovernmental organizations and their member-states should urge the Government of the Russian Federation to take additional measures to eliminate the climate of impunity prevailing in the Chechen Republic, including:

- Vigorously investigating and prosecuting all violations of human rights,
- Sending a clear signal from the highest political level that all security and law enforcement officials must respect human rights in the execution of their duties,
- Providing reparation, including compensation, to victims of human rights abuses,
- Enabling systematic monitoring by national and international human rights organizations of human rights violations,
- Fully co-operating with all Council of Europe and UN mechanisms, in particular with the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, and the special procedures of the UN Human Rights Commission, and
- Facilitating access to the region to national and international news media.

Finally, the IHF urges all national governments that still believe that civilians in Chechnya should enjoy the same protection against torture and other massive human rights violations as individuals in other parts of the world, to call for the establishment of a broad-based and independent commission of inquiry into violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the Chechen Republic.