

**Press Release**

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European Court of Human Rights to deliver first Chechen judgments

On 24 February 2005 the European Court of Human Rights will deliver three judgments in the first cases brought against Russia arising out of the situation in Chechnya¹. The applicants are represented by lawyers from the London-based *European Human Rights Advocacy Centre* (EHRAC)², together with the Russian human rights organisation, *Memorial*³.

The applicants allege that their relatives were killed or injured by the Russian military in Chechnya in 1999 or 2000, in violation of the right to life (Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights) and the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment (Article 3). Two cases⁴ concern the circumstances surrounding the deaths of five of the applicants' relatives⁵ in Grozny at the end of January 2000. The mutilated bodies of the applicants' relatives were found with numerous stab and gunshot wounds in the Staropromyslovskii district of Grozny. The applicants claim their relatives were the victims of torture and extra-judicial killings at the hands of the Russian armed forces.

Three applications⁶ arise out of the Russian military's aerial bombing of a convoy of civilian cars, as the residents of Grozny tried to avoid the fighting there on October 29, 1999. The Government has admitted that the attack was carried out by two SU-25 military planes, firing air-to-ground rockets. As a result of the bombing, the first applicant was wounded and her two children and daughter-in-law were killed⁷; the second applicant was wounded by shells in the neck, arm and hip; and the third applicant's car containing her family's possessions was destroyed.

The sixth application concerns the Russian military's aerial and artillery bombardment of the village of Katyr-Yurt on 4 February 2000. As a result of the bombing, the applicant's son and her three nieces were killed⁸. The Government has admitted that the attack was carried out by two SU-25 planes, firing FAB-250 bombs.

The applicants in all six cases also allege that their right to an effective national remedy (Article 13) has been violated. The applicants submit that the investigations into the deaths of their relatives were ineffective since all the investigations have been closed or suspended without the perpetrators having been identified and appropriate action having been taken against them.

Three judgments in the six cases were adopted by the Court on 27 January 2005 and will be published on the Court's website (<http://www.echr.coe.int>) on 24 February 2005.

The applicants will be available for comment (from Russia) on and before 24 February. The applicants' legal advisers will be available for comment on 24 February from London, Moscow and Strasbourg.

¹ Khashiyev v Russia (no. 57942/00), Akayeva v Russia (no. 57945/00), Isayeva v Russia (no. 57947/00), Yusupova v Russia (no. 57948/00), Bazayeva v Russia (no. 57949/00), Isayeva v Russia (no. 57950/00).

² Based at London Metropolitan University, EHRAC provides expert advice and assistance to NGOs and lawyers in Russia in bringing international human rights cases. EHRAC is funded by the European Commission and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. See www.londonmet.ac.uk/ehrac

³ Memorial is one of the foremost human rights organisations in the Russian Federation, devoted to investigating and publicising human rights abuses. See www.memo.ru

⁴ Magomed Khashiyev v Russia (no. 57942/00) & Roza Akayeva v Russia (no. 57945/00).

⁵ The first applicant's sister, Lidiya Khashiyeva and nephew, Anzor Taymeskhanov; the first applicant's brother, Khamid Khashiyev and a second nephew, Rizvan Taymeskhanov; and the second applicant's brother Adlan Akayev.

⁶ Medka Isayeva v Russia (no. 57947/00), Zina Yusupova v Russia (no. 57948/00) & Libkan Bazayeva v Russia (no. 57949/00).

⁷ Her 16 year old daughter, Ilona Isayeva, her 9 year old son, Said-Magomed Isayev, and her daughter-in-law Asma Magomedova.

⁸ Her 23 year old son, Zelimkhan Isayev, and her nieces: Zarema Batayeva (15), Kheda Batayeva (13) and Marem Bateyeva (6).



T h i s p r o j e c t i s f i n a n c e d b y t h e E U .

The views expressed herein are those of EHRAC and can therefore in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.