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27 November 2007
For immediate release

European Court to rule on killing of elderly Chechen civilians

On 29 November 2007, the European Court of Human Rights will rule in a case concerning the killing of Zaynap Tangiyeva's elderly father, mother and uncle, then aged 73, 67 and 75 respectively. She is represented before the Court by the London-based European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC) and the Russian NGO, *Memorial*.

In December 1999 Zaynap and her family were living at home in Grozny, Chechnya. The city was under intense shelling by Russian Federal forces. On 26 December 1999, Zaynap and others went to shelter in the cellar of a nearby building. Her parents and uncle remained at home to look after the property and cattle.

Zaynap, her family, and neighbours were subjected to frequent identity checks and were forced to assist Russian soldiers collect dead bodies. Local men were also selected to be exchanged with the rebel fighters in return for Russian servicemen taken hostage. Houses in the area were systematically burnt down.

On 11 January 2000, Zaynap decided to leave Grozny and went to say goodbye to her relatives. The house was on fire. She found her father's body, with gunshot wounds, in the kitchen. Fearing that the killers would return she fled Grozny, returning the following day to bury him. On 6 March 2000, officials from the Russian Ministry of Emergencies extracted the charred remains of her mother and uncle from the cellar of the house. Bullets were found near the bodies.

Zaynap attempted to persuade the authorities to carry out a proper investigation into the killings. However, she was told that there were no direct witnesses to the murders and that she could be held responsible for making false accusations.

In April 2000 she lodged an application with the European Court complaining that Russia had violated Article 2 (right to life) of the European Convention on Human Rights by killing her relatives and also by failing to investigate the killings properly. She also alleges violations of Article 3 (inhuman and degrading treatment) and Article 13 (right to an effective remedy).