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The "DOSH" magazine and the Center of Caucasian initiative supported by the "Mothers of Chechnya" organized a memorial ceremony in Grozny on the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Anna Politkovskaya. The observer of "Novaya Gazeta" was killed on the stairs to her apartment in Moscow on October 7, 2006.

While the members of the "Putin" patriot club were celebrating the 59th birthday of their idol riding around the city with Russian flags and the prime-minister's portraits, the ombudsmen were quietly remembering the death of their "friend in arms and sister".

# ABDULLA DUDUEV FOREST AS AN OPTION

## What makes young Dagestanians to grab the arms

The field meeting of Russian President's Committee on Human Rights and Civil Society Development was conducted in Makhachkala in the beginning of June (for details read "An attempt to dialogue", Issue 2 - 2011). The ombudsmen and activists from Moscow and Dagestan had been discussing regional situation with local officials for two days trying to establish a dialogue. The discussion was tumultuous and emotional: ombudsmen and the relatives of the victims suffered from unlawful actions of the law enforcers highlighted the facts of human rights violations that were too hard to be accepted by the law enforcement officials. The event showed again the abyss of misunderstanding between the government and society, and the fact, that officials don't realize their purpose and don't want to follow the law, making the whole regime illegitimate in the eyes of the growing part of population.

Following this discussion we decided to ask the residents of Dagestan what they think about the main topic of all discussions circulating within the Dagestanian society and social networks: what are the reasons of the armed conflict between the regime and the Dagestanian youngsters.

During September and October the DOSH magazine and the Pan-regional civic organization "Center of Caucasian Initiatives" supported by "The mothers of Dagestan for Human Rights" and "Human rights protection of Dagestan" conducted a poll in the most unsafe regions of the Northern Caucasus. 2117 people aged from 18 to 20 had been asked in Makhachkala, Kizlyar, Khasavyurt, Kyzil-Yurt, Tuhchare and Khutrah. The social profile of the respondents was as following: state employees - doctors, teachers, social workers - 19, 3%, students - 28%, pensioners - 12%, businessmen - 5, 9%, private employees - 6,1% and unemployed - 18,7%.

One question had been asked: "Why do you think the Dagestanians are moving into the "forest"?"

And four answer options had been provided:

**1. Because of their faith, trying to establish the Shariah law in Dagestan,**

**2. Because of the law enforcers' unlawful actions, trying to save themselves or to take revenge for relatives,**

**3. Because of unemployment and the absence of legal ways of getting money**

#### 4. Other reasons

The results of the poll were as following:

**1. Because of their faith, trying to establish the Shariah law in Dagestan - 28,3%**

**2. Because of the law enforcers' unlawful actions, trying to save themselves or to take revenge for relatives - 49,4%**

**3. Because of unemployment and the absence of legal ways of getting money - 20,8%**

**4. Other reasons - 1,5%**

Among the other reasons the respondents named stupidity, lack of education and poor knowledge of Islam, efficient militants' hooking, dreaming about easy money, corruption and outlawry, discontent with government, self-fulfillment, dreaming about joining the powerful clan of "forest militants", political conspiracy, the conspiracy of the corrupted law enforcers and the others (more or less the same but expressed in different words). It make sense to note that there was no difference between the answers of the respondents from various social groups - less than 2%,

### Comments:

**Zubayru Zubayruiev, Acting chief of the Department of information policy and the press-office of the Dagestanian president**

"There are many reasons why people join militants and it's hard to define the major one. There are many people among the "forest militants" who didn't manage to find their place in the socie-

ty; didn't get education or a job and have no ideas how to feed their families. For those people war is better than peace. Some of them take revenge or were tricked. Only 15% of them choose



Зубайру Зубайруев



Светлана Исаева



Надира Исаева

the way of extremism following their ideas, as it was in the end of the 19th century when terrorists were killing city officials. Many of them move to forest escaping from vodka and weed. Probably, there are some people who use it as a way of social protest. There are many people who joined Islam less than one year ago. These young people have received a simple model of our complex world and they are ready to fight for this order and the eternal life. Some of them are from poor families. A decade ago they would become ordinary gangsters, but today they call it a fight for Shariah ..."

**Svetlana Isaeva, Chairman of "The mothers of Dagestan for human rights".**

"I've been protecting human rights for four years meeting many people including the relatives of those who went to the "forest". And I realized one thing - sooner the law enforcers will follow the law and the Constitution, lesser people will join the militants and take part in unlawful actions. I'm absolutely sure that people join the militants because of the law enforcers' outrage. I see examples of this every day."

**Nadira Isaeva, Journalist**

The morning of September 23, 2011 made the residents of small Dagestanian mountain village

Khutrah to recall scenes from old movies about the German occupation during the WWII. Armed people in uniform were breaking into houses, taking men and women out of the village, and then beating and torturing them. Even a true pacifist would change his mind after seeing soldiers on armored URALs playing the master in his home village and abusing his mother, sister, wife and himself.

The proportion in the results of the poll, 1 : 2 : 1 : 0, is pretty rough but shows the trends. It means that according to the respondents, there are three major reasons, why Muslims join the armed opposition: faith, law enforcers' outrage and unemployment. The second factor prevails. It means that a specific social class of people (and it's time to consider Russian law enforcers as a separate social class) declaring themselves as a force protecting Russia from Wahhabism, terrorism, Salaphism and other kinds of extremism, in fact fuels these rebels, first in minds and then in actions as well. Active attorneys will support my point of view, because they know how the law enforcement machine destroys lives of young Muslims and bankrupting their families.

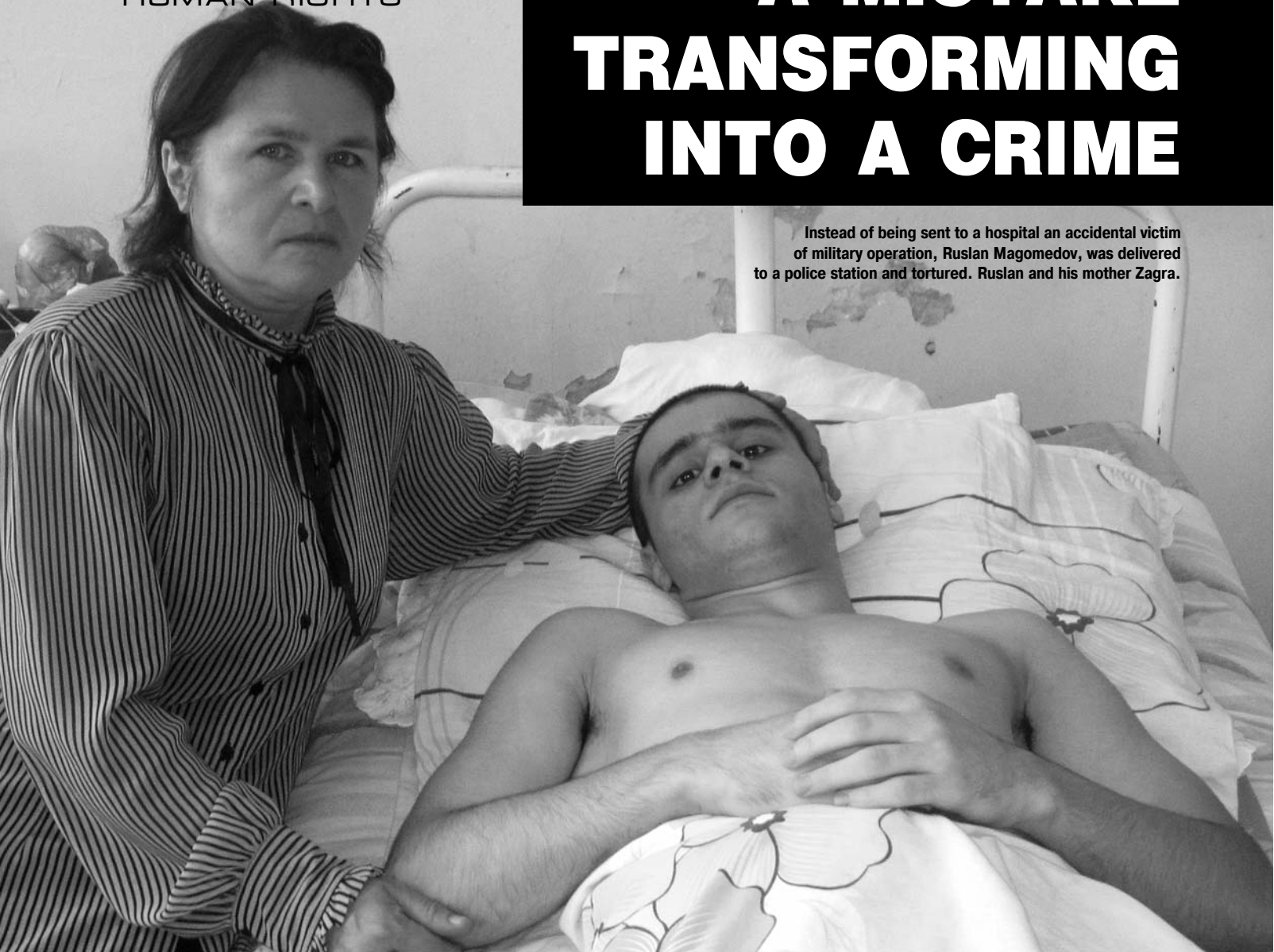
The factor of faith is twice less important according to the poll, and

unemployment plays approximately the same role. It's all about the motives. It doesn't matter if it's law enforcers' violence or despair from unemployment. Mass human rights violations practiced by the law enforcers or social problems are not that powerful as faith. Especially if we're talking about Islam, that supports the idea of armed self-defense.

There are mostly young people born between 1980 and 1990 among those who move to the "forest" in Dagestan. This generation is free from the Soviet ideology and was raised in the absence of any state ideology. They've chosen Islam as a personal ideology and demand for justice with arms in their hands. And the intensity of the "forest" movement is directly proportional to the degree of law enforcers' outrage and the corruption in the regional government that leaves no space for active young generation. According to the principle of dialectics, growing outrage and corruption will make more youngsters to believe that peaceful protest techniques and elections are absolutely useless in resolving the problems of society. Law enforcers' tyranny fuels the "forest" with human resources and ideology, making militants to believe that their way of resistance is true and the only one available.

# A MISTAKE TRANSFORMING INTO A CRIME

Instead of being sent to a hospital an accidental victim of military operation, Ruslan Magomedov, was delivered to a police station and tortured. Ruslan and his mother Zagra.



On July 12, 2011 at 2:30PM 20 years old Ruslan Magomedov, who was walking down the Yaragskogo street in Makhachkala, nearby from the Republican Prosecutor's office, was wounded during special forces' operation. The officers of Dagestanian MVD took him into custody where he had been physically and psychologically abused till 9PM. They wanted him to declare himself guilty in the crimes he didn't do.

Then he was delivered into the hospital #1 where he continued to stay in custody while being in critical condition. He lost 2.5 liters of blood. His diagnosis included the following: gunshot comminuted fracture of the left huckle with the fractions of foreign objects, gunshot

exit wound of soft tissues on the left cnemis, left foot paresis, sciatic nerve damage, medium degree cerebral contusion and closed brain injury. Ruslan Magomedov had been suffering from fever for two months. Doctors were unable to provide him an efficient treatment. And all these days he had been staying in custody with no visitors allowed. A mistake transformed into a crime getting worse and worse each day. The consequences of this mistake could become irreversible transforming the policemen who did it into murderers.

On September 2 his parents asked "The Mothers of Dagestan for human rights" for help.

On September 3 a lawyer, M. Gasanov, helped Ruslan in filing

a complaint on the unlawful actions of the law enforcers.

On September 5 a member of "The Mothers of Dagestan for human rights" accompanied with journalists attempted to visit Magomedov in the hospital. But they were arrested and sent to a police station, and the film they made was confiscated.

The Chairman of "The Mothers of Dagestan for human rights", S.I. Isaeva sent a complaint to the Chief prosecutor of Dagestan, A.I. Nazarov and asked him to investigate the case.

Photo caption: Instead of being sent to a hospital an accidental victim of military operation, Ruslan Magomedov, was delivered to a police station and tortured. Ruslan and his mother Zagra.

## TSUNTINSKY DISTRICT OF DAGESTAN: LAW ENFORCERS ARE FOLLOWING THE "CHECHEN SCENARIO" OF MOP-UP OPERATIONS

In the period between September 23 and September 30, 2011 340 residents of Dagestanian village Khutrakh in Tsuntinsky district had been experiencing a mop-up operation that recalled memories of the second Chechen war.

Mountainous Tsuntinsky district is located in the Western part of Dagestan close to the Georgian border. The ride from Makhachkala to the center of the district takes 9-10 hours. It's not that far but the way goes thru winding roads which are kept in awful condition.

The situation here has been tense for years. The forest covering a quarter of the territory of the district serves as a shelter for militants who attack police officers and military convoys.

In the beginning of October ombudsmen received information

about the mop-up operation in Khutrakh. During the operation the residents were suffering from violence, tortures and robberies. Obviously this operation was conducted as a revenge for militants' attacks. On October 8 the members of "Memorial" and "The Mothers of Dagestan for human rights" visited Khutrakh.

The only road to the village was blocked by a checkpoint made from a big tent and military trucks. According to the residents' reports the checkpoint was built during the first day of the mop-up operation on September 23, 2011.

On September 23 a convoy of URAL and UAZ vehicles with law enforcers on board approached the village. It's hard to precisely identify the forces

involved, but it makes sense to guess that the team included the officers of MVD and FSB and the soldiers of Russian border patrol.

The majority of vehicles were allocated outside of the village. The law enforcers surrounded the perimeter of Khutrakh and built a tent base on the road in front of the village.

At the same moment around 30 vehicles went inside the village. Armed law enforcers dressed in masks and camouflage (more than 100 persons) started inspecting houses. They were rude, didn't introduce themselves, showed no IDs and didn't describe the motives of their actions. Shakedowns were frequently accompanied with robberies. The law enforcers were stealing not only valuables but even medicines, light



bulbs and other items useful in establishing of their base.

Head of the administration of Khutrakh, Rasul Kurbanov, reported: "The residents of our village suffered because of their sons who joined the militants".

During the first day of the operation the law enforces had been capturing and taking away the residents of Khutrakh, both men and women. Obviously they paid special attention to the relatives of those who joined the militants and people who had been allegedly supporting them.

The arrestees were delivered to the filtration point organized inside the tent base. Some of them were questioned and tortured. Others were delivered to the regional police station or to the nearest border control base. Some of them were delivered to the Khebda village. Tortures were practiced everywhere. However it happened not to all of the arrestees: women were abused but they avoided tortures. In some cases the law enforcers were correct with men as well, for example with the teachers of the local school. But the majority of the arrested men experienced tortures and even the simulation of execution. People were asked about the militants and hidden arms.

The majority of the arrestees were released on the next day.

The mop-up operation continued during the following days. In some cases law enforcers visited the same house three or four times during the week. The majority of arrests were made on September 30, when people were exiting the local Mosque after evening worship.

On September 23 the son of Khati Gazimagomedova, Ahmed Guseynov (year of birth 1990, a disabled person of the 2nd degree) was taken out from its house and delivered to the tent base outside of the village, where he was tortured by putting a plastic bag over his head, digging him into the ground up to his neck and putting a machine gun



to his ear... They were asking him about the persons who support the militants.

Ahmed came back home at 8PM. His body was covered with mud and cigarette burns. He said relatives that law enforcers made him to lay down and then had been jumping on his body. "They said - You were a disabled person able to walk and now you will lose this ability," said Khati.

Shamsudi Shamsudinov said that he was taken out of home on September 23 and escorted to the tent camp by three masked law enforcers. They put him inside a vehicle and started asking. Law enforcers were trying to find a possible connection between Shamsudin and the militants and asking him about the people who support the "forest". On the evening they took Shamsudin inside a truck, put a plastic bag over his head, fix the bag with a duct-tape and tortured him with electricity. According to Shamsudin's reports they had been torturing him from 2PM till 6PM. He said: "Then they took me out of the vehicle, dug me into the ground up to the neck, shot over my head and threatened to kill me with a knife. They had been pressuring me for 20 minutes". Then they took him back into a vehicle, handcuffed him and continued interrogating. He was released on the next morning.

A teacher from the village, Magomed Rasulov, reported that during the last lesson on September 24 ten soldiers armed with machine guns entered the classroom. They asked him about the elementary teachers Ramazan Kurbanov and Gusein Koyniev. "They aimed guns on me and asked to show where they live. Then they escorted me down the village towards the houses of

Kurbanov and Koyniev. On the road they met Koyniev, arrested him and let me go. He was interrogated and released after half an hour," said Rasulov.

On September 30 13 years old Tagir Magomedov was coming back home for the passport of his father Siradzhudin. Soldiers arrested the kid and took him to the Tsuntinskiy police station. When his father came for the son they said that Tagir was mentioned in the lists (probably in the lists of "unreliable persons"). They kept the kid until 11PM and then released.

So formally the operation in Khutrakh finished with no results. None of the residents was arrested and no illegal items were found. At least there was no official information about it. Thanks God no residents of Khutrakh disappeared or killed as it happened during the brutal mop-up operations in Chechnya. However it doesn't make law enforcers' actions legal and cannot be considered as an excuse. Moreover, any violent actions of law enforcers help the militants' ideologists in propaganda of their ideas. These ideologists have already published information about the mop-up operation in Khutrakh on their websites describing outrages of "the unfaithful" who could be stopped only with arms.

It calls up the question: Is it what the organizers of the mop-up operation in Khutrakh wanted as a result of their actions?

***Based on the materials from the websites of "Memorial" and "The Mothers of Dagestan for Human Rights".***

*Photo of Svetlana Isaeva.*

# ONE HUNDRED HOURS IN HELL

**A story of a Chechen who was tortured  
but didn't agree to become a militant**

A trial on the case of police officials Nazir Guliev and Ilez Nalgiev accused in torturing of arrestees has started in Ingushetia. This is the first trial on the problem known to everybody. Chasing of statistics and the impunity transforms police and special services into a gang of maniacs and makes youngsters to join the militants. RR publishes a shocking insight about the mechanism of Russian torturing system. It was brought to light thanks to the outstanding courage of Zelimkhan Zhitigov, a young Chechen who survived in prison and filed charges against the executioners.

I met Zelim Chitigov when he was released from the Botkinskaya hospital. He is a shy guy showing a traditional Vainakh respect to older people. While recording an interview I was guessing how he managed to cope with what has happened in his life. "We don't know either", said ombudsmen who have taken him out. "Probably, it is due to his internal honesty". At the moment we met, Zelim was already able to walk, but still experienced some difficulties. He was treated well in Botkinskaya. He entered the hospital on a wheelchair after four months spent in the hospitals of Nazran and Grozny as a result of five days of tortures.

### The beginning. The city police station of Karabulak

- I live in Chechnya with my wife. At the moment I had two kids. My wife was pregnant and preparing to go to a hospital. Nobody was able to take care of my sons, because I was busy working on a construction site. And my mother lived in a refugee camp in Ingushetia. Our house in Chechnya was damaged. We managed to repair only two rooms and lived there with my wife. I realized that it would be too hard for my wife to raise three kids alone so I decided to move closer to my mother. So we moved and I found a job on a farm.

On February evening, after 8PM, I was standing on a bus stop. There is a bus stop near the city police station of Karabulak. It gets dark very quickly there. There were no buses and then a car stopped and the driver asked me where I need to go.

- Could you drive me to a gas station?  
- There is a gas station close to the refugee camp.

- OK, get in.

One guy from the back seat went out and let me to get in. I have poor vision so I didn't pay close attention to how they looked like. I thought they would give me a ride. I sat in the car between the passengers. Then they immediately made a u-turn. A said: "You're not going towards the gas station", and they answered: "Stay quiet, you're riding the right direction". Then I took a look around and noticed that they had machine guns. We approached the police station and Deputy Head of police, Nalgiev Ilez went out to meet us. Now I know who was he. But these days I didn't.

- Who are you? - he said.

I told them that I was from Promzhilbaza, a refugees' camp ...

We entered the police station. They didn't inspect or interrogate me but confiscated a mobile phone. Then we sat down in a room on the second floor.

- Are you a Muslim?

- Yes, I am a Muslim.

- So we're brothers, right?

- "We're all brothers", I said.

- Do me a favor.

Then I thought they wanted to get information about someone. But I knew no one.

- He said: "Help me to clean up the republic."

Public cleaning works were common in Grozny. I was guessing, why police cared about cleaning a city.

- What do you mean?

- I mean killing Russian soldiers. We should destroy the things forbidden by Islam including liquor stores, cafes and brothels... We're Muslims, and these things are forbidden!

I saw a new chief of the city police speaking on TV one week before. He said: "Stop, don't do it! If you think that the outrage is unstoppable, you're wrong. I will personally..." At that moment I thought: "Finally, a good man wants to stop it". So I said to them: "Your chief promised... How can you offer me something like this? What if I tell him?"

- A chief? Come with me.

We went out to a corridor and then entered another room there was the man I saw on TV, Nazir Guliev.

- He asked: "Who is it?"

- He is our brother, a Muslim.

The office was beautiful and they offered me a chair to seat. I said: "Do you know what he has offered to me?"

He was listening and smiling. Then he said: "You know, it's impossible to say all the truth on TV." I was pretty surprised! It was strange to hear something like this from a policeman! I thought it was absolutely impossible. After finishing a high school I got married and started working in construction all days long. I knew nothing.

Then they offered me two wads and a gun: "Here's a gun and money. You have to help us. Tell us what car you like and we'll give it to you, no problem..." I said: "I cannot drive and have never held a gun in my life." I tried to explain that I was working in construction, raising two kids and didn't care about the things they were talking about...

- Take three or four guys with you. You have friends, right? We'll give them guns as well. What gun do you prefer?..

- I know nothing about weapons.

- We'll give you an ID ...

They had been inducing me for two hours. Then he said: "Ok, you don't like it. What can we do..."

Then they took me to another room for fingerprinting. They recorded information about the relatives of my mother and father. Then they said: "Now you can go..."

*According to Ingushetian media Nazir Guliev, a senior police lieutenant and an ex-welder, was appointed to the position of the chief of Karabulak city police department in December 2009. Obviously his career jump was supported by his relatives: Guliev is a brother-in-law of Uvaysu Evkurov, a brother and a chief of Republican President's security service.*

*Following the appointment he publicly pledged to wipe out Wahhabists from Karabulak in one year. And in less than half a year Nazir Guliev established a total outrage in Karabulak. According to his employees, Guliev ordered to catch and beat all the young men walking on the streets after 8PM. He said that he followed the will of Evkurov: "he said to me", "he allowed". City police station became a torturing conveyor.*

*And Guliev didn't forget about the other aspects of his job. According to his employees all the local businessmen, stores and barbershops were obliged to pay a share. The stores that failed to pay were set on fire and the owners had to wait for a ransom in prison. Following the chief's orders policemen had been stealing cars and fuel tanks, robbing liquor stores and selling weapons. So it wasn't a quiet corruption but racketeering of 90s. The policemen who didn't want to follow his orders were fired. 17 officers were fired from the city police department pretty quickly.*

*Obviously Guliev felt himself untouchable. He practiced arrests of police*

*investigators from other regions, FSB officers and one federal judge (who later managed to get 1 million Rubles in compensation from the state). As a result of his assassination attempt two police officers died, but he survived.*

I had been thinking about it for several days. I went to my cousins and asked them: "What do you think about it? Is it normal?" They were joking: "Why didn't you tell us? A car and money, we could share it!.." They considered it as a joke, and I forgot about it. And then I felt that something should happen. I didn't tell my mother to avoid panic at home. I was innocent and it helped me to calm down.

Right before this story terrorists attacked the police station and two guys from our camp were taken away. My mother told me that one of them confessed himself guilty. I said that day: "He should rather stay at home and everything would be OK. It's good that he was found..."

On April 26 my wife called me and said: "They came to our house." I was surprised and immediately went home. Then I took my passport and went to the city police station. There I met the guy I knew. He was a policeman from our camp. We were in good relationships.

- Aslan, they came to our house. What's happening?

He made several calls asking to check my surname.

- No, you're not in the lists, relax.

- But they came ...

- Probably it was a mistake. It seems like they were searching for someone else ...

- But they were asking for me ...

- OK, come back tomorrow at 9 and we'll see.

### The day one. The "E" center

He calmed me down, so I went home, took a dinner and fell asleep. The next morning at 7 they broke into my house. Thirty men in masks entered

when I was praying. They were armored and dressed in black uniform. They said nothing and showed no IDs. They took me out and put in a car. Inside a car two guys sat on my hands. Then they put a jacket over my head and laid me down between the seats. Then they started to punch my head with a gun while the car was riding. They said nothing, just continued beating me ...

When we came somewhere they put a bag over my head down to eyes and tightened my hands with a duct tape. I was brought somewhere. "Lay down!" I lay down and they started beating me. They were saying nothing, just beating. There were seven or eight persons. Then they lowered the bag below my nose. I was barely breathing and asked them: "Please, take the bag out ..." Someone lowered the bag down to my neck and started suffocating me. I almost lost consciousness and only then they released pressure a bit. I started breathing. They sat me down and started asking. "Do you know him? - No, I don't." After two minutes of interrogation they said: "We're going to bring a lie detector to check if you're telling truth." I was glad to hear it! I didn't know why I was captured so the detector will help them to realize that it was a mistake.

They took my shoes and socks off and connected wires to my fingers. Then they pronounced a surname. I didn't hear it before, and then again. When they were asking me about the third surname I felt my feet shaking a bit. I was surprised and didn't understand what it was. "A lie detector says you're a liar! Where do you hide weapons?" I said: "I don't know. I've never held a gun in my life ...". Then it started shaking more. I was surprised, because I had never held a gun. I said: "It works wrong!"

They were saying nothing. My body was shaking, and I realized that it was an electric current. So they continued asking and torturing me with electricity again and again. They broke wires



## "ANTI-TERROR" A VICTIM OF TORTURES

somehow and they stopped. They laid me face down and three persons sat on my back and started to bend my legs backward. Then they continued kicking me.

**- Are they Russian or Ingushetian?**

- Pure Ingushetian! But they were saying: "We're Russians! We're Russians!"

**- Why?**

- I don't know. They were simply beating me and shouting: "We're Russians!"

Then they put me in a very small room there it was impossible to stretch my legs. I spent there around five minutes listening shouts and cries from somewhere. Then they were torturing me I was crying as well - I'm just a human. Then they took me to another room and lift a bag a bit away from my head. I saw a guy and his face was bleeding. When I looked closer I realized that it was the guy from our camp who was taken earlier. They asked him:

- Is it him?

- Yes...

- Did he connect the wires?

- Yes...

He was answering "Yes" on all the questions. I told him: "If you did something it's your problem. I have seen you but I don't know you. Tell the truth!" They were beating me and did nothing to him.

Then they brought another guy who was wounded a bit less.

- Do you know him?

- No, I don't (I saw him for the first time in my life.)

- But he knows you. Do you know him?

- Yes, I know.

- Did he press the button?

- Yes...

And he continued saying "Yes". Then I said: "Do you know me? What is my name?" And he failed to answer. "You see!" I said. I was trying to express my innocence. I thought they don't know me. They took him out and started beating me. Then they brought him

back again and blood was flowing down his face. He said: "This is Zelimkhan. I just forgot the name ..." I said: "Don't involve me into this"

Then they took him out, put my pants off, handcuffed my hands and feet and connected the wires. They were putting water on my body and applying electricity.

**- Was it hard?**

- I don't even know what to say. It's unbearable. I was ready to say everything they wanted, but it was impossible for me to lie. On the second day I realized that they wanted to make me guilty in the recent explosion. But I was unable to confess. I have two sons, a wife and brothers. How could I come back home after that? People died there and their relatives will declare vendetta against my family. How would I look to my wife's eyes? My father taught me: "Don't touch what is not yours and never lie. Dying is better than lying" All of my life I've been following these principles, so I was unable to lie!

They were putting water on my body and applying electricity. One of them said: "Why did you kill an Ingushetian policemen? You'd rather go and explode Osetians!" I said: "I didn't create them, so I have no right to take their souls out. Both Ingushetians and Osetians are humans. Why should I kill someone?" Then another man entered the room. He looked pretty strange, like Carlsson from cartoons. "He doesn't confess? Ok, I'll bring him a basin. We'll fill it with water and put him in. He'll quickly confess." Fortunately he didn't come back.

Then they brought me back to the small room. I had a mobile phone inside my pocket. They didn't even search me. If they thought that I'm a militant, why didn't they check me for guns? I had passport, medical and social insurance cards and a copy of my father's passport with me. Initially my hands were tightened well but after a while a duct taped released a bit, so I managed to grab the phone and call my

mother. I was unable to take the phone closer to my ear so I used speaker-phone. I said: "Mom, I don't know where I am and what's going on. I was tortured. Do whatever you can. Tell all the relatives..." Then I heard steps and switched the phone off. I put the phone back to pocket but not deep enough. They continued torturing me with electricity and the phone fell down to the floor. They made me to stand in front of the wall and started beating me between the legs with a baton. Then they laid me on the back and started beating my feet.

**- Was it on the same day?**

- Yes. At the moment I was still able to walk. Once they took me to the toilet and on the way I saw the guys they showed me before. They were seating, eating and smoking. A guy, who was escorting me, said: "You see? Say what they want and you'll drink tea with cookies..."

On the evening they brought another Chechen guy. The same story: "Yes, yes, it's him..." Then they put wires into my mouth and turned the electricity on. That was awful... My lip was ripped off and my jaw was damaged. My ear hears nothing even today - eardrum was broken. I was unable to stand and walk.

Then some fat Chechen policemen came. One of them looked more or less friendly. He helped me to wake up, sat me down to the chair and put his hand on my shoulder. My body was shaking because of electricity. Then another guy came. I started explaining my story but he was not listening.

- What teip are you from?

- Nizhloy.

- Kill him.

I felt upset. He was a Chechen! I didn't ask him to save me, but he was a law enforcer! He was supposed to find criminals! And he didn't even say something like "he's guilty, kill him". He said "Kill him" and went away...

And then Deputy Chief of city police department, Nalgiev, came. "Hey, what

are you doing here?! He's my friend! What are you doing with him?" Everybody around were in masks except him. I started explaining myself. He used to offer me a gun, but I was glad to see him since he was a policeman. I thought he'll fix the situation since he knew that I was innocent. "Hey, you were taken by mistake. I'm sorry. You should be released ..." He gave me a pen and a piece of paper: "Write a statement for the Chief of Karabulak police department. Say that you were arrested and then released after two hours." I was glad to hear that! I wrote it and then he said: "I'll take care about your statement and then come back and drive you home." He left and they continued beating me. Then they put a bag other my head and put in into the small room again. Probably it was a night, because they left me alone for 5-6 hours.

### The day two. The "E" center

On the second day everything repeated. They crucified me on the wall and started kicking my kidneys and between the legs with batons and water bottles. In the middle of the day they left and the Deputy Chief came. He lifted the bag from my head and said: "Do you know what you've done?"

I was hardly speaking: "Yesterday you took the paper and left ..."

- Do you know what you've done? You killed my brother!

- I killed no one.

He started shouting and beating me: "Say that you did it!" I was surprised. Couple minutes ago he said that I killed his brother and now he was saying "Say that it was you!" It meant he knew that I was innocent.

Then he put a gun inside my mouth:

- You think that I will simply kill you and that's it? I will go and kill your kids as well!..

- Ok, do it, You're a hero...

He was beating me, spitting and abusing my wife and mother. Then he left. They continued beating and tortur-

ing me. They ripped my foot nails off with the pliers. They wanted to rip my hand nails off as well but they were too short, so they started squeezing my skin with pliers. They were opening my mouth with a stick and rub my teeth with a sand cloth. They put a grenade inside my mouth. Then they showed me pictures on the phone with a decapitated body without hands and legs. "Look. Two hours ago he was here. If you won't confess we'll do the same with you." They put a knife to my neck: "We'll kill you like a sheep..." They did many dirty things that I cannot describe in details. Then the evening came and they took me back to the same room.

### The day three. The "E" center

On the third day I was unable to walk. I had nothing to do except waiting for death. They didn't kill me but didn't release. They had been beating me on the third day as well but less intensive.

**- Did they give you something to eat and drink?**

- Of course no. A Russian came to me at the night between the third and fourth days and said: "I'm guessing. Are you sick or an idiot? I don't understand you. Who are you? Usually people confess or die here in less than two days..." I lay down on the floor. "What do you need? You have kids, so think about your family. Say that you did it. And try to understand us - we have to feed our families as well. Just confess and we'll help you. You'll quit prison after two or three years. You'll start a new life ..." I answered: "Why? Why should I spend three years behind the bars? I did nothing wrong. I didn't know those people ..." Then another men came and started to take pictures.

**- What did they use for taking pictures?**

- They were taking pictures on mobile phones while torturing me. And they were kidding: "We've got a uniform for you. We'll take you to the forest,



then kill you and lay down a gun nearby. You'll be looking like a real militant. We'll make money on you anyway, so it's better for you to confess." Another guy said: "Hey, it's better to wait until the May 9. His beard will grow a bit. We'll let him enter the refugees' camp holding a gun and then kill him as a chief militant of Karabulak. We'll get more money on it..." And then they started imagining what they could do with this money: "I need to decorate my bathroom. And I want to buy a car. They had been speaking all night long. And when the morning came, they told me that they were preparing me for execution.

### The day four. Russian soldiers

They laid me down in a car and drove somewhere. On arrival they took a bag out of from my head and walked me to some building. Later I realized it was a sauna. I was in a room with a table. They sat me down. Then they called a waitress and ordered beer. They asked me: "Do you want a beer?" To be honest I was thirsty, but since I was approaching death I decided not to drink, because my religion forbids drinking alcohol. And then they started drinking beer paying no attention to me. And they were chatting.

**- What did they talk about?**

- "We'll go to Mozdok to the girls ..." - "And what if your wife gets to know?" - "Last time we drunk so much beer that we were able to build a huge pyramid from bottles!..." - They were chatting like kids. After an hour and a half they started talking about me: "He's healthy and beautiful ... Nobody survived here after four days ... It's sad that he didn't confess..." And then one of them said:

- I don't want to kill him.

- Me neither but what can we do?

- I know, we'll transfer him to Russians and they will kill him as usually.

- Wow, it's a good idea. Let's do it.

Then they put a bag over my head again and we had been driving somewhere for forty minutes. Then they took me out of the car I felt it was windy. Then they walked inside a wagon. There were some holes in a bag so I was able to look around a bit. They sat me down and walked away. Then I had heard two voices.

- **Were they Russians?**

- Yes, they were Russians. They told me: "Take a gun and say it's yours..." They handcuffed me and beat me a bit with hands and feet. Then they said: "Stand up!" And I was unable to stand so I continued to lie down. Then they said: "Ok. Say that you've found a gun somewhere and just brought it to us." I said: "I didn't do it". They had been beating me for fifteen minutes and then said: "Ok. Now I'll put something to your pocket and then I'll invite witnesses and you will say it's yours. You'll be charged for selling drugs and that's it." I continued explaining why I could not do it and they continued beating me again. Then one of them said: "You should confess in stealing a car." I answered: "I don't know how to drive a car..." And they continued beating me. "Ok. Confess in stealing two chickens. Just two chickens..." I said: "Ok. I'll do it..."

- And what did you do with these chickens?

- I don't know, because I didn't steal for real...

He got mad and started beating me again. I felt myself very bad and said: "Could you give me some water?" They there joking on this: "You're supposed to drink blood... Because you're a spider-man..." Then one of the Russians said: "Ok. Our water costs five thousand dollars. Do you know how much is it in Rubles? You're going to owe us one hundred fifty thousand..." But finally he gave me water. He lifted a bag out of my head and was pretty surprised with what he saw: "Are you from hell?" Then

they lifted my t-shirt and got horrified. Almost all the water they gave me spilled out, because I was barely swallowing. Then they put a bag back on my head.

Someone came in and asked: "Is he the one to be killed?" And the other man answered: "Last time I cleaned after you and made reports to the boss. I'm fed up of this! The boss is going to come soon and you'll do what he says. You'll take him to forest and do it there. I won't let you make a mess here again!..." And they started arguing.

I spent another hour there and then I had heard a man speaking outside: "Don't do it. I'm fed up with cleaning shit after Ingushi! They should do it themselves!"

### The day four. The city police department of Karabulak

They made me an injection. I felt a bit better. I was unable to walk but felt no pain. They put me in a car and I decided they were going to kill me somewhere. Then they took a bag out of my head and I realized that we were inside the office of Karabulak city police department. Guliev and Nalgiev were standing in front of the main entrance and saying rude words. They confiscated my belt and shoe laces and put me to a cell. I was able to move my hand a bit so I started inspecting myself - everything was very bad. Then a policeman came and walked me to the second floor. I was barely walking so the policeman was supporting me on the way. When I entered the room I saw a woman inside. It was Maryam Tochieva, an investigator. "Wow. What's happened to you!" I was stupid enough to believe that she was going to help me and inform my family...

"Oh! Do you feel pain somewhere?" I told her the whole story, put my shoes off and showed wounds on my feet made by electricity. "Do you need something?" I said: "Do you have something to eat?" She made a call and they brought me some mineral water, a

sausage, bread and kefir. I was barely eating but it was the only way for me to stay alive. I drank a bit of kefir.

Then she said: "They will escort you to a policeman now. You have to answer "yes" on all the questions they will ask. If you say "no", they'll kill you. I feel sorry for you..." They walked me to another room. There I saw Iris Vedizhev, Head of criminal investigations department, and another man in mask. They gave me a pen and a piece of paper:

- Ok. Write a statement for the Chief of Karabulak city police department and declare that you don't need a lawyer.

- I thought: "They are talking about a lawyer, so probably they are not going to kill me". I said: "I'm not going to write it." Vedizhev started beating me. He was kicking my head with a bottle of mineral water and throwing me towards the wall. Then they started suffocating me with a power cord. Then the woman came and asked: "What is this?! What are you doing?" She sat me down. Later I realized it was just a show.

Vedizhev said: "You were walking down the quarry, fell down on a rock, got scared and decided not to go home..." Now I know that in the report they wrote that they found me suspicious walking in the quarry checked my documents and took me to the police station. I said: "I haven't been in the quarry..." An investigator looked at me and said: "Say Yes..."

She went out and they continued beating me: "We've found a bomb inside your home. Who made this bomb?" I was pretty surprised with their versions from "pushing a button" to some guns, cars, drugs, chickens and now a bomb. I told him again that I had never held a gun in my life. He got angry:

- Where did you get this bomb from? Who brought it to you? Did you make it by yourself? Ok. Say that a stranger brought it or you simply had found it somewhere! Say at least something!

- I don't have my own home. I live as a guest with my kids. Do you think I will

store something like this? I've never held a single shell in my life.

- Ok. Say that two strangers came to you and asked to store a bag for a while. You got scared that they can kill your family and agreed... He was offering me papers to sign and beating me for not doing it. We spent a lot of time together. When we finished he was completely mad. They put me in a cell where I spent a night.

*The day before, on February 29, the house of Zelimkhan's mother was searched and a bomb was allegedly found. According to the report it was hidden between children's clothes. Witnesses didn't see the moment when it was found. They just saw a black plastic bag wrapped with duct tape. No traces of the bomb left. They said it was immediately destroyed in a test field. But the fact of demolition was not recorded in the register of the test field. No traces of an explosion were found as well.*

### The day five. A court

In the morning they brought me to an investigator. She was angry: "A lawyer will come shortly..." I was happy: my father, mother and a landlord will know that I'm alive!

- The lawyer is on the side of police. If you follow her advices you'll be dead. Don't trust her and don't say that you were tortured. If you say something like this you'll be killed."

I had never heard about the things like a lawyer or a criminal code before. I live in a village. After high school I got married and started working. So I believed her. A girl came and said: "I'm a lawyer..." I put my face down and covered the traces of handcuffs on my hands with a jacket. She started to say something but I didn't listen and kept silence.

- Is everything OK?

I confirmed. Then someone called the investigator and she went out for a minute. I put my hand down and the lawyer saw my face.

- What's happened to you?!

I said: "I need nothing from you. Just say my family that I'm alive." Then the investigator came back. The lawyer said: "I need your mother's phone number." I told her the number and she immediately called my mother after exiting the room. All my relatives came to the police station. The lawyer came back and said to the investigator:

- Let his mother and father talk to him and then you can continue.

- He should sign the papers first.

She gave me a blank piece of paper to sign. The lawyer advised me not to sign something like this. I thought: "What's wrong with it if I sign a blank piece of paper?" But probably with the help of Allah I decided not to sign.

The investigator got mad: "Take him to a cell immediately!" She sent the lawyer out.

The lawyer managed to say that the court session will start at 3PM. I was happy to hear that. It means that everybody will know and a judge will say that I am innocent. I was ready to offer them a thousand of witnesses ready to confirm that I was inside the dormitory at the moment of the terrorists' attack.

They put me back in the cell and I started feeling myself very bad. At 3PM policemen took me somewhere. One man with a moustache said: "Put the handcuffs on!" And the young guys from the convoy were almost crying while looking at me. And they rejected handcuffing me. One of them told me: "Sorry man. We're just dummies here." They put me inside a special car for transferring arrestees. Then they walked me to the court hall and one of them said: "Sorry, bro, but here we have to handcuff you...". They sat me down inside the cell. I felt myself very bad. Then my mother and uncle came. You know, following our orders I have to stand up in front of an older man. There was a wooden bar inside so I grabbed it and managed to stand up a bit. And then I lost consciousness.

I woke up then they put water on my

face. An eardrum was broken so water entered my brain. My left brain was full of pain! I though they continued torturing me. Someone was trying to make an injection but I didn't let him do it. I was screaming and trying to get them out of me. A doctor was trying to measure my blood pressure and I thought he was connecting wires for torturing me. So I was in panic.

They didn't let to call an ambulance for me. My mother said that the prosecutor and the judge rejected calling an ambulance. But then my uncle approached them and said: "If the guy dies you both will be dead. You know the traditions of our nation". And then they decided to let the ambulance to come.

### The hospital

They made me an injection and took me to a hospital in Nazran. There was a special room for arrestees on the fifth floor. I didn't remember the first moments in the hospital. I felt myself very bad and was unable to move because of the tubes connected to my body. They were injecting me drugs so I had been almost unconsciousness for a month. Then I started moving a bit. My body had been shaking for almost two months. My body was reacting itself on policemen. I was barely sleeping waking up on every sound.

The judge prolonged my arrest for another thirty days. The lawyer demanded for medicolegal proceeding but the court rejected it. And the head of city police department told her: "I feel sorry for not killing that guy. Quit of this case if you don't want your kids to become orphans. You know, everything can happen. You can be hit by a car while crossing the street or something..." They there threatening my father: "If you don't withdraw your application we'll kill all your family...". My parents filed an application while searching for me.

They did a lot of weird things! My medical history was stolen then my

mother left home for shopping. They were threatening her too: "We'll kill him!" They were threatening doctors as well: "He's not sick. Release him from the hospital or we'll kill you..." Doctors are just humans so they asked my parents: "Take him somewhere in Russia, to Nalchik or to Moscow. There he will receive an adequate treatment or it will be too late." They didn't know what was wrong with me. I needed tomography, but the court didn't let it happen.

While I was in hospital my mother received a letter: "Your son has been charged according to article 222 (illegal storing of weapons)." This letter was sent on February 26, the day then I went to the city police department. At that moment I wasn't even arrested and they didn't search my home. How did they manage to initiate the case? Can you understand it?

On the second month they took me to the court. I was riding a wheelchair. That was a joke. I was unable to sit, so I lay inside the cage. I heard almost nothing and didn't understand what the judge and the prosecutor were talking about. The lawyer paid attention to the fact that I didn't hear well. And the prosecutor said: "He's OK." And the investigator said: "When I saw him he was absolutely healthy and spoke well..." These people are not humans.

They said in the court that they had found a bomb inside my house. The lawyer said: "You say you've found it? OK, show us at least something: fingerprints or chemical expertise. You say you took the bomb to the test field and destroyed. OK, show us video or pictures of the explosion. Show us single evidence..." They had nothing. She told it to me later because I heard nothing at the moment. They were arguing a lot but they didn't let me to leave the prison hospital. They said that I was the resident of Chechnya and I could go to the Chechen militants. I don't know where they found the people like these to become judges! I was on a wheelchair. How did they think I would join the militants?

While I was in the hospital on Nazran, another guy, Ruslan Evloev, the resident of Ekazhevo, was brought there (we changed his name - RR). He was barely walking and almost whole his body was burnt. The skin was almost taken out from his palms and back - they had been torturing him with a hot iron. He was a student. His mother was a Russian teacher and he had no father. He had been studying medicine in Rostov. He came to his mother for vacations. Once in a morning they broke into his house and took him away without saying a word. That was the same story: they put a bag over his head and tortured him with electricity. He spent there only one day but his body was heavily wounded. They allegedly found weapons inside his house. They took out all the valuables including a TV and then exploded the house. He spent ten days in a hospital and then they sent him back to prison. No medicolegal proceeding was appointed. And he was smarter than I am! He is a very brave guy. I did some sport before and he was very skinny and weak. But he didn't confess in the things he didn't do. He was calming me down: "Relax Zelim. Everything will be OK..." We were feeling sorry for each other...

And also there were people arrested for drugs or ammos. They spent a few days in the hospital and then were released. I met one of them later and he said that he paid 350 thousand Rubles to various persons and they let him to get out.

On the third month they let me to leave Ingushetia and we went to Chechnya. There I was placed to a local hospital because I needed regular painkiller injections. They made CT and started treating me. I started recovering. I was able to sit a bit and move my hands. I was unable to speak but started eating soft food.

**- Did they treat you in Ingushetia?**

- They tried but they didn't know the reason why I was unable to speak and move my legs. They didn't see what was

wrong inside my brain. They treated the things they saw from the outside: handcuffs and electricity wounds, jaw and lips. My legs were completely black. And they didn't know what was going on inside. And in Chechnya they had a CT so they found a cystic lesion inside my brain, a spinal hernia, a hematoma inside my chest, and the damages of kidney, liver and lien. They said these damages were made by the electric wires the policemen put inside my mouth.

### The investigation

I spent a month in the hospital and then went to a rehab center. I started feeling myself a bit better, but I was still unable to walk and talk. I had continuous headaches, my back was in pain making me unable to seat. After five minutes of seating I felt severe pain.

The investigator and another Russian woman, Kasenko, visited me in the rehab center. She started to play her role: "These bastards made me cleaning up this shit. Of course I know that you're innocent..." I trusted no one but I told her what had happened to me. She was trying to show that she cared: "The prosecutor of Ingushetia said that the case would be closed if you say a surname. Just say any surname and that's it. This is unavoidable. Guliev is a relative of the president. Confess in something and we'll let you go..." Then my mother started to panic. I said: "Mom, go out" The investigator was happy! She was sure that I would point on someone.

- The Republican prosecutor will keep his word. Just say that there were a stranger, you let him to spend a night at your home and he left a bag...

- Listen to me carefully. They have been torturing me for four days and I didn't confess in the things I didn't do. Do you think that I'm going to lie to you now? There was the Ingushetian prosecutor then they were torturing me for nothing? You know that I'm innocent so write it down: Zelimkhan is innocent...

She was completely pissed off!

- Ok. So we'll arrest your mother and wife because they had access to your room as well.

- Do it. Arrest the whole family. I can spend three years in prison. That's not a big deal...

- It's not three. It's six...

So she got mad and left.

**- You said that Guliev is a relative of Evkurov?**

- They say that the Evkurov's brother, Uvays, and Guliev are married on sisters. All of them talked about it: "What can we do? We know he's innocent but Guliev is protected by the president... Nobody wants to lose their jobs or even lives because of Zelimkhan..."

*Meanwhile Nazir Guliev got in trouble: his outrage was so wild that on August 10, 2010, the officers from his department organized a meeting in front of the windows of the head of Ingushetian MVD. They demanded to fire Guliev for making them torturing and killing youngsters. The deputy minister had listened the officers and Guliev's duties were temporarily suspended. After a month he was appointed back but shortly before he broke into his ex-office and attacked the officer who was taking care of his duties. This officer called for police Special Forces and Guliev was arrested and charged in attacking the police department. Meanwhile the officers of FSB stopped a vehicle full of weapons and its owners said that they bought it from Guliev. And the Investigation Committee charged Guliev in racketeering.*

*Following that the people tortured in the Karabulak city police department started filing applications.*

- The investigator of my case started taking me to the crime scenes. We went to the building of CPE in Nazran. I was inside the car and the investigator and my father approached to the building and tried to get in. The head of CPE said: "Get out of here or I will kill you." The investigator started explaining that

this case was controlled by the President... "The president? I don't give a shit about it!". Fifteenth to twenty people with guns run out of the building and started searching cars around, so we drove away. Then we visited Achaluki and found that sauna.

Only after six months of investigation they appointed a medicolegal proceeding. Experts took a look at the pictures of my brain and spinal and confirmed that these damages were made by electricity.

**- And how did the story end?**

- It has not ended yet. They say they want to charge Nalgiev for everything. Guliev is a bodyguard of the president and Vedizhev is a saint, he didn't even touch me. My case is still open. One year passed and I'm still in between of freedom and prison. I fed up with this: I see cars without license plates every day on my street and my kids suffer from this story a lot...

**- What do you think, why it has happened with you?**

- I don't know. But I think they chose me because I'm a Chechen from the refugees' camp. A have no relatives able to protect me. All the guys I saw in prison were from poor families. They can do nothing.

**- Do you know what has happened to them?**

- They were sentenced for prison. Only the Chechen guy was released. All of them later said that their confessions resulted from tortures. Now I see how it goes. Innocent young guys are being captured, tortured and killed across Ingushetia and Chechnya. In my village in Chechnya guys are scared to visit a mosque. If you don't drink alcohol, smoke and swear - you're in deep trouble. Do you think Evkurov doesn't know that people are being tortured in his republic? Do you think he can't cope with this? I believe none of them.

*Aslan Pliev, a neighbor of the Chitigov family, was pledged not guilty in the case of the terrorists' attack on the city police*



Zelimkhan Chitigov with his kids and mother Zukhra.

*department but was sentenced to prison for possessing of weapons. When he was released he declared that his testimonies against Zelimkhan were taken under tortures. After the statement of Unus-Bek Evkurov the case against Nalgiev and Guliev finally started moving and was transferred to the court.*

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*Photo of: Oxana Yushko for "RR", reprinted with the author's permission.*

### P.S.

The head of Ingushetia, Unus-Bek Evkurov, who has taken the case of ex-policemen Nazir Guliev and Ilyas Nalgiev under his personal control, believes, that the offenders went beyond the limits but it is possible to understand them, because they're at war every day. "They lost so many friends in the traps like this. They're not robots. And sometimes it's hard to define the border of unacceptable methods of interrogation," said Evkurov. "But we cannot consider them innocent because it will feel the others free and the law enforcers will become criminals one day."





## DEAD OR MISSED IN CAUCASUS

In 2005 the non-governmental organization "Human Rights Watch" estimated the amount of persons missed during the Chechen war (since 1999) between three and five thousand people. The official Russian statistics confirms 2 090 cases. Normally it should be considered as a "crime against humanity" according to the international law. Unfortunately now it happens in other regions of the Northern Caucasus as well including Ingushetia and Dagestan.

All the victims are civilians usually captured by the militaries or law enforcers ("siloviki") allocated in the region. And none of complaints were duly investigated by Russian court. European Court of Human Rights (the body overseeing the European convention of human rights protection, signed by Russia) investigated many cases of this kind and pledged Russian government guilty.

Notwithstanding the official statements of stabilization in Chechnya, the end of the "counter-terrorism operation" regime (since April 2009), the appointment of a new leader of Ingushetia instead of Zyazikov and some attempts

of dialogue in Dagestan, people continue disappearing in the region.

The Ingushetian organization "Mashr" (Peace) that supports the relatives of missing persons, counted thirteen cases of disappearing in 2010. And "The Mothers of Dagestan for Human Rights" counted 25 missed persons in Dagestan in 2009. These numbers may look humble comparing to the losses during the war, but every missed person is a tragedy for the family. Law institutions pay no attention to these crimes making people hate local and federal government and its officials.

So is there a chance of sustainable peace and stability for Caucasus? The furious protest is a normal reaction on reading stories of missed persons and listening to their parents. You feel the need to fight against these crimes.

And then you realize that the cynicism of administration has passed all the possible limits. The local and federal authorities either pay no attention to it or unable to fix the situation. The authorities should accept their inability to act or they should be pledged guilty in criminal omission. If they cannot establish the law

and order on Caucasus they deserve no trust from local population. And if they prefer to close their eyes on situation they should be considered as instigators. In both cases we see the total bankruptcy of the authorities in Caucasus.

The outstanding courage and persistence of the Caucasian people impress those who collect their stories. It's really painful to record stories about the arrests and disappearing of someone's husbands or brothers and the following attempts of families to find them without any reaction from the officials. If it's painful for a spectator, can you imagine the pain of those who were involved and came thru this?

Listening to these stories is some form of acknowledging them real. I still remember the faces of the people we spoke with in Chechnya and Ingushetia. We still hear the voices of Madina, Ayna, Mariat and the others. We see their crying husbands and sons taken to the uncertainty just a few days before we came. And we remember the young Russian woman, who lost her husband Ruslan (read page 29 - "DOSH"). And those who took her husband away advised her to choose another one among "those who smoke, drink and lie". "They capture the best of us," say the locals.

Why don't they understand that taking out people and building a wall of silence in front of those who search for them fuels hatred between population and the administration? Only the memories of two recent wars can explain why locals are so extremely patient. But for how long it will last? And what will happen then the patience ends? Will be there a government able to accept its mistakes and help people to cope with what they have come thru? Unfortunately this degree of violence and impunity may result in radical reaction very hard to slow down. And who will be responsible for a new war?

We should ask ourselves: what did international and especially European society do? Why did they let this chaos happen close to our borders? We will regret of not preventing it and letting it to develop for such a long time. Our main mistake is indifference. This is a common mistake of good people who are lucky enough not to have a tragedy knocking on their door.



Marina Posheva spent five months knowing nothing about her husband's destiny.

## DEAD OR MISSED IN CAUCASUS

She started telling me her story:

- My name is Marina. I'm a Russian. My husband was kidnapped this year.

Going deeper into her story I started feeling her pain. Her blue eyes were full of sadness. And everything started from big love...

Marina's chosen one, the Ingushetia resident, Ruslan Poshev, was born May 31, 1982. As the other guys of his generation he had been studying in high school dreaming of becoming a lawyer. After the school he went to a college in Karachaevo-Tcherkessia and there he met Marina. She lived in Kavkazsky, the village there his college was located. She remembers all the details of the day when they met.

Marina was a leader. Everybody loved her and she knew the importance of friendship. Probably that was the reason why she managed to successfully communicate with everyone without paying attention to nationalities. But Ruslan was not just a friend. He became the most important person of her life. That day Marina was sitting on a bench with her friends. Ilez Geroev and Ruslan Poshev approached them and Marina's friends immediately realized that

Ruslan's green eyes enchanted her heart.

- "I immediately realized that he's my man and I need no others". Remembering that day Marina recalls the happiness that was later stolen.

- "I remember, how my parents were disappointed with my choice"

Almost all the parents are too selfish in the love they feel to their kids. They believe that they have rights to control even private aspects of their kids' lives. Marina's parents were the same. They were advising her to think twice before marrying Ruslan. But she was absolutely sure in her choice. She knew that Ruslan is her destiny and she was ready to follow him till the end. They married in 2001 according to Muslim traditions. Their older son is seven now and the younger is less than one year. Four years ago Marina with her son moved to the house of her husband's family in Ingushetia. Ruslan served as a court marshal in Magas. But their happiness obviously made a problem to someone. On May 14 this year Ruslan was kidnapped and after two hours his house was searched. Marina didn't disclose the reasons of the search but they confiscated 70,000

(seventy thousand) Rubles. The family collected the money for a surgery of their younger son.

And then they started pretending that Marina had staged her husband's kidnapping. Of course they declined the charges of stealing their money. But Ruslan was kidnapped on a highway and then after two hours their house was searched. His relatives had not filed any application at that moment, so obviously the kidnapping was not staged.

- He was neither a Wahhabist nor a militant. He did nothing wrong. What for!? What for!? He was just a good father, son and husband. I cannot stop searching him. I will continue. He will come back, otherwise my life is senseless. How could I live without him?

I heard the stories like this so many times in Chechnya! And it was always hard to find the correct words to support the victims... And in this case I was just listening to her. Marina told me a lot of good things about Ruslan's relatives, especially about his mother who worked a lot to feed the whole family. She told me that their family waited for a miracle to happen and Ruslan to come back. I asked her:

- Do you regret of something?

- If I was able to start my life over I would still marry Ruslan. He gave me so much warmth like nobody else. If he doesn't come back my life will be senseless...

- But your kids need you.

- There would be no kids without him.

Her voice was quiet and tired. And she said it without any pathos.

The Grozny office of the "DOSH" magazine introduces you another two tragic stories in the section "They are searched and awaited" that tells the stories of the people missed in action during the two Chechen wars.

The first stories was published in "DOSH" - № 4(30)2010, to be continued in the next editions.

## Story № 9



Nura Edilova has been waiting her son for 10 years.

# We will survive

before the Chechen wars started. He was 14 when he seriously damaged his right eye while riding a swing. His eye lost the ability to see and Abdulla had become a disabled person.

In 1995 Nura lost her husband. Muslan died from tuberculosis. Since then 19 years old Abdulla became the primary supporter of his mother. The first war campaign made him to become an adult when he joined militants. But when the campaign ended he went home and started taking care of his house. And then the second war started. Nura was worried and tried to keep her son around. Then he told her:

- We will survive. Nobody needs war including us.

And they started to survive. They cared about their house and grew potatoes. Sometimes Nura felt nervous about the war and uncertainty, but her son was calming her down and she continued making preserves and taking care about potatoes and beans.

On the day of August 26, 2001 she was going to visit the village market and buy some lime and tomatoes for adzhika (her son loved adzhika (a spicy tomato sauce) very much). Abdulla advised her:

- Take a cab and I'll join you later to help.

Bud he didn't ...

Their neighbors saw that soldiers broke into their house and took Abdulla away. Nura was shocked and spent 2-3 months in bed. And her brothers had been trying to find any traces. Then they got information that a guy from Goyty (who looked like her son) was kept in the military base located in Khankala. Then Nura decided that she had to start searching for her son. She made her weak body to stand up from the bed and.... she's still searching him.

- On the day when they took Alkhazur there were no clouds in the sky, but then shower rain had started, - she said quietly.

"It looked like the skies were crying for a mother's tragedy".

- My time had stopped that day. I still remember that rain ...

Nura is wiping her tears. She was almost everywhere while searching for her son. And she heard so many rumors! She didn't accept the bad ones and believed in the good ones. In 2007 she filed a case into the European court. I asked her a question:

- What do you expect from the European court?

- I want them to accept the fact that my son was illegally kidnapped. And I want the guilty to be punished.

## Story № 10

# I will search for him till the end of my life

A day of happiness came to the Khadzhiev family in 1969 then they lived in Kazakhstan. Twin boys were born that day. The parents named them Khasan and Khussein. The family already had four kids, two sons and two daughters, but the birth of twin boys is a great luck for Vainakhs. The happy parents, Sultan and Zalpa, didn't know that separation was coming...

The tragedy came unexpectedly as it usually happens. Sultan's both kidneys failed. A friend of their family, Shita, was ready to donate his kidney to Sultan and the surgery was already scheduled, but Sultan died earlier. Khasan and Khussein were 6 months old that day. Zalpa went to motherland to bury her husband and stayed there forever. She raised her kids, worked hard and cried at night... She thought everything bad had already happened. In 1981 another tragedy hit their family - Ilyas died. He had just graduated from high school and was going to enroll into college, but he was hit by a car... This tragedy shocked Zalpa. Her daughter, Rauza, remember how hard was it. The house 39 on the Lenin street in Goyty became a shelter of pain. And then the second Chechen war had started. Rauza was unlucky in personal life so she stayed with her mother. She remembers the day when it happened in details: on October 30, 2001, at 4AM armed people broke into their house ....

- "All of us were sleeping including Khasan, Khussein, mother and me,"

said Rauza. And then she started rapidly telling me her story. It looked like she was scared that someone would interrupt her before she told me everything. The whole family was woken up by the sound of breaking door. Rauza asked them to stop breaking the door and opened it immediately. 10 to 12 military men dressed in uniform entered the house and threw Rauza to a corner. The yard was full of soldiers and military vehicles. Then Rauza heard a question:

- Who is Khasan here?

And then she saw a hand raising a machine gun. Rauza shouted:

- Don't do it in front of a mother! Please!

Then she saw her brother handcuffed. They said on the radio:

- Vostok, Vostok. The operation is completed. We're returning to the base.

They took Khasan out and started beating him with rifles...

- Khuseyn and our mother were upset the most. She felt sick that day and died after four months. Until the last day she had been asking me to continue searching for Khasan. I do search for him, but still know nothing. And Khuseyn sleeps badly at nights. Sometimes he wakes up in the middle of the night... Probably it means that Khasan is still alive? Twins feel each other very well. I think he shouts when Khasan is feeling pain.

It's impossible to stay calm while listening something like this. I asked her:



Rauza Khadzhieva: "I will wait for my brother as long as I'm alive."

- Did he work somewhere?

No, he didn't. He was going to apply for a job in police. The whole life was compressed into an official statement: "The preliminary investigation of the criminal case 25191 initiated on the kidnapping of Khadzhiev K.S. ... was suspended due to the absence of a suspected person." This is a quote from the illiterate official letter signed by an investigator, M.R.Suleymanov. But Rauza continues to search. Using the support from the "Memorial" organization she filed a complaint to the European court. Another brother, Ruslan, died from heart attack this year. A wife and two daughters left alone after the disappearing of Khasan ...

- I will search for him till the end of my life, - said Rauza when I was saying Good Bye to her.

**Maret ELDIEVA**



## THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTION FOR HER

The "DOSH" magazine and the Center of Caucasian initiative supported by the "Mothers of Chechnya" organized a memorial ceremony in Grozny on the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Anna Politkovskaya. The observer of "Novaya Gazeta" was killed on the stairs to her apartment in Moscow on October 7, 2006.

While the members of the "Putin" patriot club were celebrating the 59th birthday of their idol riding around the city with Russian flags and the prime-minister's portraits, the ombudsmen were quietly remembering the death of their "friend in arms and sister".

Approximately 40 people attended the ceremony. The majority of them were the mothers of the kidnapped and the representatives of various local non-government organizations,

including "Memorial", "Female dignity", "The Committee against tortures" and the others.

The small venue was unable to accommodate all the people who came to express their condolences. "Five years passed, but the pain is still strong. There is no substitution for her," said the Chairman of "The mothers of Chechnya" Madina Magomedova.

The documentary about Politkovskaya was shown in the beginning of the meeting and everybody was crying. "Anna was like a sister for me. She was always nearby and supported me when my three sons were taken away by the federals," said Zaynap Batalova, a 57 years old woman from Urus-Martan.

Women were sharing their memories about Politkovskaya, appreciat-

ing what she did to the Chechen nation.

Zaynap held the portrait of Anna. "Anna had very beautiful white hairs," she said. "Anna cried with us on our meetings." In those days of 2000 Anna had been standing all days long in front of the prosecutors' offices and military headquarters supporting the women demanding to release their kids.

"Anna sacrificed her life for truth about the Chechen war, and we should do everything to keep her remembered among Chechens," said Libhan Bazaeva, Chairman of "Female dignity".

All the attendees expressed their condolences to the relatives of Politkovskaya. They said that the assassination of Anna was a personal tragedy for all of them.