

CAUCASIAN INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE

WORD

DOSH

DIGEST

ISSN 1818-5851



9 771818 585775



**Natalia
ESTEMIROVA**

murdered July 15, 2009

ISSUE #5

THE SUMMER OF EXECUTION

THIS DIGEST WAS PREPARED BY:



Israpil SHOVKHALOV

- Editor-In-Chief of DOSH magazine. In 1990-1998, he worked at Chechen State Television and Radio as reporter, program presenter, and chief editor of youth and social programs. In 1998-2003, he was assistant to Russian Federation State Duma deputy (Yabloko party). In 2000-2003, he was editor of the press-service of the Russian Human Rights Research Center. Since 2003, he has been Editor-in Chief of DOSH magazine. In 2005, he was the finalist of Andrei Sakharov Award, Journalism as an Act of Conscience. Member of the Union of Journalists of Russia.



Abdulkhazhi DUDUEV

- Executive Editor of DOSH magazine. In 1994-1998, he worked at Chechen State Television and Radio as reporter, presenter of News information program, and chief editor of social and political programs. In 1998-2003, he was assistant to Russian Federation State Duma deputy (Yabloko party). In 2000-2003, he was editor of the press-service of the Russian Human Rights Research Center. Since 2003, he has been Executive Editor of DOSH magazine. Member of the Union of Journalists of Russia.



Lidiya YUSUPOVA

- In 2000-2005, director of the Grozny office of Memorial Civil Rights Center. In 2004, she became the winner of the annual Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. In 2005, she was awarded the annual Professor Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize established by the Rafto Foundation for Human Rights. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006-2008.



Zoya SVETOVA

- Journalist of different Russian and European newspapers, magazines, and TV channels. Recipient of numerous journalistic awards for covering human rights issues.



Usam BAISAEV

- Memorial Civil Rights Center member.



Irina VASYUCHENKO

- Literary Editor of DOSH magazine. Writer, literary critic, translator, member of the Union of Writers of Moscow and the Union of Translators.



Mikhail NOVIKOV

- Consultant. Translation into English.



Vitaly KUZMENKOV

- Layout Designer.

OFFICE IN MOSCOW

4 Luchnikov Per., office 1
Moscow, 103982
Russian Federation
Tel.: +7 (495) 621.0424
Tel./fax: +7 (495) 625.0663
E-mail: dosh_magazine@hotmail.com
www.doshdu.ru

OFFICE IN GROZNY

92 ul. Mayakovskogo
Grozny, 364051
Chechen Republic

Editor-in-Chief
Israpil SHOVKHALOV
E-mail: shovkhalov@hotmail.com

Executive Editor
Abdulla DUDUEV
E-mail: duduev@hotmail.com

Deputy Executive Editor
Svetlana ALIEVA

DEPARTMENTS

Society
Lidiya YUSUPOVA

Zoya SVETOVA

Maria KATYSHEVA

Inna BUTORINA

Elena SANNIKOVA

Correspondents

Maret ISAEVA (Grozny)

Marem YALHAROEVA (Ingushetia)

Malika BETIEVA (Chechnya)
Aset USPANOVA (Ingushetia)
Ali MAGOMEDOV (Dagestan)
Natalia KRAYNOVA (Dagestan)
Nadezhda BOTASHEVA

(Karachay-Cherkessi)

Secretary

Georgy ZINGER

Literary Editor

Irina VASYUCHENKO

Layout Design

Vitaly KUZMENKOV

The magazine is registered with the Ministry of Press, Television and Radio Broadcasting and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation. Registration Certificate PI #77-15652, June 9, 2003.

Founder and Publisher

Regional Civic Initiative - The Right to Life and Human Dignity Public Organization
Board Chairman
Viktor KOGAN-YASNYY

The opinions expressed in author signed materials and in interviews do not necessarily reflect the position of the Editorial Board of the magazine or its publisher. All materials published in this issue are protected by copyright and belong to the Editorial Board. Any reproduction in any way without the expressed written permission of the Editorial Board is prohibited. The use or quotation of the materials must contain a reference to DOSH Magazine.

The magazine is published quarterly in the Russian language since June, 2003.
There are 999 copies printed of this Digest.

CONTENTS

1 (23) 2009

Zoya SVETOVA

PROFESSION UNDER FIRE 2**UNPOPULAR PICKET** 5

Usam BAISAYEV

NOBODY WANTED TO DIE 7

Elena SANNIKOVA

NO END TO TALKHIGOV'S ORDEALS 11

2 (24) 2009

Dmitry BERKUT

MEMOIRS OF A FEDERAL SOLDIER 13

Natalia KRAYNOVA

WITHOUT OPTIONS 17

Abdulla DUDUEV

VERY FEW PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT THIS TRUTH 20

3 (25) 2009

THE SUMMER OF EXECUTION 23

Natalia ESTEMIROVA

A TALE OF FEAR 24

Abdulla DUDUEV

YAKHYA EVLOEV: WE ARE DISAPPOINTED 26

THREE YEARS WITHOUT ANNA POLITKOVSKAYA

Three years have passed since the day Anna Politkovskaya was killed.

Three years ago, it seemed inconceivable, it was unbelievable. She was a very popular journalist who almost alone had been breaking through the information blockade of the second Chechen war relating to the world the disgrace of those who had unleashed this massacre in the name of reinforcing their authority and self-interest. She spoke about the disasters that eventually fell upon the people of Chechnya. Her nobleness and courage excited many in the most remote corners of our planet and she was awarded several prestigious international awards in the area of journalism and human rights. It seemed that recognition of such scale and global popularity would protect her from direct physical violence.

Everyone who thought so was deeply mistaken. When the murderers dared to bear arms against Anna Politkovskaya, the well-known journalist and human right activist, the person of rare spiritual height, and simply a woman, it became obvious that the last boundary was passed, the barrier against evil was broken: pressure and intimidation, persecution and threats, bloody massacres became an ordinary thing. Three years after the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, a series of murders of other human rights activists occurred in this country: Stas Markelov, Natasha Estemirova, Zarema Sadulaeva. It is not the meanness and the impunity of the murderers that is the most terrible thing, it is the fact that the mass consciousness has got used to such murders. Evil is paramount but a healthy society is immune to it through compassion, the feeling of responsibility, and an angry protest against cruelty. It seems that our society is lacking these reactions: nothing can excite its conscience or stir up its mind any more. Yes, we are sick, we are heavily sick with indifference.



Dosh #1(23)2009
Zoya SVETOVA

PROFESSION UNDER FIRE

Stanislav Markelov was one of a few Russian lawyers who defended the Chechens.

In November 2008, two months prior to his murder, Stanislav Markelov spoke at a meeting in the center of Moscow. The meeting was organized in support of anti-fascists. Markelov was the lawyer of several members of this movement persecuted by the authorities. Now, after his murder, the friends recollect his speech at the meeting. There was an impression that Stas Markelov felt that he would be murdered. For many, this speech became a kind of his will: *"I am tired. I am tired of seeing the names of my friends in criminal reports. It is not work any more. It is a matter of survival. We need to be defended from the nazis, from the mafia, from law enforcement agencies that often simply serve to them. And we perfectly understand that nobody can provide protection to us. Neither God, nor the tsar, nor the law, already nobody, only we ourselves can do it."*

I met Stas Markelov about eight years ago. He was then defending Anna Politkovskaya from threats of Major Sergey Lapin, a militiaman from Khanty-Mansyisk area who tortured arrested persons at Ochyabrsky ROVD of the city of Grozny. Together with Politkovskaya, Markelov won the case in Grozny and Sergey Lapin was found guilty of tortures that caused the death of Zelimkhan Muralov. It is the second case (after Budanov's case) when a Russian military man serving in the Chechen Republic was punished for a crime against peaceful population.

"I should assume the functions of law enforcement agencies"...

Stas has always been very convincing in proving that his clients were innocent and encountered obvious lawlessness, therefore it was necessary to help them urgently. When he offered to write an article about his cases, Stas used to say: *"I have got an interesting case for you. Look at these papers please. I offered this story to Anna Politkovskaya but Novaya Gazeta cannot write about all my cases."* And, as a rule, I wrote.

I didn't see Stas for several years. It happened so that I was writing about other themes and communicated with other lawyers.

However, over the past months I often called him to get his comments on various legal issues. On December 22nd, 2008, we saw each other at a round table discussion at the House of Journalists and exchanged a few words. Now, recollecting this meeting, I feel awfully sorry for not asking Stas about many things that day. A few days later, it became known that Dimitrovgradsky court supported Yury Budanov's petition about conditional-early parole. The Civil Assistance committee concluded a contract with Markelov to defend in court the interests of Elza Kungaeva's family. Stas appealed against the court decision and detained Budanov's release from prison for several days.

After New Year holidays, in spite of the fact that the complaint of the Kungaev family was not considered yet, Yury Budanov was released. I called Stas on January 15th to get his comments. He told me then the same things that he told dozens of other journalists who tormented him that day with similar questions. Stas Markelov expressed his views about Budanov's illegal release at his last press conference on January 19th, 2009, one hour before he was murdered.

Today, when you read Stas's last speech, you involuntarily look into it for the reason of his murder. Especially, as the employees of the information press center where the press conference had taken place told me, Stas was late for the press conference and behaved in a slightly unusual way. The press conference was supposed to begin at one o'clock in the afternoon but about a quarter past one Stas unexpectedly called and said that he lost his way. The employees of the press center were surprised because Markelov had been there many times before and especially recently used to hold his press conferences there. When Stas finally arrived, he admitted: *"My feet somehow do not walk me to you. Probably this Budanov affects me so."* Then he came out to the journalists and declared:

"If the family of the victim had no right to appeal against the court decision, Budanov would have been released on January 3rd. Since he was not released, it means that at that point the court decided that the family of the victim had the right to make the complaint. The Criminal Procedure Code states that any participant in the process has the right to appeal

against the court decision. *Dimitrovgradsky court answered my questions concerning Budanov by fax. I do not understand at all why they conduct official correspondence by fax? Instead of mailing a sealed official document, they sent it to me by fax. To whose benefit? Strangely enough, it is not to Budanov's benefit. He could have suffered a little longer and would have legally left the prison. It is not to the benefit of the court either: it would be a risk of a setup. Speaking of political forces, I am sure that it is not to the benefit of various groups supporting Budanov. They need Budanov as a hero and not as a repented criminal. It is not to the benefit of the Office of Public Prosecutor that keeps its mouth shut. Have you ever heard any statement from them? It seems as if they push the public opinion to the thought that it is the order.*

We should not forget in what conditions Budanov's case started. Eight years ago, people in the Chechen Republic did not search for justice in court but went to the woods. Then the conditions were gradually changing. It took so much effort and so much work to persuade people not to appeal to separatists but to go to court! Therefore, in the context of Budanov's case, it is difficult to think of a more impudent demonstration that all these efforts were in vain. Who needs it? Who benefits from non-functioning Russian legal institutes in the Caucasus? Since law enforcement agencies do not function, I am forced to assume their functions..."

Then Stas together with journalist Anastasia Baburova, with whom he continued the conversation that they did not finish during the press conference, left the building and an unknown murderer shot them both on Prechistenka Street...

When I was sorting out my archives after his funeral, I come across one of the cases that he had handed to me and I had no time to write about it.

The Case of Zaur Musikhanov

A short letter was written on a typewriter. It is a story of Urus-Martan resident Zaur Musikhanov. He wrote this letter to his wife Zulay. She retyped it and sent to Stas Markelov who took her husband's case to the Supreme Court of Russia. Together with this letter, Stas handed to me brief information about Musikhanov, the decision of the Supreme Court of the Chechen republic pronounced on September 24th, 2004, and his supervising complaint addressed to the Presidium of the Supreme Court of Russia.

Now, when Stas Markelov is no longer with us, I feel ashamed that I was inattentive to these documents and did not properly read that letter of Zaur Musikhanov. I would very much like to publish it now because we should hear the story of Zaur.

"I joined the group of illegal armed bands and on the 12th of the month I received an automatic rifle. The crime occurred on the 15th. I was a



new person in this group. Over my 23 years of life, I have never been in that village to be accused of this crime. My fault was that I protected Oybaev and Mukhtarov at the end of their village. Both the court and these two guys perfectly know that I did not touch them at all. I helped them to save their life. I myself took them to this woman Zinaeva and asked her to shelter them till the dawn though I could have acted differently. Zulay, my conscience is clear.

No matter how the court decides to punish me, I am not guilty in this crime. I did not plunder, did not kill, or did not abduct. Never in my life. Neither did I participate in any operation where grave crimes were committed. I quite understand that gangsterism and participation in illegal armed bands are two absolutely different crimes and their purposes are different. I communicated with these two guys as if they were my good acquaintances. I never wore a mask, I told them where I came from and where I lived. You heard it all in court, Zulay!

I explained what pushed me to join the group of illegal armed bands. On October 2nd, 1999, over one day, my family and I buried 8 murdered people. Among them were my aunt, she was 37 years old, my sister, she was 16, my uncle, he was 40, my nephew who was 3 years old and a number of relatives. They were killed when they were sitting in the cellar. 8 killed and 7 wounded. Together with my parents and my wounded cousin who could not get to his feet for 6 months, I moved to Ingushetia. In addition to it, we have an adopted daughter who because of these events became an orphan. Her parents are in the list of missing persons.

There are hundreds and thousands of such cases in the Chechen Republic. I told the court: "Your honor, I would like to ask you who personally will be responsible to us for the death of our eight relatives and who will return the crippled lives and souls of our wounded? What was their fault? After all, they were civilians, resi-

*dents of the village who were 3 to 45 years old.”
And all of them wanted to live!*

For example: Budanov is a colonel. There is no such thing as a deranged colonel. For murder and rape he was sentenced to 10 years. Why was I sentenced to 9 years? Because I was building a dug-out? After all, Ulman was acquitted! Who is a criminal? Is there a difference between me and them? The only difference is that I am Chechen.

But I am proud of my origin. It is a “commercial war”, as general Gromov said. Without proof of our guilt, on deceptive grounds, they condemn and send us to prison. God will not forgive it. The truth will triumph. The officials need the Chechen Republic without Chechens. If you put me on trial, then sentence me to a deserved term for criminal conduct. I quite understand that it should be not more than five years that I deserve, as investigator Schukin told me. It was judge Soltamuradov who sentenced me to the term that I received. If we struggle for peace and prosperity of the Chechen Republic, then tell me where are those pilots who bombed our civilians? Where are those soldiers who by order of their officers took away our carpets and gold things? And when this larceny was discovered, an ordinary soldier was accused and put into prison for marauding instead of his officer. This soldier was sitting in Grozny in SIZO #1, if you remember, Zulay. So many innocent people are behind bars. It is horrifying. Whom will you prove it to? Who will listen to you? Anyway, Zulay, wait for me! Do not pour tears. The main thing: my conscience is clear before Allah, before you, and before the people. And the fact that I participated or, more precisely, was registered in this group, it doesn't matter. We will stay alive and everything will be fine! It is hard to see when your relatives become your worst enemies. It is very hard. All will be all clear when this dust settles.

See you!

Zaur.”

Strange Amnesty

The Supreme Court of the Chechen Republic sentenced Musikhhanov to nine years of imprisonment with punishment serving in a high security colony. He was pronounced guilty of “participation in a gang, committing murders of police officers and peaceful citizens in the village of Martan-Chu during the night of June 3rd and 4th and during the night of August 15th and 16th, 2002.” In his complaints to the Supreme Court, lawyer Markelov noted that Musikhhanov joined the armed band on August 7th, 2002, which is confirmed even in the text of the decision of the Supreme Court of the Chechen Republic. There is also no word in this decision about any murder of police officers and peaceful citizens. Besides, on June 6th, 2003, the

State Duma issued a decision “About amnesty in connection with adoption of the Constitution of the Chechen Republic.” In February 2003, Musikhhanov voluntarily surrendered to the local militia and specified the place in which he kept the automatic rifle, which means that he completely falls under the action of this amnesty. He stayed in the woods for only half a year and did not have the time to commit any serious crime. He took active part in group actions only in August 2002 and remained at the base of this armed group only till October of the same year. According to Markelov, the prosecution intentionally ascribed to Musikhhanov participation in a gang so that he could not be released on amnesty. Thus, the real charges incriminated to Musikhhanov were storage of a weapon and illegal imprisonment expressed in the fact that for a short term he detained two residents of the village so that they could not inform federal soldiers about the arrival of separatists in the village. Markelov considered that both of these crimes fall under amnesty. Moreover, Musikhhanov completely admitted his fault during the trial.

Markelov explained Musikhhanov's story in one interview: *“He spent only about two months as part of an armed band and during this time he only had the time to dig an entrenchment to which he ran with his automatic rifle but he did not commit any serious crime, even according to our power structures. In this case, it is possible to trust their information as it is clear that our power structures would not rehabilitate a Chechen. Why is this case unique? Having learnt about amnesty, he came to militia and wrote an application. However, instead of being granted amnesty, he was declared a gangster and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, 9 years. It is absolutely unclear what he is sitting for because all the acquitting data is reflected even in the court decision. Moreover, there was a second amnesty that included the articles incriminated to him. The most surprising thing is that the court simply forgot about the condition of amnesty and legalized the practice of its selective application.”*

Presently, the case of Zaur Musikhhanov is registered in the European Court of Human Rights. Nobody knows when the decision will be announced.

Today his colleagues, lawyers, human rights experts and friends are asking: who will continue the cases that Stas had no time to finish? Who will replace him? Who will, just like Stas, daringly and courageously take the doomed cases that promise no money or official recognition? Who will, just like Stas, go to Chechnya every month, risk himself to protect the victims of arbitrariness?

When at the end of December 2008, Svetlana Gannushkina called Stas and inquired who he could suggest as the defense lawyer for the Kungaev family, Markelov told her: *“For this case, I can suggest only myself.”* Stas's uncle, a former judge and lawyer, told me during the funeral that he always warned his nephew: *“Being the lawyer of victims is very dangerous. After all, there are many vindictive people among those who are guilty before the victims...”*

UNPOPULAR PICKET

The day of February 5th, 2009 was gloomy and frosty. A small picket in Pushkin Square in the center of Moscow was organized by activists of anti-war movement. A few sympathizing people joined them in the memory of the victims of the tragedy that happened nine year before when dozens of civilians were shot and burned in the Chechen village of Novye Aldy. They were killed and plundered by soldiers of the Russian army.

That cold Moscow evening only a dozen and a half fellow citizens came out to this picket, almost all of them Muscovites. Their faces were easily recognizable. They were human rights activists, former political prisoners and civil action workers who participated in the so-called Dissenters' Marches and other opposition actions and who never hesitated to criticize the authorities aloud. Strangely enough for Moscow, where a numerous Chechen diaspora lives, there was no one native of the Chechen Republic among them. Probably they expressed their grief over the victims in another, less noticeable way. It was the police who were everywhere around the place.

Anna Karetnikova, a representative of an anti-war club and the organizer of the picket, tells:

"Usually, as soon as we appear in the square with posters, a policeman comes up to us to write down our names. They did the same today. Such lists, as we know, are accurately passed to the Counter-Extremism Department. Sometimes we have to provide explanations when the police do not understand our actions."

According to Karetnikova, provocations are frequent during their weekly anti-war actions:

"Nationalists approach to us, threaten, and tell us in a rough form where we should be removed to. During such moments, the police who are supposed to pro-

tect us reasonably disappear to observe the events from afar."

According to Anna, passers-by are often indifferent to the picket. Only a few people join.



That icy February evening, people who were running out of a snack bar to the underground station turned away their gloomy faces and hid hands in the pockets when Elena Sannikova, a human rights activist and a former political prisoner, risking to freeze her fingers, was handing out leaflets with a weekly chronology and the story about the executions at Aldy.

The number of tragedies in the Caucasus is continuously growing and the massacre at Aldy is one of the bloodiest but not the last by far.



In the morning of February 5th, 2000, special purpose police units entered in the village of Novye Aldy. According to human rights activists, these were OMON units of St.-Petersburg and Ryazan. Their faces were covered with camouflage paste to make future identification impossible.

Within several hours, over fifty persons became victims of extrajudicial punishments, including a one-year-old child, nine women, and eleven elderly residents of the village. Not only did OMON shoot the innocent citizens and set their houses on fire, but they also plundered the houses.



Dosh #1(23)2009



The remaining local residents waited for several weeks and did not bury the bodies of the killed fellow villagers in hopes that law enforcement agencies would begin investigation on the massacre. However, no serious investigation was ever started.

The Office of the Military Prosecutor refused to open a criminal case on the grounds that "military units of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Military Prosecutor did not conduct any military or passport control operations on the specified days in the village of Aldy" and because of "the absence of essential elements of crime in their actions."

Here are a few testimonies of those who managed to escape:

"Those who came into our courtyard demanded money from us. The father-in-law went somewhere and brought three hundred roubles. The soldiers were dissatisfied and began to swear. Then they started to shoot. They killed my father-in-law and the Abdulmezhidovs brother and sister, our neighbors. After all these horrors I can no longer respect the Russians. I doubt that we will be able to get on well in one state."

"They killed and burned people without asking their documents. The basic requirements of these murderers were gold and money and then they only shot."

"I saw Gula Khaidiev, the old man was killed. He was lying in a pool of blood in the middle of the street. The soldiers killed eighty-year-old Rakiyat Akhmatova. She was wounded and they came up to her. She shouted: "Do not shoot!" That day we lost 114 people. 82 bodies were found."

Nine years ago, in the village of Novye Aldy and the nearby area of Grozny, 50 to 100 people were killed during a massive clean-up operation. Though the units that executed this special operation were established, those guilty of murders of innocent civilians remain unpunished.

Actions in the memory of the Aldy victims also took place in St.-Petersburg. They were organized by regional human rights public organization The House of Peace and Nonviolence and Yabloko party.

During the memorial evening that took place at the Memorial Information Center, a documentary video was shown with footage made a few days after the events at Novye Aldy. About 30 people attended the event of which they heard over Echo of Petersburg radio station.

After viewing the video, people discussed the options to improve the attitude of Aldy residents to St.-Petersburg. The organizers of the event suggested organizing a series of trips of children from Aldy to St.-Petersburg that would enable 10 children from Aldy to come to the city and stay with local families from several days to several months. All the attendants supported the initiative.

On February 6th, 2009, a mourning picket in the memory of the Novye Aldy victims took place in Malaya Konyushennaya Street near the monument to Nikolai Gogol. The participants lit candles also placed them over the village map in locations where the bodies had been found. The action was part of the With Good and Peace from St.-Petersburg project.



NOBODY WANTED TO DIE

Nine years ago, the tragic events in the village of Komsomolskoye (Goy-Chu) of Urus-Martanovsky district produced probably the largest number of victims of the entire second war. During two weeks, over 625 people (the number of tombs) were killed here, hundreds were wounded, and thousands were left without a place to live or means of existence. Those events are still covered by a veil of official lies. It was said, for example, that "large forces of insurgents" had been destroyed in this village, that groups of well armed "mercenaries and terrorists" were fiercely resisting the Russian military. However, both local residents and relatives of the victims categorically denied such statements. Their testimonies supported by investigations conducted by members of human rights organizations produced a much more tragic picture.

Refugees and Insurgents

On February 29th, 2000 near Ulus-Kert, after leaving from Shatoysky district in the East direction, the groups of Shamil Basayev and Hattab destroyed the 6th company of the 104th regiment of the Pskov Airborne Division. For the Russian command, two circumstances made this defeat catastrophic. First, after Grozny was taken, it was announced that the war ended victoriously. Second, presidential elections were approaching and it was necessary to restore the reputation. A convincing victory was required, which meant that as many enemy dead bodies as possible had to be produced. The attention of the Russian military was concentrated on Ruslan Gelayev who was withdrawing in the West direction. In the beginning of March, groups under his command and a big number of exhausted after a long walk in deep

snow, frozen and hungry refugees concentrated near the village of Suraty behind the first ridge of the Black Mountains separating the flat area of Urus-Martanovsky district from the mountain part of the republic.

Within several days, young and mature men and even women arrived in the area. At the beginning of the war, they ran to their relatives who lived in safe, as it then seemed, mountain villages to escape bombardments. As federal troops were approaching, they faced an even worse prospect: to be "cleaned-up" because they lived in places where they were not registered.

On January 13th and 14th, 2000, the Russian command announced safety guarantees to civilians leaving from Shatoysky and Itum-Kalinsky districts. However, people began to disappear at checkpoints on the very first day of the corridor functioning. The military stationed since the middle of January in the village of Duba-Yurt detained, for example, Visita Arsanukaev, Said-Magomed Delmukhanov, Hussein Didaev and Vakha Titaev who, with preliminary arrangements, tried to drive to Shatoy in two trucks to pick up their families and property. Four months later, near the cemetery of the village of Tangi-Chu of Urus-Martanovsky district, local residents found and buried the bodies of three men with traces of tortures: their noses and ears had been cut off and there were wire loops around their necks. Later, after examining the clothes, the relatives identified Visita Arsanukaev, Vakha Titaev and Said-Magomed Delmukhanov. Nothing definite is known about Hussein Didaev's destiny till now.

On February 18th, resident of Sharo-Argun Khasi Bashaev, refugee from the village of Petropavlovskaya (Churt-Toghi) Hussein Basnukaev and Ruslan Kaikharov were detained at the same checkpoint in the presence of numerous witnesses. In two cars they were carrying to hospital women and children who had been



Dosh #1(23)2009

Usam BAI SAYEV



wounded during the bombardment of the village of Aslanbek-Sheripovo. When the troops left this place in the spring of 2000, the cars were found: they had been flattened by the tank and buried in the ground nearby the former checkpoint. What became of the people is still not known.

On March 6th, 10 residents of the village of Ulus-Kert and father and son Astamirovs of Petropavlovskaya village were detained in the same place and subsequently disappeared. Together with their wives they were walking to Chiri-Yurt. The military stopped the men to check their documents and nobody saw them any more.

All of these and other similar cases were well known. Therefore, just like when leaving Grozny, refugees preferred to leave under the protection of insurgents. As a result, several thousand people seeking rescue gathered in Suraty by the beginning of March.

At the dawn on March 4th, Arbi Baraev was the first who left this place and easily went through Komsomolskoye towards his native village. The following night, groups of refugees and individuals started to leave the place as well leaving along the way the bodies of those who died of exhaustion. They did not suspect that many of them would soon be dead too. They got under fire while crossing Demiduk ridge. The accompanying insurgents engaged in a fight. They partially destroyed the Russian troops and took prisoners.

Human Shield

In the morning of March 4th, helicopters suddenly appeared above Komsomolskoye and began to fire at the upper part of the village and a nearby large forest. Residents woke up and hurried to the Russian checkpoint located on the intersection of roads leading to Goyskoye and Alkhazurovo. Using a bullhorn, the military ordered everyone to gather behind a fence.

People were kept behind the fence till the evening. During this time, the military performed the clean-up of the village, the main result of which was robberies. Having returned to the village, the residents could not find many valuable things in their houses. The next morning, the sounds of artillery and machine-gun shots merged into one continuous rumble. The people rushed to the other end of the village in panic.

However, those who were in the village got under fire from helicopters and those who were near the road to Alkhazurovo were shot by Russian snipers. The families of Pashaevs, Makaevs, Ilyasovs, Verikovs, Gatsaevs and others could not leave their houses because of shelling and bombard-

ments. Many of those who remained in the village were subsequently lost.

Zaibolt Bashaeva was found killed together with her grand daughter, 11, and her husband Rizvan, 85. Malika Umarova, 80, and her daughter Aina, 24, were lost. Ela Khasarov, 90, died, leaning against a tree, all his body was covered with fragmental wounds. Malika Elmurzaeva, 44, was lost in her own courtyard. Zara Tashaeva, 70, and her grand daughter Rosa, 7, were found under the debris of her house. The Russian military first shot old man Taus Beksultanov and then set the house on fire with his dead body inside. Malika Amirkhanova and her daughter Aina, 36, were killed during artillery shelling. Zaindi Idigov, 30, was also killed.

Those who managed to leave the village were placed behind the fence again. Positions of federal troops were behind them. Civilians were purposefully placed in the line of possible fire contact with the insurgents. However, no shots were made from the village during all these days. The Russian troops, on the contrary, were shooting continuously. After each shot from tanks, guns, Grad installations and especially after explosions of TNT ropes, people threw themselves to the ground in scare. Women were constantly crying and children became hysterical, almost everybody had a headache.

The soldiers attempted to separate men from women. When Abdurakhman Gelaev saw how the Russian military with automatic guns started to build a row between them, he died of a heart attack. The soldiers did not allow reading a doleful prayer. Because of a resolute spirit of the women who did not want to leave their brothers and husbands, the military dropped the initial plan. Six and a half thousand residents of Komsomolskoye of all ages performed the role of a "human shield" through March 9th.

Tsutsuraev, 62, and Ami Kilaev, 32, died during this time. Musa Bataev received a gunshot wound. Tagir Akhmadov, 48, had a heart attack. Several men (6 or 7) were pulled out from the crowd by the soldiers ostensibly for the absence of documents and taken away in an unknown direction. Later, two of them were found shot in the district center between the hospital and the cemetery.

There was an extreme shortage of food and water. The soldiers occasionally allowed women only to bring water from the well across the road from the checkpoint. When people attempted to get fire wood to make a fire and crossed the fenced territory, the soldiers fired from their machine guns to make them get back.

On the second or the third day of standing in the field, the head of village administra-

tion Adam Avdaev managed to solve the problem of food supplies. After long persuasive talks, the military agreed that residents of Urus-Martan, Goiskoye and Martan-Chu would bring food. There was still a shortage of bread and food but people did not feel famine any more.

On March 8th, drunken soldiers opened automatic fire above the people who were standing behind the fence. Four people received wounds. On March 9th, the military called up the head of village administration and on behalf of the Russian command demanded that all villagers should return to their homes. Adam Avdaev told his fellow villagers about the ultimatum and added that in this case he would not guarantee life to anyone. It was decided to break in the direction of Goiskoye and Urus-Martan despite any possible counteraction. People started to move and soon they all were past the checkpoint. The military did not stop them probably because there were hundreds and thousands of residents of the nearby settlements who drove the people to their houses in cars and buses.

Fighting Operation or Slaughter?

It is known that the insurgents repelled several assaults and separate groups began to leave the village on the second and the third day. By the middle of March, the larger part of the armed insurgents was either killed or, having bypassed the Russian blocks and outposts, broke out of the encirclement. After that only a few centers of resistance remained in Komsomolskoye. The last of them, a group headed by the former prefect of Naursky district Taus Boguraev, surrendered only on March 20th.

It is possible to confirm with confidence that a significant number of the dead bodies taken out from the village and examined before being buried unequivocally belonged to refugees or those who could no longer put up any resistance. Their wounds, above all, testified to this. There are numerous testimonies of people who came to the village searching for their relatives and who examined the bodies.

Zeinab, resident of Komsomolskoye:

"I returned to the village on March 16th. The houses were still burning. They bombed again though they knew that we would be coming. I saw many bodies, including those without heads. The chopped off heads were lying separately. I was together with the Chechen OMON. We wanted to get the bodies of relatives and friends. We found one of them alive. He spent ten days among corpses, did not eat or drink anything. Later, in Goiskoye, I saw headless and earless bod-

ies. There was an earless body in my garden. It had a quilted jacket, jeans and socks. His mother would never identify him. I could not sustain and started to shout. Then the guys moved me away."

Larissa, searched for two brothers:

"I examined many bodies, three hundred or four hundred. For most part, they were smashed by armored troop-carriers. There were no legs, no hands. With chopped off finger bones and cut off heads. The heads were cut off when people were still alive because there was blood left. There were bodies without ears. Some were cut off when people were alive, others - after death. There were normal bodies and there were deformed bodies. They brought three legs from three different persons. The legs were torn off not by a splinter of a shell but by a track of the tank, it was obvious.

Those who remained under the ground had money, documents and valuable things on them. It means that the workers of EMERCOM did not plunder the bodies. Only those bodies that were under the control of federal troops were plundered. They did not even have passports. The passports of friends were found at the police station. Their relatives said they had been searching in Chernokozovo but found them in Komsomolskoye. The ear of one of them had been cut off. He was a friend of my brother. He had been taken prisoner. We were told that he was in Chernokozovo. They found him and they also found Aslanbek. They showed Aslanbek on TV as if he was in Chernokozovo. He was here and they shot him in the nape."

Naib:

"I arrived in Komsomolskoye to find the body of my relative. The workers of EMERCOM took out the bodies and buried them. Local residents photographed and provided identification. I examined about three hundred bodies. The majority had the eyes poked out and ears cut off. Such wounds could not be received in fight. Approximately seventy percent of the victims had a sighting shot in the head. The bodies were disfigured by the tracks of tanks and armored personnel carriers. This could hardly have happened without a reason. Many stomachs were cut. It is possible to assume that these were fragmental wounds but there were too many of them. As a rule, the guts were outside and I saw dry grains of rice, corn, and sunflower inside."

Satsita Magomadova:

"I went to Komsomolskoye to get my son's body. I knew that he had been killed. I examined 450 bodies. There were those

who were killed in fight and those who were killed after they were wounded. Hands and legs of several people were as if they were split by an axe. Ears were cut off. Throats were cut. Stomachs were ripped up with the guts outside. There were approximately a half of such bodies. I think that many were tortured when they were still alive because blood was visibly coming out of their wounds. They were those who were killed in the cellars. Half of the bodies were without a head. Heads and hands were brought separately.

OMON soldiers said that they were removing mines. Then they let the workers of EMERCOM go there. Actually, they were torturing people at this time. One day they brought bodies without heads and the next day they brought only heads. One could see that the head had been cut off and not torn off by a shell.

The son had gone with the guys. He was wounded in Komsomolskoye. He stayed in the cellar. There were 25 people burned in one cellar and 30 in another. They were burned alive. It is normal that someone gets killed in a fight, such things happen at war. But why torture? My boy was just of military age. He went with his friends because he was afraid that he would be taken to serve in the army. He was never at war. In the fall, he went with his friends to the mountains and they always came back home."

There are many testimonies like these confirming both the number of victims and the cruelty towards defenseless people that is unequal over all these seven years. It is not known how many people were then killed. With some certainty it is possible to speak of only about 625 bodies that were taken out from this village and after visual examination buried at the cemeteries of Goiskoye and Urus-Martan. It was possible to identify a few people. The relatives took their bodies and buried them at the place of their residence.

They Surrendered to Survive

On March 20th, about noon, the group of the insurgents blocked in destroyed houses at one end of the village stopped resistance. It was the first time over the period of the two wars when armed people fighting against the Russian army voluntarily agreed to lay down arms. They were given a guarantee of safety on behalf of the federal command. During the first hours they surrendered in the presence of General Mikhail Labunts.

There are three videotapes on which the procedure was recorded. Two of them were

recorded directly in Komsomolskoye. One can clearly see on them how people exhausted by two weeks of continuous fights were walking one by one towards the Russian positions and how they were then searched and identified.

There were also two women who came out together with men. Only one person was unable to move without help: he was brought on a blanket. He was later identified as Taus Boguraev.

One can see on these videotapes that not less than 100 people (according to other data, almost 150) walked towards the positions of the Russian troops. Despite the promised safety and amnesty, their destiny was tragic. Around 16:30, after four hours passed since the beginning of the surrender procedure (it lasted from 12:00 through 18:30-19:00), 25 people were selected from the crowd. They were told to make up a line. Then they were moved to the nearest hollow with the hands on the head and were ordered to lie down on the slope. Then three soldiers (according to other sources, four) walked along the line of people lying on the ground and shot at them with their machine guns first in the legs and then in their bodies. 12 or 13 people were killed at once, others received wounds. There were a few people unharmed, the names of two of them are known: Beslan Buchigov and Khamzat (Kazbek) Magomadov. The soldiers lifted them up and ordered them and two other survivors to dig a grave. The soldiers said that they would bury them in it as well. When the grave became half a meter deep, the officer who was together with the soldiers received an order by portable radio. He ordered to stop all work and the survivors were taken back to the rest of the prisoners. The bodies of the killed remained in the hollow. In the beginning of April, they were found by local residents and buried at the cemetery of Goiskoye.

On March 20th, several other groups of civil guardsmen who decided to surrender were apparently destroyed. Relatives subsequently identified a dozen of people on the videotapes recorded by the Russian military. In particular, Beslan Sardalov was recorded alive on one of the videotapes. Subsequently he was found killed. Arsen Dudaev was killed and later found by the workers of EMERCOM and local residents. The same happened to Aslambek Akhmadov, Khasan Chuchiev and Magomad Nalgiev, who had been videotaped among those who surrendered. Beslan Buchigov, one of those who had been digging a grave for the insurgents shot in the hollow, was found killed. Taus Boguraev was also killed. His body with traces of tortures and a head chopped off was found in the vicinities of Komsomolskoye after the Russian troops abandoned the area.

Some of the insurgents who dared to lay down arms and come to the Russian army positions were delivered to the military commandant's office of Urus-Martanovsky district. It is, however, unknown what happened to them afterwards. It is possible that their bodies were discovered at the end of March and the beginning of April in the ruins of Komsomolskoye.

Only 73 of all those who surrendered were taken to Khankala. There is a list with their names signed by investigator of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Major of Justice T.A.Bushmanova. The postscript reads: "12 unidentified bodies and those who died after delivery to Khankala were transferred to EMERCOM of the Chechen Republic to be buried."

On the territory of the main Russian military base, all of the prisoners were beaten with the butts of automatic rifles, batons and boots, subjected to tortures, including electric shock. The ears of at least two people (still alive!) were cut off. On the third videotape recorded by the employees of the Main Department of the Penitentiary at Chervlyennaya station and in possession of human rights activists, one can see that the right ear of one person was almost completely cut off and was hanging down. It is unknown whether this person survived, however he was not seen among those who were later put on trial or those who were rescued for money by relatives.

At the military base in Khankala, the pris-

oners were held in two trucks, GAZ-53 and Ural. The first had a sign: "The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation." People were taken for tortures from them and then pushed back. It was impossible to sit in them. People suffered from thirst and famine. No medical aid was rendered. Old wounds and those received during tortures began to suppurate. The heaviest torture was the absence of room and fresh air. As a result, Musa Magomadov, Lecha Aldamov, Maoldi (Movldi) Kagermanov, Usman Muskeev, Vakha Tunzhukhanov, Khasan Khakuev, Lema Aliev, Umar Amirov, Artur Makaev, Rustam Mandriev, and others died.

On March 25th, their bodies together with the survivors were sent in the same trucks to Shelkovskoy district. In the vicinities of Chervlyennaya station, far from onlookers, the people were transferred from cars to railway cars. The dead bodies were placed along the spoil bank. On the third videotape one can see that the majority of the surrendered were extremely exhausted. Many appear striped naked. After jumping from the trucks down on the ground they could hardly get up on their feet. They picked up their clothes and then tried to run to the railway car. All this was accompanied by hails and kicks. Security guards were laughing.

Those who "died after delivery to Khankala" (mentioned in the list signed by Major of Justice T.A.Bushmanova) were probably transferred to the employees of EMERCOM here.

The survivors were taken from Chervlyennaya station to Taganrog and Novocherkassk. According to available information, less than 50 people were placed in jails located in these cities. The captured insurgents were beaten through the middle of June 2000, when, under the request from their relatives, employees of IRCC visited them in jail. Those who ended up in Novocherkassk experienced especially severe treatment. Security guards used to beat prisoners with iron rods and the limbs of several people were broken. During cold weather, they poured prisoners with water from fire engines when they were in the open air.

Twelve people were released from Taganrog pre-trial detention center. All of them were granted amnesty. As relatives confirm, they had to pay a significant ransom for it. Vakhid Timaev, one of the released, was later detained and disappeared.

Trials began in the middle of December 2000 in the courts of Rostov-on-Don and the area. Abubakar Magomadov was established as the organizer of surrender. By decision of the Rostov regional court he was sentenced to three and a half years of imprisonment (Article 208 Part 2 and Article 222 Part 1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). The others were sentenced to the same term on the same basis. Those who endured inhuman tortures and managed to survive were all placed behind bars.



NO END TO TALKHIGOV'S ORDEALS



Dosh #1(23)2009

Elena SANNIKOVA

Zaurbek Talkhigov is presently being placed in the so-called ward type premises (PKT). It is a type of prison ward where inmates are placed as a punishment for internal rules violation. By verdict of the prison chief, Zaurbek was transferred to PKT from another inner prison where the regulations were softer - SUS (a barack of strict conditions of confinement).

Those who are placed in PKT are not entitled to visitors. They are restricted in many other rights that prisoners normally enjoy. Food is also restricted, which can ruin Zaurbek's health because he has serious gastric problems. Walks and parcels are restricted. As a rule, it is cold and damp in PKT, especially during the winter. Prisoners get sick with tuberculosis in punishment cells, penalty wards and PKT.

During his camp term, Zaurbek actually saw nothing but these special prisons inside the prison with various types of rigid restrictions. There he got hepatitis, chronic gastritis, and an intestines disease for which the doctors recommended him an immediate operation in the summer of last year. But the prison doctors refused an operation.

Zaurbek is entitled to one long visit of his relatives once a year. The last one happened in the summer of 2007. In 2008, the relatives could not visit him in the summer. Only by December, his mother and younger sister managed to save enough money and food for a long journey from Shali to Syktyvkar.

Zaurbek's mother works with sick and problem children at the regional rehabilitation center. Her younger daughter is a college student in Grozny. Her salary is small and she pays a lot for her daughter's education. In the strained days of preparation for the New Year's holidays, Tamara arranged for a leave from job and Amina interrupted her examination session. They packed everything for the long journey into very heavy bags and carried them from Shali to Grozny, then from Grozny to Moscow by train and from Moscow to Syktyvkar by yet another train. There, in this cold northern city, they stayed for a night and the next morning, on December 15th, mother and daughter went to the colony with their heavy bags where they learned that Zaurbek had been placed in PKT and it was prohibited for him to have visitors.

Tamara is telling what happened next:

"We went to the prison chief's office. He was in a meeting and we had to wait for a long time. Finally, the secretary let us in. The chief met us with a sharp remark that we entered without his permission. It was rather strange to me because one word hello has always been enough to grant permission in Chechnya. I told him that we arrived to visit the son. He

answered that my son was punished and he was not allowed any visits. I asked about the reason for his punishment. I did not feel well and could hardly speak. He said that Zaurbek had been lying and smoking a cigarette where it was prohibited even to sit. I wondered how it was possible to place a sick person for such behavior in PKT during winter time. The chief was firm: visits were not allowed. I begged him the best I could though I do not have such a habit. I was asking to allow a visit for a day considering that we had made a long way and how much we brought with us. I was asking to understand my situation, to understand me as a mother who had not seen her son for such a long time. He called his people and they showed me the rules: no visitors while an inmate was in PKT. I told him that they had been aware of our forthcoming visit and they could have waited for our arrival or informed me in advance not to go. I would have waited until he was released from PKT. He repeated that Zaurbek had been smoking and showed no respect for the authorities. Finally, he signed permission for a short (a few hours) visit. Talking through a double glass and by phone, I could not even touch my son."

I asked Tamara how the permitted visit passed and she said:

"We were strictly warned to speak only in Russian during the visit. I had no difficulty speaking Russian with him but the daughter did. It is not accepted with us that the sister speaks with her brother not using the native language. They repeated that if we said a word in Chechen, the visit would be interrupted. Having heard about such severe constraints we approached to the glass. I asked Zaurbek how this could happen that he had been smoking where it was prohibited and why he had received such a severe punishment. He answered that he did not want to dis-



cuss such questions. Several security guards were standing nearby and listening to each word. I asked him how he felt. He did not complain but I saw that he was sick. He was all pale and his hands were thin and absolutely white. He had a constant nausea, his pancreas was damaged, he needed a diet and there was no diet there. He asked to pass gastric medication through the prison hospital. He also asked for a water filter because water was very bad, with a strong smell of chlorine and impossible to drink."

I wondered if they had promised Tamara that they would give her visit permission after three months passed.

"Yes, but it was a somehow strange promise. The chief said that the schedule of long-term visits for 2009 was full and Zaurbek would not fit into it. But how can the schedule be full? Zaurbek's name was on the list for December. The chief said that they would put his name back in the schedule if he demonstrated good behavior during these three months. I wondered what would happen if he had admonitions. He answered that then Zaurbek would receive penalty and would be placed in the punitive isolation ward."

I wondered how Zaurbek reacted to this.

"He told me not to worry and that it was impossible to explain to me what was happening. He confirmed that he would not break the rules and had not broken them. And in fact I know that this is true. Well, he reclined, had a smoke... This is because his conscience is clean and he is serving time for nothing. And they know that he was punished for only one phone call, he did not do anything bad, and his conscience is clean. They could have been less severe to him. I told him that I wanted to go and see his ward and stay near him for a while. He said that it was impossible. Even if it were possible, he would not allow me."

I asked whether she was able to pass a

water filter for Zaurbek that he so much needed considering his health condition.

"I brought the filter the next day. They started to insult me saying that I had put drugs into it... This offended me very deeply and I began to shout. My son was punished not for drugs. They refused to take the filter and advised to take it to the operations department. We went there and the people promised that they would pass it to my son. I felt how they hated me and I understood that they provoked my son with similar insults."

"I cannot even say how many times they put him in PKT. He is constantly closed in this ward and they give him only an hour and a half for a walk in the open air. We wrote an appeal asking to ease his conditions and wondering why he was treated so severely. We wrote sincerely, as parents do. Each time we received the same formal replies."

Tamara Talkhigova and her daughter Amina returned to Moscow. They next day they were leaving to Grozny. They were very sad after they visited Zaurbek, it was bitterness. It was especially hard to look at Amina. She was a schoolgirl when Zaurbek went to prison and it was a shock for her: she lost appetite since then, became closed, reticent, and refused to eat meat. Even my attempts simply to offer her tea after she returned from Syktyvkar were rejected.

Zaurbek's arrest affected his father Yunus Talkhigov even stronger. Before the arrest of his son, Yunus was a strong and healthy man. He had his first heart attack in 2004 during a trip to the prison when, just like this time, Zaurbek's parents were denied a visit. When all attempts to achieve justice failed, Yunus Talkhigov got serious heart problems. Since then he had two heart attacks and received group two of physical disability. He can no longer go to visit the son because of poor health.

During six years, Zaurbek Talkhigov was five times transferred from one prison to another in spite of the fact that the code forbids to transfer prisoners without a serious reason. He changed several camps in Komi and spent one year in Ulyanovsk prison where he got ill with hepatitis.

Zaurbek Talkhigov spent seven years in various places of imprisonment. In October 2002, he responded to the

appeal of Aslanbek Aslakhanov, Deputy of the State Duma, came to the surrounded theatrical center at Dubrovka and for almost the whole day, in the presence of FSB agents, over a mobile phone kept trying to persuade the terrorists to release hostages. His arrest and the verdict were totally unexpected both for him and his relatives. During the trial, his mother was confident that Zaurbek would be fully acquitted: all evidence was in his favor and there was not a single proof of fault.

For one telephone conversation Zaurbek Talkhigov was sentenced to eight and a half years of jail. Just like Colonel Budanov who was jailed for murdering a Chechen girl. Zaurbek Talkhigov made an attempt to rescue hostages, mostly the Russians, from the hands of armed Chechens. He is now in a cold PKT ward. Colonel Budanov who stole and tortured a defenseless girl is already enjoying freedom.

It is impossible to imagine that Budanov would spend a day in such a ward where it is impossible even to sit down on a cot in the afternoon or he would be placed in PKT for smoking. No, Budanov served the time in soft conditions and he was not thrown into punitive wards or PKT for a trifling fault. He is a murderer but for our prison guards he is a friend, not a foe.

Whereas Talkhigov is a foe and he does not fall into the category of socially close elements in the system of our selective justice.

That is why he is kept in unbearable conditions, developed a heavy illness, and the guards mock at his relatives. PKT confinement will end for Zaurbek in the middle of March. Will he be allowed the long awaited visit? Or will he again be forced to suffer in a punitive isolation ward for insignificant infringements as the prison chief promised?

Local human rights activists found out that the last time the doctor visited Zaurbek was six months ago. The prescribed dietary food was cancelled long time ago. Meanwhile, his disease requires a diet, a constant supervision of the doctor and regular medication. Zaurbek has nothing of it. He feels sick from poor and rough food at PKT, therefore he now only eats bread and drinks water.

When such things happen in this country in the name of justice and thinking and conscientious citizens can do nothing to break it, they develop a habit of living without doing anything. It is indeed safer: if Zaurbek had not tried to rescue hostages and instead relaxed and smoked, he could still be enjoying a peaceful life at home. This is a lesson to all of us and to the Russian society. There are quite a few smart students who have already learned this lesson.



MEMOIRS OF A FEDERAL SOLDIER



Dosh #2(24)2009
Dmitry BERKUT

The Chechen war has brought much grief to both sides. Now, practically every Russian family is somehow connected with this war through fathers, sons, uncles, nephews, friends, or neighbors. I was there several times on a mission and I am convinced: many victims of the Chechen war could have been avoided.

Delayed-Action Soldier

The word "enemy" in regard to the local population of the Chechen Republic is a conditional name. The people live beside us, behave like all neighbors do, communicate, sell vodka to us, and at night, according to testimonies of some of them, they shoot at us.

During my first mission, it became clear: you need to be afraid not only of them but also of your own comrades in arms - Russian soldiers.

The young boys became totally whacked because they simply could not understand for what or for who they were at war. What else can you expect with such spiritual disorientation of the armed guys who are detached from home and exposed to the danger of death? The consequences of their actions cannot be fully predictable.

Those who served in the army before the Chechen war, in peace time, can think of a simple example: life turned into a non-stop duty on guard. I remember when I was standing on guard for the first time. I thought: either my heart would stop or I would go out of my mind. In the Chechen Republic, soldiers spend 9 to 12 months in such conditions non-stop and some soldiers serve even a longer term.

People can hardly sustain a permanent stress. Here, in addition to it, people are in the frontline, with frequent firing and shelling, permanently drunk commanders and contract soldiers who also go nuts and at times vent their rage and stupidity on conscripts.

Soldiers look for ways to switch off. And often find,

thanks to the confusion and chaos or, to say it simply, the disorder in the frontline.

It is evening. We are building fortifications. We are dragging planks. Suddenly, we hear a submachine gun burst very close to us, several meters away from us. I fall to the ground and silently swear: I am without my submachine gun, I am dressed lightly and there are slippers on my feet that will definitely not help me to fight in the mountains. Then you realize: something is wrong. Why don't the guards beat the ring (a command for perimeter defense)?

It turned out that a gowed-up soldier imagined how someone looking like an insurgent was trying to get over the barbed wire perimeter. By a lucky chance, he did not shoot anybody with his burst. He only damaged several units of equipment.

Or there was another situation. A young soldier got inside a tank. What a sudden curiosity! He decided to study combat equipment. Modern tanks are completely automated systems with automatic charging of ammunition. A shot came out. The toilet building was hit. A soldier who was inside got killed. What an ugly and silly death. It is obvious that the "the reason of death" line in his death certificate will contain "a shot from an enemy grenade launcher."

During the night, there was an exchange of fire at our outpost. Combat readiness command was issued. Then all clear. There was no attack. Two soldiers drank too much cheap Ossetian vodka, had a quarrel, and decided to solve the dispute by means of automatic rifles.

As a result one of the guys was shot in the legs and will remain an invalid.



A Prayer Book under Grenades

I was not baptized. Somehow it did not happen: it was the Soviet times, the father served in the Soviet army all his life. It does not mean that we were militant atheists but we were brought up outside of religion.

Before my new mission to the Caucasus, my mother said: "I cannot stand it any more. If you do not get baptized, I will not let you go anywhere. I will beg your commander!" This is how I got baptized. I was thinking about it myself for some time but could not make this step.

Chechnya. We were performing a clean-up operation. Insurgents occupied one of the houses. To say that we were not scared, that it was not the first time, or that it was possible to get used to such things is to say nothing. It is impossible to get used to such things.

The mother gave me a prayer book. I put it in the pocket on the day of departure. I sometimes took it with me in such difficult situations. I put it in the internal pocket of the waistcoat under cartridges, grenades and entry munitions. It was the pocket on the left side, near the heart. And I had a cross on a chain around the neck: a gift from my grandmother.

We were approaching the house. I was in the assault group. We were to be the first to enter into the house. Snipers and machine gunners with grenade launchers took their positions around the house.

If the insurgents detect us, the assault group rarely comes back without losing people, minimum one person who is less fortunate. Sometimes it can happen during a fight because of friendly fire.

We formed a chain. There were six people in our group. We jumped from one cover position to another. The efficiency of such tactics is relative. You can run two meters or you can also make ten meters.

No calculations are made. It all depends on how luck strikes. We entered into the

lower room. The control group had already taken the senior person out of the house onto the street. It was a man around forty years old. They told him to get all those alive out of the house. It is useless to ask whether there is anybody else in the house except children and women: even if there were "our clients" in the house, nobody will hand them over to us. It is against the local custom.

I opened up the door of the basement room: nobody there. I took position in the corner. Now the partner entered the room. There were two small doors here. He dived into one of them. He quickly got out and showed with the hand that it was clean. Mine was the second door. I opened it. For a while it all seemed normal: not a soul inside. The partner covered me from behind. I entered into a small dark and dusty room. It seemed that there was nobody inside. There was a huge jug in one of the corners, a meter and a half in height and half a meter wide. Suddenly something moved in the twilight. A shadow flashed between the jug and the wall.

Thoughts flash in my head: I've got the order, the cartridge is in the cartridge chamber, the safety lock is unlocked, and the bolt is cocked. The index finger on the trigger hook only needs to make one short movement.

Thoughts continue flashing in my head: Is it all? What a shame! Perhaps the partner will be lucky to get out of it alive. I need to press the trigger. And to be quick enough to jump back. That's my destiny. Stop! Why is there no movement?

I do not know how much time passed,

were it seconds, microseconds or whatever they were. They say that before death all your life flies by before your eyes. Nothing of the kind. Perhaps it is too early for me to die? A heaven-sent idea: perhaps they did not notice that I noticed them? I started to turn my head in a somewhat idiotic way from one side to another as if I was looking around. I do not know how well I performed but my face did all its best not to express any emotions.

The plan of further actions emerged quickly: we should try to get out of here as quickly as possible, grab my partner and run, run, run! Then I need to shout over the radio to the guys who were cleaning up the upper rooms of the house to get out and then shoot, shoot, shoot, because it was here where they stayed, here where they were hiding!

I was turning towards the exit when my eye caught something strange: at the basis of the jug, behind it, there was something yellow. For a moment, already at the doors, I looked again, and there was an edge of a yellow children's rubber boot. The boot moved and hid behind the jug. Without having the time to think, I approach the jug and looked behind it. A little boy was hiding behind it. He was looking at me with interest.

There was nobody else either here or further, in the darkest corner. I took the child by the hand and walked out with him onto the street. I could not even be angry. I simply took the child out and brought him up to the man, the owner of the house. There were women and children standing around him and crying. I asked him: "What is this?" He got scared and said that the neighbors had asked to look after the child when they moved to the district center to earn money. These nine children were not all his: several of them were his



neighbors' children and he forgot about one of them.

Alexei, my partner, poured vodka for me from his flask. I did not want to drink at all! I could not understand one thing: why I did not shoot? Was I frightened? More likely on the contrary, if I had become frightened, I would have started to shoot left and right to take with me as many enemies as possible. I do not know. It was as though something was preventing me from shooting.

I touched the prayer book in my internal pocket: it was there in its usual place. That's enough. I do not want to go anywhere anymore. Let them sort out their petrodollars themselves.

I only thank my mother who insisted on baptizing me. It was not in vain.

Mountain Relativity

The outpost of MVD units that was deployed together with our Ryazan group of militia in Nozhay-Yurtovsky district of the Chechen Republic received an order to move to a new position. Redeployment started in groups. One company was sent to prepare the place for the others: to put up tents, dig entrenchments, and erect the perimeter. The new place was several kilometers below and away from the headquarters. The main troops of the outpost remained with us. They had 152-mm mortars.

During the night, our neighbors from a military unit positioned near the place where the outpost company moved to and was digging trenches asked for fire support at the position from which they had been attacked. The mortars of the outpost supported them with fire during half an hour. Several boxes of mines were used.

In the mountains, it is not an easy task to shoot from a mortar even during the daytime. The wind affects the accuracy and coordination. During the night the task becomes especially uneasy.

In the morning, it was reported that during the night fire support operation mortar gunners suppressed the company located below. Two soldiers and an officer were killed.

One of the soldiers lost his friend there. The soldier was also from Ryazan and we tried to feed him better than others (when we had food ourselves). Less than two months were left before their demobilization. We asked the commander to give him a one-day leave. We gave him enough vodka to drink but he kept crying.

A few days later, the outpost completely moved to the new place. When they were leaving, one of our Ryazan guys said: "If

they managed to fire from here to there, there is a chance something can fly from there to our positions." A couple nights later, this really happened. Our former neighbors were launching their mines in a spiral way with our base being in the center. Luckily, we quickly called them and they stopped launching mines.

We were positioned at the checkpoint when a command to open fire in the direction of the green location in the gorge to the right of us came from the base. We received information that someone was wandering there. We fired several bursts and then started launching grenades. It was a sort of a game: whoever hits the same tree twice wins.

A few minutes later, a captain from the neighboring army reserve unit ran up to us and shouted to stop fire: their reconnaissance platoon got under our fire and was asking the Ryazan cops to stop shooting. They simply did not have our frequencies on their portable radios.

The East Is Tricky

We were in position at the exit checkpoint. Six militiamen from Ryazan. Around us there were two hiding positions with two soldiers in each position. Also, there was an armored personnel-carrier and four more soldiers above the slope. We were checking a dark blue Izh-Kombi. There were an old man, a young driver and a girl in the back seat of the car. Everything was clean and the car continued creeping uphill. Suddenly we heard a dry shot from a sniper rifle. Then we heard a signal from the APC: "Where is your doctor?" We answered: "At the base."

Later we found out that a soldier was sitting on the roof of the APC and playing with his friend's sniper rifle. Through the sight, he was following the Izh that we had checked. He pressed the trigger. Why the cartridge was in the cartridge chamber and why the safety lock was removed? He did not remember. The bullet of the 7.62 mm sniper cartridge entered through the roof of the car. The driver got a burn on the head. He was lucky: the bullet only touched his head. Then the bullet hit the girl in the chest and went out through the trunk.

The Chechen girl did not live long. The



village administration head assistant warned us: "Do not go to the exit checkpoint any more: there are talks in the village and something may happen."

The soldier-murderer was urgently taken away to a unit in Neftekumsk, Stavropol region. In the evening, local residents organized a demonstration near our checkpoint and demanded to give away this soldier. We got away with it simply by explaining that he was no longer there.

The APC with our militiamen was exploded at the exit checkpoint. Luckily, a minute before the explosion, the guys got off the APC and walked away from it to examine the position. The bomb technician did not find any mines. As a result, all the Ryazan militiamen received various degrees of contusion, the bomb technician got destruction of eardrums, and a contract militiaman flew several meters away off from the APC turret and broke his leg.

The driver injured his face against the edge of the hatch. The relations with local residents that took so long to normalize got finally spoiled. The war goes on. Mostly at night.

There are hundreds of such examples.

"Forward, Eagles!"

Very few people know that there was a real revolt in one of the militia divisions that was on a mission on the territory of the Chechen Republic.

We received an order to prepare a night ambush. When we arrived to the place we realized that the commander did not have either the plan of action, or the plan of withdrawal, or the plan of coordination with hidden posts.

There was nothing left for us but wait. Hidden posts were in position. When it became dark, the machine gunner and I

both understood that one accidental shot was enough for chaos to break out. We would eventually simply shoot down each other. We would not even know who fired at whom. We disobeyed the order and abandoned the position.

We did it by our own decision. It was impossible to continue combat operations this way. The commander was chomping with rage. Our guys wanted to punch his face. They found out that the order came unexpectedly and it was urgent. We did not even know the area where we were dispatched. Later, local militiamen told us the story that big bosses from the regional commandant's office urgently needed a small war for their specific purposes. Someone simply needed to write off something.

Perhaps they wanted to write off us.

A large-scale clean-up operation started near the Georgian border. We were searching for an important commander of the "Ichkerian army" with a small group of his bodyguards. The concentration of troops was unprecedented. There were helicopters in the air. The neighboring slope was occupied by artillery, air assault units, MVD troops, a separate reconnaissance battalion, GRU, and special troops of FSB. Our unit of militiamen was broken into search groups and reinforced by soldiers and several local civil guardsmen.

We noticed that a lot of people from various units were moving back and forth within the perimeter.

Finally, we received maps and orders. We moved forward. After an hour of checks, the routs of groups began to intersect. It is a dangerous thing during clean-up operations because it is possible to shoot down your own people, especially when the order was to recede upon contact, launch a signal rocket, run away, and start digging trenches. Then helicopters and artillery should start working. Then it should be our turn to examine the debris.

During the first route intersection, residents of the checked house assured us that they had recently been cleaned up by another group. The clean-up groups apparently received incorrect maps. Or someone walked over our territory.

After we could not find on our map several houses that existed in real life and found ruins or empty fields instead of houses, we understood that our maps were incorrect.

We were passing through the center of a mountain village. The road intersected with another road that was coming from somewhere above. We noticed a group of armed people moving along that road towards us. We could not identify who they were. All of us look alike there in the

mountains. They wore beards, in various camouflage uniform, just like us, dirty and scary. We scattered along the road. There was mud and puddles of water all around and I had washed my clothes the evening before. I did my best to keep dry the cartridges in the side pockets of my waistcoat. The situation was too bad: one nervous shot was enough to start a big shooting. We would fire from all our weapons, launch rockets, depart, drag wounded men, then helicopters would arrive and destroy the whole place, and artillery would certainly assist: they never shoot a little.

Seconds were passing by. Was it fear or something else? Probably those who have more experience any have been to Chechnya before know what happens here in the wood or in the mountains when some of our units keep shelling each other for hours from all weapons that are available. Then a report appears, something like: "A large gang of insurgents was suppressed, a few federal soldiers were lost, that many were wounded, and the insurgents took all their numerous dead bodies away with them." We know too well how such reports are made up. That is why we were taking the risk and waiting for them to begin the first. The nerves were crumbling and falling into pieces directly into the mud.

The "other" side shouted:

"Who are you?"

This is good news. First of all, it is they who are asking. Second, they do it in Russian.

"We are militia, and who are you?"

"Search unit 42."

"We are search unit 43! Send someone for negotiations!"

One of our guys walked towards them. They also sent one soldier. They both talked for a while and looked at the maps. Fine, according to the maps, our routes intersected. Someone thanked God that shooting had not started because there is nobody else to thank for it.



Epilogue

Those who have been "there" have already learned the meaning of the words from a popular song: "There are no atheists in the entrenchments under fire."

When it is impossible to rely either on the commanders, or the army, or militia, you only believe in God. This war, and many do not call it war, is wrong. Everything is wrong here.

Only a few realize it. That is why we "carry home heroes for whom, in their twenties, we are digging graves." And we keep carrying them.

Once again you get convinced that it is absolutely true when people say that for some the war is a war and for others the war is the mother. The soldiers get their tombs and the generals move to new private residences. The parents keep dropping the tears and officers keep receiving new shiny awards.

P.S. The events described above occurred in Nozhay-Yurtovskiy district of the Chechen Republic. The episode with the child occurred in the village of Baitarki. The episode with mortar usage against friendly positions occurred in the village of Simsir. Our unit was stationed in the village of Zandak. Though we kept the departure date in secret, that day half of the residents of the village came to the school building where we lived to say good-bye to us.

They said: "Your conduct was praiseworthy. Before you there were bad people stationed here. We are scared when we think about those who will be after you. Come back to visit us with your families. Only do not come with weapons. Please come on vacation. We will show to you such beautiful places that you would never see through the sight."

One clean-up operation always comes to my memory, when local residents organized a whole feast for us. They said that, unlike other units, our guys behaved decently. When entering into the house from the street, our guys took off their dirty rubber boots and cleaned up the house barefoot.

When I was on my way home from this mission, to tell the truth, I was feeling a kind of shame mixed with rage and insolence. Why does it happen so? In fact, people do not need it. Everyone wants to live in peace. Many our guys want it too. Why do we think about it looking with one eye through the sight?

WITHOUT OPTIONS

The wife of an insurgent tells why people join the underground



Dosh #2(24)2009
Natalia KRAYNOVA



Bammatkhan Sheikhov, former leader of Buinaksk jama'at, is now serving time in prison. For two and a half years he was hiding from law enforcement agencies. His son was killed in November 2007 during a special operation in Makhachkala. In February 2008, Bammatkhan Sheikhov surrendered under the guarantees of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Dagestan Adilguerey Magomedtagirov who promised to Sheikhov that he would be granted amnesty if there was no blood on him. Six months ago, the jury pronounced that his attempts on the life of militiamen were not proved. Nevertheless, he was sentenced to three years for participation in illegal armed bands and carrying weapons. Raykhanat, Sheikhov's wife, told us why Bammatkhan joined the underground and why such people cannot return to peaceful life.

- Our story was in many newspapers. We lived in Moscow and came to live here. I do not know the reason why they started persecuting him. He did not communicate with anybody, he did not go anywhere, and we were only repairing the house, that's all.

The only thing that could cause suspicion was his beard. Did it all happen because of the beard? It is still a riddle for me. They endlessly called him to visit the local militia department: "Why don't you go to Said-apandi (one of popular sheikhs)? Why do you wear a beard?" After such questions he decided not to shave the beard on purpose. They detained and kept him for five days but they never brought any charges against him. Eventually, he got tired of it. Last time they came, Russian OMON was there too, and turned

everything upside down in the house. They even took down and crushed the flag that the grandmother had brought from hajj, a typical Islamic flag. The neighbors got indignant and this person who tore down the flag, I do not remember his name, wanted to show off before the Russian OMON and said: "The Russian flag should be hanging here." The husband understood that it was useless to hope for anything here. I always told him: "It is impossible to live here, we should return to Moscow!" Nobody touched us in Moscow. I could freely wear hijab, my husband wore a beard, and we had no problems at all.

He said that he would leave for some time, he packed his things. It turned out later that he left for the woods. Then the police began to watch the son, Khadzhimurad, and planted an explosive on him. It is interesting that when they came to arrest him he even was not at home. Usually, the son was in the house, and they knew about it. They usually came early in the morning. They never could find anything during the search, even literature. And when they came last time, I, the silly woman, went to get the attested witnesses and left them without supervision in the house. I should have sent them instead! When I returned I saw them sitting in the kitchen and opening the sofa: "Oh, and what is it that you've got here?" I said: "You have planted it here!" One of them giggled: Didn't you know that we plant such things?" I answered: "No, I did not know that you plant such things, and now you only confirm it." They asked: "Where is your son?" - "He is not here." They were puzzled because they were sure that he was sleeping in the other room. They probably had long-time plans to arrest him. They



usually organize raids, plant something and then arrest. The guys who were arrested that day told me later that the militiamen came to their ward with a list and shouted: "Sheikhov, Khadzhimurad, out!" though he was not there. Should he be at home, they would have arrested him and it is hard to guess what they would have done with him.

I always insisted that he should leave. It is hard for me leave with children, therefore I stayed and convinced him to move for a while to Stavropol, to Krasnodar, to friends. And I was delighted when he finally decided to move. Only later I understood that he did not move but took to the woods.

- Tell us how he was detained?

- Negotiations about his coming out of the woods in trade of amnesty lasted the whole year, since February, 2007. Adilguerey constantly called us, not only me but all family members of the insurgents, and asked us to help convince our relatives to return to peaceful life. I even took a lawyer with me because I was indeed interested. My son was in the woods and I wanted him to return. And who does not want it? At these negotiations, I was together with the sister of Zakariyaev, the sister of Azkhar Abakarov, the mother of Dinara Dazieva who later died at Tankaeva Street. (There was a special operation at Tankaeva Street in Makhachkala on November 12th, 2007, - see the photo. As a result of assault on the apartment house, eight supposed insurgents, including two women, were killed.) The Minister promised to us that if there was no blood on them they would be released. All of us asked him: "Where is the guarantee that you would really release them and you would not persecute them afterwards?" He

repeated: "I am the guarantor of all this!"

Naturally, I conveyed this information to my husband as best as I could. My son said: "Mom, they cannot be trusted, it is useless. They themselves have driven us into this deadlock and left without options."

Finally, my husband agreed to negotiate. An FSB agent and the chief of "the sixth department" (directorate against extremism and criminal terrorism) were supposed to come to that place. They surrounded the house where my husband was and placed the second cordon.

Peaceful civilians were between my husband and federal agents. I do not know who brought them there but they seemed as though they were hostages. Then, apparently, the chief of FSB of Untsukulsky district, deputy Shamil and Magomed Suleimanov (native of Gimry, one of seven insurgents who had been previously granted amnesty) entered into the house.

According to them, the negotiations lasted five hours. When my husband understood that he was surrounded, that they were planning to bomb him, and that there would be no concessions, Adilguerey called him on the phone and said: "You will now walk out and they will bring you to Makhachkala. I will invite your family and you together with your family will go home." And indeed, I was told that I needed to go to Makhachkala where I went from Buinaks together with his sister during the night. We were told: "We shall now interrogate him, you wait a little and he will return home with you. There is nothing on him, only carrying weapons and participation in illegal armed bands. He will be released in his own custody before trial." Later they said: "No, it will not happen today, come back tomorrow." So we travelled back and forth for a week. Then they told us to wait for ten days. And then suddenly we heard about these accusations about attempts on militiamen.

As the investigator told me, "I will charge him with whatever I am told to charge him."

- Did the negotiations concern only him alone?

- There was one more person with him, but he has already been sentenced to five years. They did not take into account that he had voluntarily left the woods.

- Could he bring many people with him?

- Of course he could. It was not accidental. Negotiations lasted a year.

He was promised guarantees and he considered his options. In fact, there are people in the woods who got there absolutely by chance and he initially told the

Minister and others about it. Why did my husband, my son, and my nephew take to the woods? There were no specific charges against them, they simply exasperated them with prosecutions without explanations and thus forced to take to the woods. There are even invalids among them. One was almost blind, he went there because he was constantly pursued and beaten.

His wife was selling potatoes at the market and he was carrying passengers across Buinaks in his horse driven cart. Each time something happened, militia detained him because he was from Karamakhi (the village of Karamakhi is a part of a Wahhabi enclave crushed by federal armies in September, 1999). He was also beaten. Eventually, he got tired of it. The elderly blind man took to the woods. There are many people like him there. My husband also told about them on the first day when he was taken. He said that they were peaceful people and they should find a way out of a deadlock situation that they got into not by their fault.

They would have left the woods but it seems that nobody needs it. On the contrary, they are being pushed into the woods. The situation is getting worse and nothing is being done.

- Were you there at Tankaeva Street during the special operation?

- Yes, I was there and it is difficult to tell about it. My nephew and his wife were there too. It is a separate story how they were scoffed and how they managed to go away. I do not know whether the Almighty will forgive those who made all this to a peaceful family.

This boy worked since morning till night to support the family. Has purchased an old car and offered taxi services between Buinaks and Makhachkala every day in any weather. He was also detained and beaten. He told them: "What do you want from me? I perform my salah five times a day and do not touch anybody." - "We shall beat you until you vomit from the sound of azan." I do not know how this can be explained. And he was never charged with anything.

Open his case and see with your eyes! Everything is based only on suspicions: maybe he knows something, perhaps he will say something.

Once he unexpectedly called his wife and asked to come with children to Makhachkala. We arrived and he said: "Imagine, I was driving a client today and after he got out of the car near the market I had to brake sharply. Suddenly a whole arsenal of weapons crept out from under the seat. I was in a shock. I drive in the center of the city and I can be

stopped at any moment. I could have been arrested immediately." He did not know what to do with the weapons and threw them out somewhere. He decided not to return home. We assumed that the weapons had been planted and they were planning to stop him on his way back at the city exit checkpoint and discover these weapons.

He also left for the woods. His wife followed him. I still cannot understand how she could abandon the children. I had constant disputes and conflicts with her because of this.

- Do you disapprove of those who leave?

- You see, they simply do not have another option. For example, Gyulnara Rustamova (leader of Mothers of Dagestan for Human Rights) keeps fighting day and night to find a way out and there are still no results! What can be done if they cannot leave alone the peaceful people? Salikh, my other nephew, a student of Technical University, was detained many times! Once he disappeared for a week. They dug a grave for him and said: "If you do not tell us where they are, say a prayer and we shall bury you here alive." Thanks Allah, their family moved to Moscow and now lives there. Not everyone is able to take off and leave, you understand? What can we do? We are defenseless today and the state does not offer anything to us.

Sergey Chenchik, deputy chief of the Department on Struggle against Organized Crime, once said to me: "It will not stop until they stop."

I said: "No, it is until you stop it!" Why do they persecute people? Why do they break into mosques? What are they looking for in bookcases? Leave people alone! When I was trying to convince my husband to leave, he answered: "Why should I leave? I have lived here all my life. Did I do anything wrong?"

In fact, they never charged him with doing anything wrong. The overwhelming majority of those who were later charged in connection with being in the woods, had been simply suspicious before.

Why does it happen? One Moscow political observer wrote that a flash point was needed here. Why cannot these conflicts be solved peacefully? One word from above, it seems to me, would be sufficient to stop all this. Instead we have this infinite "struggle against terrorism" which is not seen anywhere here. The problem is extemporized! They catch 18-year old children, make terrorists out of them and throw them in prison, at the best. In the worst case, children simply disappear. Gyulnara keeps searching for these children. Where are they?

- If there is no terrorism, who then kills the militiamen?

- Any action always has a counteraction! Recently, a woman told how her son was detained and how he was tortured! They put electricity through his mouth and all his teeth fell out. Who can sustain such tortures? We live in the Caucasus and why do you think our children will not resist if the cops do such things to them? We are not slaves.

- In your opinion, will Gyulnara Rustamova's actions bring results?

- I am glad that something like this has grown on our land at last. Though she is weak now, it is still good that she exists. This group of people is trying

to do something using legal methods. However, there are no results yet. The most terrible thing is that there is no support from people. When lights are switched off, everybody runs out onto the street because they are deprived of comfort. When people are persecuted and killed, those who are not directly involved remain indifferent.

It is a deadlock until the government orders to stop it. It is no use shouting endlessly: "There will be no Sharia here!" Whether it will be here or not is another question. You please observe the laws that you yourselves invented and written! Nothing else is required from you.

Someone needs a flash point here and all of them try to inflate this fire. It is a continuous provocation.

- Where is the way out?

- I do not know. Ramzan Kadyrov has his people, former insurgents who now work with him and returned to peaceful life. We, in Dagestan, do not have a leader who people would believe. It is impossible to rely on anybody, neither the government nor the president. How can people leave the woods if they see that all promises turn out to be a treacherous trap? The story of my husband is a good example.

- What kind of a leader can change it?

- I do not know. Perhaps Moscow can do something? But Moscow sends all local affairs in a vicious circle: they all return where they started.

They leave us without options.

P.S. On June 5th, 2009, Adilguerey Magomedtagirov, Minister of Internal Affairs of Dagestan, was murdered in Makhachkala. The investigators established that the Minister was shot from the window of an apartment house opposite the Marrakesh restaurant where he had a family celebration. Several other people were wounded. The bullet hit the heart of the Minister (52) who was heading the republican Ministry of Internal Affairs for 11 years. In 2007, there were two attempts on Magomedtagirov's life. Attempts on the life of the Minister also occurred in 2005 and 2006.





Dosh #2(24)2009
Abdulla DUDUEV

VERY FEW PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT THIS TRUTH

ФБУ ИК-18 УФСИН России по ЯНАО
поселок Харп Приуральский район
Ямало-Ненецкий автономный округ

103982



Кому: Редакция журнала
= ДОШ =

Куда: г. МОСКВА,
пер. ЛУЧНИКОВ 4, под. 3

Индикатор места назначения
103 982

Recently, we have been receiving more letters from our imprisoned compatriots. Tamerlan from Vedensky district of the Chechen Republic is one of our constant readers who is serving life time in one of the colonies of Yamalo-Nenetsky autonomous region. This young man is only one of hundreds and thousands of Chechens who got between the millstones of the two wars. His bitter fate is a certificate of how prudent politicians and blood-thirsty military sacrificed a blossoming territory and the lives and souls of people to

Ассаламу алайкум!
Здравствуйте уважаемые сотрудники редакции журнала = ДОШ =!
В письме, которое я написал Вам на десяти листах и отправил 13.05.2009г., я обещал Вам написать к нему дополнения, т.е. ответить на Ваши остальные вопросы, а точнее рассказать сколько нас чеченцев на этой зоне (ИК-18) осужденных к ПЛС, откуда они, и за что осуждены. И что нам здесь разрешают, а что нет т.е. на каких условиях мы совершимся. Из Ваианков мы здесь на ПЛС всего 5 человек, и все мы осуждены из-за второй Чеченской компании (войны), якобы мы одни из тех террористов, которые совершили немало страшных преступ-

their ambitions and interests.

I am writing to you because I feel information hunger and want to learn something about my native land.

A few words about myself: I was born in 1981.

My father and mother are Chechens. The father was born in Siberia exile but managed to return home with his family. He grew up, got education, and met my mother. My childhood was rather quiet and safe. Then the war came. I was 13 years old.

The war at once forced all my friends, coevals and even those who were much younger, to have a different look at life.

Six years passed. The second war broke out and my dream to become a computer programmer vanished. In the fall of 1999, they started to bomb the markets, launched cruise missiles, and dropped pellet bombs. Defenseless people were killed in hundreds. There were mostly women in the markets. Young girls died and they could have had families by now. A lot of old women were also killed.

Those who dropped such bombs, didn't they know who they bombed? They also have children and wives.

Overwhelmed by the wave of protest patriotic sentiments, I joined, just like many others, the army of Ichkeria. Eventually, I was found "guilty" because the ethnic identity became a brand: if you are a Chechen and you are young it means you are a Wahhabite!

Many of my fellow countrymen acted just like in the Oriental proverb: "It is better to be a living donkey rather than a dead lion." And even those unruly people who had previously lived by the principle "better die standing than live kneeling" obeyed to reason or the ani-

— 6 —
У КАЖДОГО НЕ СПРАВЕДЛИВО НАКАЗАН-
НОГО ЧЕЛОВЕКА ДОЛНА СТРАДАЕТ МАТЬ,
СЕСТРА И БЛИЗКИЕ РОДСТВЕННИКИ.
ЭТО МЫ ВИДЕМ ПО ИХ ПИСЬМАМ,
ОСОБЕННО В ПИСЬМАХ МАТЕРИ ВИНУ
ЧТО ОНА ПО ШИМО ТОГО, ЧТО ЕЙ
ПРИШЛОСЬ ПОКИНУТЬ СТРАНУ, ЧТОБ
УБЕРЕЧЬ СВОИХ МОЛОДЕЖНИК ДЕТЕЙ ОТ
ЖЕСТОКОЙ ВОЙНЫ И СЕЙЧАС В СВОЕЙ
СТРАНЕ ПРИКОВЫТСЯ СЛУЧАТЬ ПО
РОДИНЕ, С БОЛЬЮ И ТОСКОЙ ПЕРЕ-
ЖИВАЕТ И ЗА МЕНЯ. А ОНА НЕ
ЕДИНСТВЕННАЯ МАТЬ В ТАКОМ
ПОЛОЖЕНИИ, К БОЛЬШОМУ СОЖА-
ЛЕНИЮ ИХ ОЧЕНЬ ДАВНО МНОГО.
В ЧЕМ-ЖЕ ОНИ ВИНОВАТЫ?!

УВАЖАЕМАЯ РЕДАКЦИЯ!
НА ЭТОМ МОЁ ПИСЬМО ПРИБЛИ-
ЖАЕТСЯ К КОНЦУ, НО ПРЕЖДЕ ЧЕМ

— 7 —
ЗАВЕРШИТЬ, ХОЧУ ПОПРОСИТЬ У
ВАС, ЕСЛИ ВЫ ПОСЧИТАЕТЕ
НЕОБХОДИМЫМ И ОПУБЛИКУЕТЕ МОИ
ПИСЬМА В ВАШЕМ ЖУРНАЛЕ, ТО
ПРИШЛИТЕ МНЕ ПОЖАЛУЙСТА
ЭТОТ НОМЕР ЖУРНАЛА И ЕЩЕ
КАКИЕ РАСТОПОГАЕТЕ.

В ЛЮБОМ СЛУЧАЕ Я ВАМ
ОЧЕНЬ БЛАГОДАРЕН.

БАРАКАЛЛАХ! ЗА ВСЁ!

ИЛАЮ УСТЕХОВ И
ПРОЦВЕТАНИЮ В ВАШЕЙ РАБОТЕ!

С УВАЖЕНИЕМ,

Т. [signature]

25.05.2009г.

P.S. В ЭТОТ МЕСЯЦ, 15-ГО ЧИСЛА

mal instinct of survival after they got into ORB-2 (operative search bureau).

They began to follow that first Oriental proverb too. And they obediently took upon themselves as many unsolved crimes as much cargo a donkey can take on its back.

After the army service I moved to Odessa. The sudden death of the father made me go back home. In Khasav-Yurt, I met with my friend Ruslan who decided to accompany me.

Before the departure we dropped into a cafe. We were drinking coffee when a group of 20 or 30 men in civilian clothes entered the cafe. They came up to us and demanded to show our documents. When we were taking out the documents they attacked us.

They drove us somewhere for about 15 or 20 minutes until we stopped in the courtyard of the building where there was an FSB department among other organizations. They lifted me to the second floor and pushed into a room. They threw me down on the floor. I raised my head a little and noticed my friend Ruslan on the floor in the other room. Because of so many punches I was unable to understand anything. My body could no longer react to pain and stopped feeling anything. They ordered me to stand up. I tried but failed because my feet did not feel anything. Then they poured water over me and applied electric shock to my bare back, neck and hands.

They wanted to make me the organizer and the witness of murders of special services agents and investigators.

Having understood that tortures would continue endlessly until I confess, I decided not to involve my friend into it and said that I had killed an FSB agent. The investigator was delighted and began to write down my confession. I said: "Yes, I did! Exactly the way you said. But he did not do it, it was me."

A few months later they transferred us to Grozny, to ORB-2, where every night Ruslan and I were tortured starting from 8 in the evenings till dawn. I attempted a suicide but they rescued me and sent to hospital.

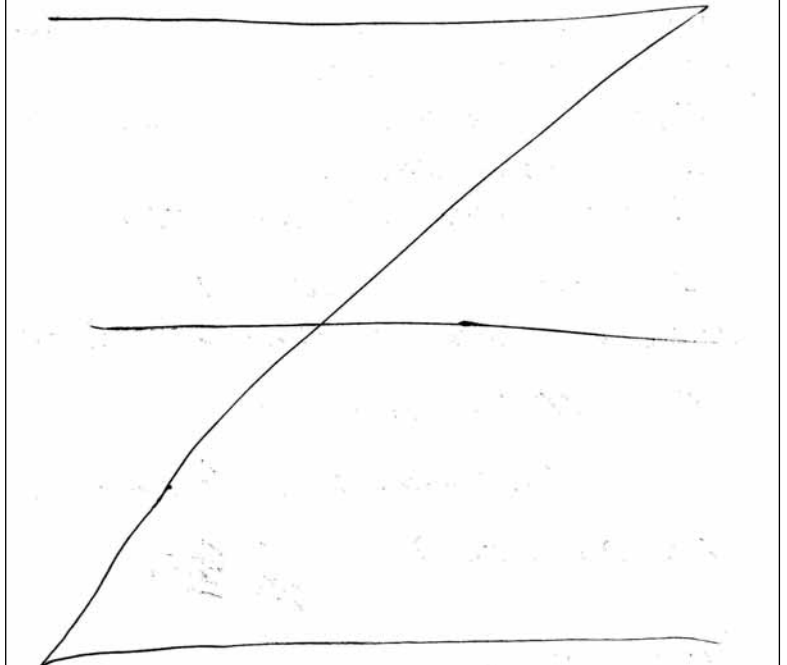
After that they left me alone for a short while.

Soon tortures resumed every night with electricity, water, batons and a gas mask.

Now they were talking of other murders. They did not call doctors to me and did not render any medical aid. The lawyer and the investigator who came to write down my confessions were, apparently, together with those who tor-

— 8 —
УКЛОНИЛСЯ ПОВНО 5 МЕС СО ВНА
МОРО АРСТА.

22 МАЯ МНЕ УКЛОНИЛСЯ 28 МЕС.
А СЕГОДНЯ, 25 МАЯ, ПОВНО 2 ГОДА
КАК ПРИБЫЛ В ЭТУ КОРОННУЮ.



tured me. They pretended that everything was all right and nothing extraordinary happened. Later I learned that several of my fellow villagers had been detained, brutally tortured, and were forced to testify against me.

My attempts to refer to Article 51 of the Constitution that allows not testifying against me were in vain. The lawyer and the investigator came to ORB-2 only to observe formalities.

In addition, they forced me to confess in the act of terrorism on May 9, 2004 in which the president of the Chechen Republic Akhmad Kadyrov was murdered.

The court verdict in Dagestan was unfair and severe: life imprisonment. The appeal to Moscow brought only one benefit: we complained and they stopped torturing us. However, the verdict was confirmed. The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation refused to revise the case.

Dear Dosh! I am telling you this story the best I can, to the extent my knowledge of Russian allows me to do so. I learned Russian during the five years of imprisonment where I sit for no fault. I am telling you all this so that you and many uninformed people realize what methods were used by investigation at ORB-2 and how hundreds and thousands of innocent people were placed behind bars.

I am sure that a skillful lawyer can read the verdict in my case and easily understand that the reason of my and Ruslan's conviction was

THE SUMMER OF EXECUTION



Dosh #3(25)2009

Murders of independent journalists and human rights activists have recently turned into an ominous tradition.

is necessary to catch and punish the murderers."

Medvedev rejected the allegations put forward by the head of Memorial Oleg Orlov that the President of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov could be involved in the murder. Russian President considers that "those who accomplished this evil deed, this crime, anticipated that primitive and most unacceptable for authorities versions of this crime would surface first. That is why, in my opinion, such crimes are planned for certain events."

Ramzan Kadyrov also categorically denied Oleg Orlov's allegations. He personally called Orlov on the phone and said: "You will be ashamed when it turns out to be a lie. You are not a public prosecutor or investigator to make such statements." The President of the Chechen Republic called the murder of Estemirova "monstrous" and declared that he would personally supervise the search of criminals. He added that an informal investigation "according to Chechen traditions" would also be conducted.

Less than a month later, on August 11th, another human rights activist was stolen from the office in the center of the Chechen capital. This time it was Zarema Sadulaeva and her husband Umar Dzhabrailov. Two days later at dawn, Zarema and Umar were found shot in the village of Chernorechye near Grozny. Their bodies were locked in the trunk of their car.

Rayana (this is her passport name) Sadulaeva headed We Shall Save the Generation Regional Public Charity Organization that helped to treat and rehabilitate the invalids of war, first of all, victims of mines and those who lost limbs. DOSH wrote a lot about those who received help from this organization. Rayana organized an annual contest among journalistic publications about the problems of invalids of war. In 2006, she awarded diplomas to three correspondents of our magazine who became winners in this contest.

There is no progress in the investigation of the circumstances of the murder of Natasha Estemirova, Zarema Sadulaeva and her husband, as well as in the case of murder of Stanislav Markelov, Russian lawyer who was engaged in many "Chechen" cases. And the course of investigation of Anna Politkovskaya's murder does not demonstrate optimism either. The real paymaster and the executors of her murder are still not found.



Zarema Sadulaeva

Early in the morning of July 15th, 2009, Natalia Estemirova, Chechen human rights activist and employee of Grozny office of Memorial Human Rights Center, was stolen in the courtyard of her house in Grozny. A few hours later Natalia's dead body was found on the territory of neighboring Ingushetia.

This caused a large resonance in the world. Ministers of Foreign Affairs of France and Sweden Bernard Kouchner and Carl Bildt and the US National Security Council expressed sharp condemnation of the murder of Natalia Estemirova and demanded from Russian authorities to conduct a careful investigation of this crime and to punish the guilty.

During that moment, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev was on an official visit in Germany. At the joint press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, he directly connected the murder of Estemirova with her human rights activities and emphasized that such activities were "necessary for any normal state." Medvedev also said: "She spoke the truth. And this is the value of human rights activists even if they are inconvenient and unpleasant to the authorities."

German Chancellor stated in this respect: "I am shocked by the murder of this courageous woman. It

A TALE OF FEAR

Natalia ESTEMIROVA



Natalia Estemirova

Meetings and gatherings in memory of Natalia Estemirova took place in Bruxelles, Paris and Tbilisi. They were organized by FIDH, Reporters Without Borders, Amnesty International, Revue Nouvelle, Unites Nomade, Pax Christi, the Chechen Committee of Belgium, South Caucasus Human Rights Network (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), Human Rights House Foundation (Oslo), and others.

Civil rights activists, art workers and representatives of international human rights and journalistic organizations gathered at Freedom Square of the Belgian capital. Including those present were former deputy of European Parliament Olivier Dupuis and professor of Bruxelles university (ULB) Aude Merlin who closely knew Natalia and often met with her in Chechnya and also at many European conferences and forums on Chechen issues.

The participants in all these actions remarked with bitterness that over the past years they had to meet too often in connection with murders of human rights activists and journalists in Russia.

Once upon a time there lived malicious and disgusting Fear. Most of all he liked to frighten people by jumping out suddenly behind someone's back or by rushing under the feet of passers-by in darkness. People got bored with him and they banished him. Fear became angry with the entire world, got far into the mountains and lived there frightening small animals and lost hunters.

He settled in a gorge where a cheerful small mountain river was flowing. In one place, the mountain spread apart and formed a wide glade. Every summer, the glade became covered with bright clean chamomiles, gentle bellflowers, and violent poppies. Wild strawberries were inflating their red cheeks, blackberries were bravely climbing up the rocks, and hazels were dropping their heart-shaped light brown nuts into the small river. They were jumping in the streams of water, losing their way among thin legs of fawns that came together with their mothers to drink water. Bear cubs were trying to catch silvery trout nearby, the trout escaped but the mother-bear threw up it by the paw and the trout immediately flew over to the river bank.

A man once came to the glade. He came out and stopped at the edge. There he stood for a long time leaning on his gun. Then he turned around and left without pointing his gun. A few days later he returned but not alone. There were a woman, a dog and several sheep together with him. The newcomers built a hut on the glade and stayed there to live. Soon another hut appeared near it, then one more, and yet another one. The number of people grew more and more, they cleared away brushwood, built houses, ranches, cattle, fished, ploughed, and sowed. The women washed clothes in the small river, shouted to one another and laughed.

All these people worked all day long. The sounds of human habitation spread all over the mountains: the cows mooed, the sheep bleated, the dogs barked, and millstones of the river mill rustled. People did not have rest even in the evenings. They converged together, danced and sang. Fear absolutely lost comfort. Most of all he was exasperated with children. They climbed up mountains, shouted, and the most awful they did: they

played fear! Yes-yes, they attacked each other from behind the trees and stones, frightened, screamed, and laughed. They simulated fear and laughed at it, they laughed at Fear! And when he attacked them, they thought that it was one of their friends who did it and laughed again!

This was unbearable! Fear went into the thicket part of the wood and began to think how he could win over people and how he could drive them out and capture the valley again. He tried to understand what gives them the strength to struggle with frosts in the winter, to build new houses when in the spring the small river furiously carried their huts away, to work continuously, and always to be vigorous and healthy. He thought long and at last he understood. Laughter and love gave strength to people. If he could take laughter and love away from them, they would lose their strength and he could easily overcome them. And it should curiosity inherent in all people without exception and especially in children that would help him with this plan. He thought he made up a great plan and almost burst out laughing from joy but he immediately regained control of himself. He weaved a thin and strong cord out of a spider web, caught a lark and walked down into the valley.

A boy was jumping back and forth over a stream when he suddenly noticed a small wrinkled old man standing in front of him. There was something moving and cheeping in his closed palms.

"What is it?" asked the boy.

"It is my secret," answered the old man.

"Show it to me," the boy asked, bent over to him and opened the palms.

The bird flew up and the boy joyfully screamed. But the loop squeezed the bird's thin neck and the lark hung on the cord as it was a piece of grey cloth.

Now the boy screamed with horror. The old man burst with croaking sounds and smacked:

"What a slick thing you did!"

The old man disappeared in the thorn-bush. And the boy went home.

His mother met him at the door with cheers but when she looked in her son's face her smile disappeared.

"What's happened?" she asked. The son shuddered and began to cry.

He never saw murders and never heard that such things were possible. He did not understand what had happened and could not explain anything to his disturbed mother. She rushed to the neighbors. The rumor that something wrong happened to her boy spread all over the place. Frightened parents stopped letting their children out onto the street. The children began to cry and quarrel. The life in the village became more disturbing and gloomy. The children lost appetite and began to weaken, their eyes grew dull. The sound of joyful laughter and songs could no longer be heard. Fear was sniffing among people. He was looking into the windows and began making faces as soon as a child noticed him. The children were frightened. They cried but could not explain what was happening to them. The adults noticed a shadow next to them but did not understand where it was coming from. At last they decided that the children got sick and needed a doctor. But where could they get a doctor? In fact, nobody ever got sick in the village before. And Fear understood that the clock struck for him.

Early in the morning he came to the village and said that he was doctor Hearts and he could cure the children if the parents would perform everything that he would tell them to do with complete obedience. Every mother and every father swore to obey him. Doctor Hearts ordered them to close the windows, to put dark curtains so that the bright light of the sun could not irritate the eyes of the children. He prohibited songs and dances so that the children could not suffer from noise. The people executed everything. They looked up at him from below because lately he grew considerably taller. Everyone invited him in the house to see their children. The children hunched under his gloomy gaze and hid their eyes, and doctor Hearts severely pointed to them a thin small beam of light that was coming through the window and the parents closed the curtains even tighter. They asked him not to leave the village. They offered a house for him in which they used to gather in order to sing and dance. There were huge windows in that house but doctor Hearts ordered to seal them off with dark fabric.

Silence and gloom settled in the village. All the works stopped because the villagers became butterfingers, the crops dried out, hungry cows gave less milk, kids and lambs began to perish. None of the children recovered but their parents kept looking at doctor Hearts as if they were bewildered and performed everything that he ordered. Every night shadows walked all over the village, nestled close to the windows and listened, lis-

tened. And then they tiptoed to the house of doctor Hearts and reported to him in which house the parents were singing a lullaby and in which house the children were playing with a doll. Every morning all the villagers dressed in black and grey clothes gathered in the center of the village and doctor Hearts informed about those who had broken his interdiction, and the anger of the villagers, who used to be kind and cheerful before, fell upon the heads of the guilty. The first tomb appeared at the edge of the village. Then the second and yet another one. In due course, all got used to the fact that children died. There was a smile on the lips of doctor Hearts when he anticipated how all the villagers would move to the cemetery and the gorge would become completely silent.

A little girl was lying in bed in one of the houses. Her brother was sitting beside her with a mug of milk. He asked:

"Lily, please drink a little! The neighbor brought it this morning for you."

"Don't do it, Ader, don't torture me!" the girl spoke hardly moving her lips. "I will die soon all the same. I would have died yesterday but I want to recall that song that the mother used to sing to me. I will recall it and leave to her."

She closed her eyes. The boy got to his feet and left the house. He walked not knowing where he was going, not looking at the road, until he appeared on the bank of a brook. Ader sat on the grass. Dragonflies were flying above the water almost touching him with their long wings, but the boy did not notice them. He recalled how the father threw him up high above when he was a small child and then taught him to read animal tracks, how the mother baked pancakes in the morning and drew cheerful faces on them with jam. The father fell down from a rock when he was picking hazelnuts and the mother died of famine because she gave all the food to children. What will happen to him when the little sister also dies? Is there a reason for him to live? His hands were tearing grass in despair and his fingers were sticking in soft, damp clay. He took a lump of clay and rolled a ball. He looked at it and attached two tiny flowers of forget-me-nots as if they were eyes, and then a cowberry as if it was a mouth. It looked like the head of a doll that Lily used to have. He made the body, hands and legs. When he returned home, he silently, not to wake up the sister, opened the chest and found bright cloths at the bottom of it: they remained from dresses that the mother once made for Lily. He wrapped the doll in the cloths and called the sister in a whisper. She opened her eyes reluctantly and suddenly saw a doll

in her brother's hands.

"What is it?" Lily asked, stretching her transparent hands to the doll. "It is so dark here, I can hardly see."

"Wait a second!" exclaimed Ader cheerfully and began to tear off dark curtains from the windows.

Suddenly he heard a song, that very song, the mother's song. Horror pierced the boy: Lily said that she would die as soon as she recalled it! He turned around very slowly and saw that the sister was getting her from the bed. Ader rushed to her. The neighbor was standing amazed at the doorstep. She thought that Lily had already died and came to help Ader to bury her. And Lily was already dancing with the brother around the room, singing and smiling, holding a bright clay doll in her hands. The woman rushed to tell the neighbors that Lily recovered. It never happened before, and the people ran to look at the girl. They were laughing when they looked at her, smiling to each other, showing her doll to the sick children, and began to take out whistles and pocket mirrors from their chests.

"Let's go to doctor Hearts!" someone shouted. "We shall tell him that miracle happened at last!"

And the people ran to the largest house in the center of the village - the house of Fear.

"The wood is so noisy today," grumbled Fear, having heard a rumble. He wanted to close the window even tighter, but hooked his foot over the curtain, fell down on the floor and seized the curtain with his hand and completely broke it. The stream of light blinded him. Plashes of sunlight from dozens of mirrors in the hands of joyful people rushed through the window. The people entered into the house and began to look for the doctor. They wanted to share their joy with him. But they could not find doctor Hearts anywhere. They vainly searched for their benefactor. During the turmoil one of them almost crushed something looking like a spider that slipped between his feet. Fear became small again and slipped away from the light that he hated so much.

Since then, he has been living in the thickest part of the wood. He frightens children who escape too far from adults and small animals when a predator creeps too close to them. Small fear is sometimes even necessary.

And people have never abandoned a smile and a song since then. But they keep trying to get rid of excessive curiosity and trustfulness: trouble may be not so far away.

Grozny, 2007

This tale was written for and first published in DOSH magazine.



YAKHYA EVLOEV: WE ARE DISAPPOINTED

Dosh #3(25)2009

Abdulla DUDUEV

"Recently, I spoke again on the phone with the President. He was in Moscow. He said that he did not forget about the case of Magomed. He promised that we would meet after his return. Then I will once again discuss with him all the circumstances and I will ask him to give me a straight answer, in a military fashion: either there is something illegal in what I am striving for, or is the law so powerless in this republic? If so, I will then stop tormenting myself," Yakhya Evloev told us. He became almost despaired in his attempts to get the murderers of his son Magomed arrested and punished. Magomed Evloev was killed in Ingushetia on August 31st, 2008.

Those who are guilty of the cynical, demonstrative, arbitrary execution of Evloev are not punished yet and we are no longer surprised.

"Estemirova and two more human rights activists were murdered in Chechnya. They still cannot find their murderers as well as the murderers of Politkovskaya. But everything is clear with the mur-

der of Magomed: who killed, who shot, who ordered. But the trial is being unscrupulously delayed. It means that it is the system where all is allowed to a few," says Yakhya with bitterness and shares with DOSH the latest news about the trial.

"The case was transferred to Karabulak court, the dates of hearings are not set yet, and the case is transferred from one judge to another. The detention of Magomed at the airport was confirmed illegal. We asked to initiate a criminal case against those who issued the illegal detention warrant but we were refused. And in fact Magomed was killed due to this arrest, the cause and effect relationship is obvious. We appealed to the Investigative Committee and the Public Prosecutor's Office with a question: why are we refused in opening a criminal case? Nobody can give a precise answer. However, under the law, you need to have strong reasons to issue a compulsory detention or taking a person off the plane warrant. The investigators should have first established his residence address and called him by telegraph. Only if he did not appear after two telegrams had been personally received by him, they would have the right to use other measures. In our case, there was only one telegram and it was sent to a wrong address where Magomed did not live. It is obvious that the order of compulsory detention could come only from Medov, former Minister of Internal Affairs of Ingushetia, and GOVD chief Shankhoev. We were asking to initiate a criminal case against him."

- Does it mean that this paper can be presented in court as proof?

"Yes, but the investigator is dodging, he says that he sent summons in my name and I refused to receive them. He alleges that our Malgobek militiaman delivered the summons. When we asked this militiaman, he said that the summons was given to him the day after the murder. The investigator alleges that this militiaman submitted an official report stating that I refused to accept the summons. But the militiaman denies it in his statement."

- Several weeks ago, it was announced that Magomed's family left the trial. Is this decision connected with the circumstances that you have just listed?

"Yes. The investigation refuses to take adequate measures pointing out that the case is examined in essence in court. But when we started to raise questions at preliminary hearings in Nazran, the judge declared that the subject of examination was the murder of Magomed by recklessness, therefore the court was examining exclusively what happened since the moment he was put in the car at the airport. The murderers repeat: "We shot him by recklessness." Their testimonies are considered while the court ignores our questions and doubts. It means, we, the victims, are



not needed there, therefore we leave. However, when the judge was replaced as a result of our petition, there was hope that the case would be fairly examined. But this judge was removed by the other party. And the case was sent to Karabulak.

We also brought the charge of money theft. In fact, 3 million roubles were stolen from Magomed. A criminal case was initiated on this fact too. We asked the Investigative Committee to unite these two cases. We again addressed the Supreme Court of Ingushetia and are waiting for consideration of our petition."



- In your opinion, what is the reason of delaying the trial?

"When Murat Zyazikov and Musa Medov were still in power, they did everything so that this case would appear as a murder by recklessness. Bastrykin, head of the Investigative Committee at the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation also participated in it. This is what investigator Komarov told me and promised that he would be objectively investigating the case. Zyazikov, Medov and Bastrykin had a meeting. Bastrykin gave an instruction: do not go deep, submit the case to court as a murder by recklessness, and do not go into details. Komarov told this to me as a big secret. But now, when I learnt that Komarov was discharged, I think that it makes no sense to be silent about this: I no longer risk harming him."

- President Yunus-Bek Evkurov came to see you after he was appointed. What did he tell you about the investigation?

"He promised to take the case under his control, but as I understand he is simply not allowed to do it. Law enforcement agencies still work under the influence of former chiefs. I visited him several times regarding these issues. He called the Public Prosecutor of the Republic Yury Turygin. They spoke for an hour and a half. Evkurov told the Public Prosecutor: "Could you listen to victim Evloev, I think his reasons are strong." I

said: "We do not believe that it was a murder by recklessness, it was obviously an intentional murder. The illegal arrest and further actions were performed by the investigator and the chief of Nazran GOVD, so charge them and listen to what they will say. Should he had not been detained, he wouldn't have been killed."

Turygin was evasive: "Yes, we have performed investigation, we interrogated them." I told him: "You, as the Public Prosecutor who knows the laws, can you tell me: on the basis of available documents and the actions of these investigators, is it required to initiate a criminal case or not?" This conversation was in the presence of the President. Turygin could only say: "Yes, it is required. But only Bastrykin can do it."

- Does it mean they follow the instructions from Moscow?

"President Evkurov said: "Let us prepare a letter to Bastrykin." We prepared the letter but there was an attempt on the President. Everything was put on hold. I told Turygin: "You are the Public Prosecutor of Ingushetia, head of the supervising body!" He answered that he did not have any power. So, he does not have the power, but the murderers had the power to illegally arrest a person, throw him in the car and shoot him. Eventually, the case was initiated under our pressure but two days later Zhilin, Turygin's deputy, revoked the decision. I then asked: "If you do not have any power, how did that power emerge when initiating the case you cancelled it two days later? Such a quick reaction has never happened in the history of the Ingush Office of Public Prosecutor. It is an obvious order! It means that there was a call either from Zyazikov or from Medov. It means you are in agreement with them. You lie to me and deceive the President. Then resign from this position!"

- Do you still have any hope that an objective investigation would be possible? Or you were entirely disappointed?

"I have a feeling that there will be no objective investigation and punishment of the guilty. And the organizers will not be found. We are entirely disappointed. Perhaps they will formally punish someone and sentence to a year or two. Actually, I do not think that they so diligently cover Shankhiev or Kotiev. No, they are afraid that if they start to testify, they will explain why they did so and will uncover high-positioned criminals. Only this holds the case. Otherwise, these pawns would easily be cornered. Kotiev could say that Medov ordered him to do it, and Shankhiev could say that Kotiev made him do it. Gudiev, Medov's deputy, who arrested Magomed in the plane, told during investigation that the Minister ordered him to take the detention warrant from GOVD and go to the airport."

- You certainly conducted your own independent investigation. What did you manage to find out?

"The day after the murder, everything was already clear to us. All the facts are presented on the Internet. We know everything up to slightest details. I do not think that Zyazikov gave the order to kill Magomed. Most likely, he ordered to detain and intimidate him, but Medov probably decided that it would be easier to do away him and then to make up the case. Having authority, they accomplished it without hesitation. They tried to cover up traces and therefore threw out the body near the hospital. When we first asked those

who were arresting Magomed at the airport, they said: "We do not know anything. We were given an order to detain and transfer him." It was impossible to hide the fact of detention. They could only say that they transferred him to other people and they did not know what happened afterwards. They probably planned to play for time, and say that were searching and investigating. But Magomed's friends came to the airport to meet him and then they chased and stopped the cars. It became impossible to hide the illegally arrested and they killed him. It is an intentional murder, isn't it? I many time told Magomed that he was risking and he could be killed. He did not believe that they would do it. He said that they might arrest him but there would be no charges. He thought that they would detain him, plant something on him and then keep under arrest for a week or two. Therefore, I do not believe that he showed resistance, as they claim. He would never have done it because he understood that there would be provocations against him. He would have easily testified and proved his innocence. It is not incidental that close relatives of the Minister of Internal Affairs were in that car: his nephews who would not blab out and provide such testimonies as needed for them."

- Has the situation in Ingushetia changed over the year that Magomed is no longer with us?

"It seems to me that human rights activists are now frightened. Magomed managed to give a push to the development of a civil society in Ingushetia. And President Evkurov wants to be close to society. Evkurov is now trying to build a team but it is very difficult. It is necessary to pick up a sufficient number of honest, normal people. Therefore, people are being changed now in highest positions. He has taken the right direction. Magomed was fighting against corruption that allowed arbitrary executions. Nowadays, there is much openness in many issues. It has become easier to understand the abductions of people. Evkurov meets with the families of those who were abducted or killed and of those who took to the woods. There is certainly a change for the better. Should the authorities have been in close contact with people before, just like Evkurov is doing now, the situation in the republic would not have reached such a degree of decay."

- Are there any people now who continue Magomed's cause as sincerely and impartially as he did?

"I wouldn't say so. Even when he was alive, his associates were not always sincere. Nobody contributed to the extent he did: neither physically, nor morally, nor financially. The money that Magomed had with him that day were intended for the construction of the house that already had the foundation built. I told him: "You spend all money for public activities and take children dancers abroad. You spent two million on costumes for Dawns of the Caucasus and Sunzha dance groups. You help sick and hungry people. You spend too much time and money on charity. This is good, but you also need to do something about your own house. Sooner or later you will return here or your children will come to live in Ingushetia. You should complete the construction of the house!" He carried this money under my pressure and those murderers stole the money. The other day, his wife came to me and said that there were no savings. He left no savings for his business. He lived for the people and died for the people."

Magomed Evloev will be remembered in the history of the republic as a person who managed to organize national protest against absolute arbitrariness of the authorities, the atmosphere of fear, lawlessness and total suppression of any civil activity. He sacrificed his successful business and his own life for the sake of justice and a better life of his repressed and exhausted compatriots.

The short and bright life of Magomed and his activities are an example of dignity, courage, and love for the people. These concepts had a very precise and tangible meaning for him. No wonder that for many years he remained the only serious oppositional figure of Ingushetia.

In November this year, Magomed Evloev would have turned 38 years old. He was very vigorous, kind, and open hearted to any trouble or problem of any person. He had many plans and ideas that were connected with public affairs and charity. He managed to accomplish an incredible amount of kind and noble deeds and would have done even more.

DOSH magazine twice addressed the authorities of Ingushetia with the request to immortalize the memory of our friend and colleague Magomed Evloev. We would like to remind of it once again since former colleagues of Magomed who now work on high positions in the republic could assist in this noble move.

P.S. On December 11, 2009, the Karabulak court of Ingushetia pronounced the sentence to the murderer of Magomed Evloev. Former chief of security guards of the former Minister of Internal Affairs of Ingushetia Ibrahim Evloev was sentenced to two years of colony settlement for "murder by recklessness." The court fully satisfied the demand of the prosecution for two years of colony settlement. Neither the defendant nor relatives of the victim were present during



Press Freedom Prize Awarded to DOSH

The 2009 Reporters Without Borders - Fnac Press Freedom Prize was awarded on December 2 to Israeli newspaper reporter Amira Hass and the Chechen quarterly DOSH at a ceremony hosted by journalist Bernard de La Villardière at the Espace Fondation EDF in Paris.

Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Jean-François Julliard said: "This year we are honoring a courageous journalist, Amira Hass, and a beleaguered news media, DOSH. Both, in different terrains, have displayed a remarkable degree of boldness and abnegation."

The Chechen magazine DOSH was awarded the prize in the Media category for its fight for the right to inform and be informed. DOSH has been covering politics and current affairs in Chechnya and other parts of the Russian Caucasus since 2003, continuing to operate against all odds in a region where media independence has never been welcome.

The prize was received by DOSH editors Israpil Shovkhalov and Abdulkhazhi Duduev. "We are not heroes, just independent journalists but that means being considered enemies of the motherland," Shovkhalov said. "This prize gives us the strength to continue working and covering what is going on in the North Caucasus."

Shovkhalov added with emotion: "We think today of the people with whom we should have been celebrating this prize - Magomed Evloev, Natalia Estemirova and Anna Politkovskaya."

Reporters Without Borders has been awarding a press freedom prize every year since 1992. The prize goes to a journalist and a news media that have made an exceptional contribution to the defense or promotion of press freedom in any part of the world. The prize winners are selected by an international jury of journalists and human rights activists.

ACTION

To the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Mordovia

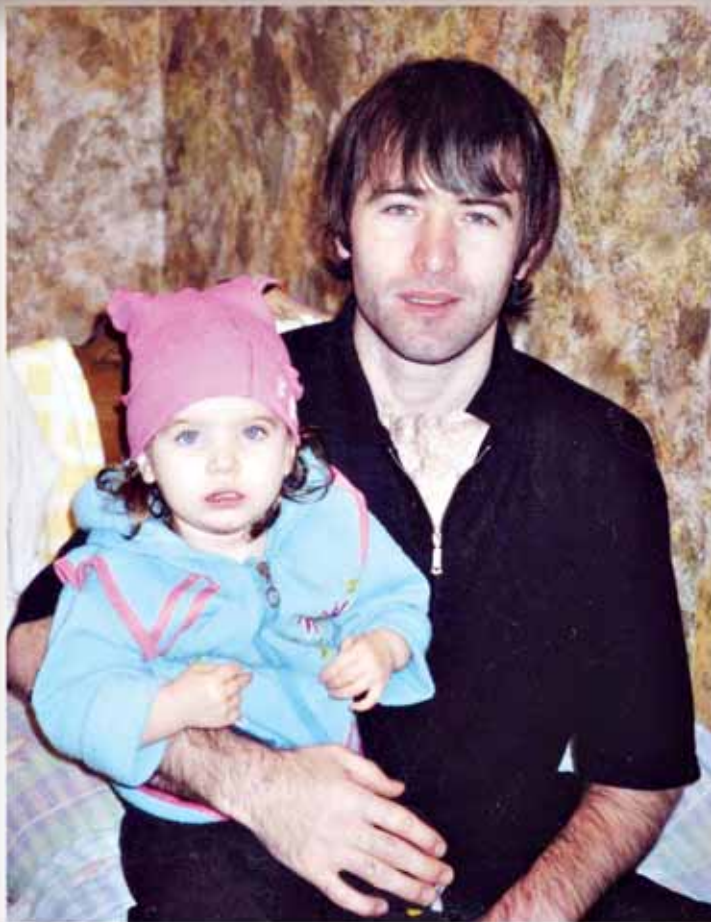
On May 27th, 2009, the judicial board of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Mordovia refused the appeal of Lechi Musaevich Dzhanaraliev who was asking to release him because of illness.

According to the special medical board report about physical examination on March 19th, 2008, L.M.Dzhanaraliev suffers from illnesses that fall under Article 23 of the "List of Illnesses Inhibiting Serving of Punishment," adopted by the Government Order of the Russian Federation #54 dated 2/6/2004 "About Physical Examination of the Convicted Recommended for Release from Punishment in Connection with Illness."

His illnesses are present in the above mentioned list: consequences of an open craniocerebral trauma in the form of deep left-sided hemiparesis, left-sided hemihypesthesia, and organic emotional labile frustration of personality in connection with a brain trauma.

L.M.Dzhanaraliev is an invalid of group 1 and requires special treatment in a civil hospital: he needs an operation and care of relatives.

In 2005, Dzhanaraliev was seriously wounded in the head by employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at a checkpoint in the city of



Grozny. He was operated after that. According to reports of the doctors, his condition is stable but it does not improve because this wound in the head is one of such serious traumas that affect the nervous system.

In April 2009, the regime of Counter-Terrorist Operation in the Chechen Republic was removed, which means that armed struggle actually stopped there.

Lechi Dzhanaraliev is seriously ill. He does not represent any threat to society. If he returns home, he can receive necessary medical aid, care of relatives and hope of returning to a normal peaceful life with his wife and a three-year old daughter.

Dear readers,

Signatures in support of this petition can be sent to:

dosh_magazine@hotmail.com