

Statement by Russian and International Human Rights Organizations on the Case of Salman Tepsurkaev

September 26, 2020

On September 7, 2020, a video was circulated on social media depicting the torture of a 19-year-old man from Chechnya, Salman Tepsurkaev. The young man was the moderator of the chat telegram channel 1ADAT, which publishes critical information about developments in Chechnya. Later it became known that Tepsurkaev was abducted from a hotel in Gelendzhik (Russia's Krasnodar region) and taken to Chechnya, where he was then stripped naked and forced, on camera, to penetrate himself with a glass bottle. Subsequently, Chechen government officials, and even the mufti of Chechnya, publicly endorsed the violence committed against Tepsurkaev. Meanwhile, Tepsurkaev's whereabouts remain unknown.

We, the undersigned, express our outrage at these developments, and urge the authorities of the Russian Federation to immediately determine the whereabouts of Salman Tepsurkaev, and punish those guilty of the violence against him.

We request the Russian investigative authorities to respond to the following questions:

- Is there a criminal investigation underway into Salman Tepsurkaev's disappearance and the violence committed against him?
- What is being done specifically to find this individual?
- Why has no one involved in numerous crimes against other critics of the Chechen authorities been identified or punished?

We express our solidarity with the people in Chechnya who are outraged by this monstrous crime and feel that their security and safety are in jeopardy.

Violations of human rights in Chechnya are becoming uglier and more brutal, and we call upon the Russian government to immediately put an end to the reigning impunity there, and to take all measures to hold the perpetrators to account.

Svetlana Gannushkina, Chair, "Civic Assistance" Committee

Igor Kalyapin, Chair, Committee Against Torture

Igor Kochetkov, Director of the Charitable Fund for Social and Legal Assistance "Sphere"

Denis Krivosheev, Deputy Director, Regional Office, Europe and Central Asia, Amnesty International

Tanya Lokshina, Europe and Central Asia Associate Director, Human Rights Watch

Anders L. Petterson, Executive Director, Civil Rights Defenders

Ekaterina Sokiryanskaya, Director, Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention

Alexander Cherkasov, Chair of the Board, Human Rights Center “Memorial”

Gunnar M. Ekeløve-Slydal, Acting Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee