

URGENT ACTION

RUSSIAN NATIONAL'S WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Maskhud Abdullaev, a Russian national was forcibly returned from Egypt to Russia on 19 June 2009. In an interview for a Chechen TV programme, broadcast on 30 June, he denied allegations that security forces had detained him in Moscow airport. There are doubts about whether he participated in the programme freely. Maskhud Abdullaev's current whereabouts are unknown. If he has been detained, he may be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

There are no reports of Maskhud Abdullaev being seen, either at Moscow airport or in Grozny. Yet, his interview was recorded in television studios in Grozny and broadcast on Chechen TV. In the interview, Maskhud Abdullaev stated that he spent a night at Moscow airport and flew to Chechnya the next morning "to visit his relatives and to see how life is in Chechnya". He also stated that he is able to move around freely in Chechnya and there is no pressure on him. He said that he was going to spend the summer in Chechnya and then return to Egypt to continue his studies at Al-Azhar Islamic University. He appealed to his father, Supyan Abdullaev, the leader of a Chechen armed group, and "to all those who are in the forests", urging them to stop fighting and surrender to the authorities. He also addressed Chechens who have fled abroad, stating that people can live and pray freely in Chechnya, and there are no abductions there.

However, it is not clear whether Maskhud Abdullaev arrived in Chechnya of his free will. He never appeared in the arrivals hall in Moscow airport where people were waiting for him. He was not seen leaving the border control zone or boarding an internal flight or entering the international arrivals hall.

Human rights organizations have expressed fears that Maskhud Abdullaev is being held by the Chechen security services in order to put pressure on his father, and use him for propaganda purposes. If so, Maskhud Abdullaev may be at risk of torture and other ill-treatment and his life might be at risk. He has not contacted his family and his exact whereabouts remain unknown.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Russian, English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Maskhud Abdullaev;
- urging the Russian authorities to clarify whether Maskhud Abdullaev is detained;
- if Maskhud Abdullaev is free, calling on the Russian authorities to facilitate meetings between him and independent human rights organizations and journalists.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 AUGUST 2009 TO:

Director of the Federal Security Service
of the Russian Federation

Alexandr Vasilevich BORTNIKOV
Federal Security Service of the Russian
Federation

ul. Bolshaia Lubianka, 1/3
107031 Moscow, Russian Federation

Fax: +7 495 914 26 32

Salutation: **Dear Director**

President of the Chechen Republic

Ramzan Akhmatovich Kadirov
Administration of the President and the
Government of the Chechen Republic
Ul. Garazhnaia, 10.

364000 g. Grozny Chechen Republic
Russian Federation

Fax: +7 8712 22 45 53

Salutation: **Dear President Kadyrov**

And copies to:

Ombudsperson for Human Rights of the
Russian Federation

Vladimir Petrovich LUKIN
ul. Miasnitskaia, 47
107084 Moscow, Russian Federation

**Fax: +7 495 607 74 70; +7 495 607
39 77**

Salutation: **Dear Ombudsman**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

This is the first update of UA170/09 (EUR 46/013/2009, 26 June 2009). Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/013/2009/en

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 27 May 2009, the Egyptian State Security Investigations bureau (SSI) conducted waves of arrests among foreign students at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Among those arrested were about 35 Russian students, mainly from Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan. The students were arrested and their residences were searched without warrants. A statement from the Egyptian Ministry of Interior claimed the steps were taken as precautionary measures to ensure that the students were legally resident in Egypt. The Ministry conducted the arrests as it suspected that foreign students might have links with a group of seven al-Qaida suspects who are under investigation for the bomb attack at al-Husayn historical district of Cairo, on 22 February 2009. The arrest of the seven suspects was announced by the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior on 23 May 2009. The Ministry of the Interior stated that the seven individuals who had been arrested had been recruiting foreigners, including students.

Most of the arrested students were released within days but some of them were reportedly deported to their home countries. Other students might still be in investigative detention.

Amnesty International regularly receives reports from Chechnya about the targeting by the Chechen authorities of the relatives of those suspected of being members of armed groups. The pressure exerted on relatives has included intimidation, arbitrary detention, forced eviction and destruction of houses. In August 2008, Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov announced on television that "those families whose relatives are in the forest are accomplices in crime. They are terrorists, extremists." Trials of suspected armed opposition members have been marred by violations of international fair trial standards. In particular, some have been charged with and convicted of terrorism-related offences, based on forced confessions and testimony extracted under torture.

Maskhud Abdullaev's family left Chechnya in 1999 and obtained refugee status in Azerbaijan. Maskhud Abdullaev travelled to Egypt in February 2006 to study at Al-Azhar Islamic University. He was arrested for allegedly violating the terms of his visa on 27 May 2009, by Egyptian SSI officers, and was then detained incommunicado in Tora prison near Cairo. He was forcibly returned to Russia on 19 June.

Further Information on UA: 170/09, Index: EUR 46/016/2009, Issue Date: 08 July 2009

