

4 December 2000

**Further information on UA 292/00 (EUR 50/04/00, 20 September 2000) -
Possible "disappearance"**

UKRAINE Georgiy Gongadze, journalist

A decapitated body believed to be that of missing journalist Georgiy Gongadze has been found in Ukraine.

The body was discovered in a shallow grave in woodland south of the capital, Kiev, on 3 November. The corpse reportedly bore distinguishing marks consistent with injuries previously sustained by independent journalist Georgiy Gongadze. Jewellery thought to belong to him has also reportedly been found at the scene. A formal identification has not yet been made over a month later.

On 28 November the leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine, Olexandr Moroz, accused President Leonid Kuchma of being implicated in the "disappearance", claiming to have an audio tape recording in which President Kuchma can reportedly be heard discussing with other senior state officials how to eliminate Georgiy Gongadze. It is not known whether the audio evidence is authentic, but President Kuchma has vociferously denied the allegations and is threatening Olexandr Moroz with libel action.

Independent journalist Georgiy Gongadze "disappeared" on 16 September, when he failed to return home to his wife and children after visiting a friend in Kiev. He had complained that police had threatened and intimidated him because of his work as a journalist. It is feared that his "disappearance" is linked with his criticism of the authorities and their alleged links with powerful interest groups.

Amnesty International is repeating its call for an independent and thorough investigation into Georgiy Gongadze's "disappearance". The Procurator General of Ukraine, Mykhaylo Potebenko, should ensure that the ongoing investigation adheres to international principles such as the United Nations (UN) Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors, which state that: "Prosecutors shall, in accordance with the law, perform their duties fairly, consistently and expeditiously, and respect and protect human dignity and uphold human rights, thus contributing to ensuring due process and the smooth functioning of the criminal justice system".

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Russian or your own language or in your own language:

- urging the authorities to make all efforts to formally identify the decapitated corpse found on 3 November;
- expressing grave concern for the safety of Georgiy Gongadze, who has been missing since 16 September
- calling for an immediate, independent and thorough investigation into his "disappearance";
- calling on the Procurator General without prejudice to take into account all information available to him, and to ensure that UN Guidelines are adhered to in the course of the investigation.

APPEALS TO:

(Please note: We have experienced considerable problems sending faxes to Ukraine. Please be patient and keep trying. Send faxes manually and if a voice answers say 'fax' and wait for the signal. If problems persist, please send faxes to diplomatic representatives of Ukraine accredited to your country)

Procurator General of Ukraine

Mykhaylo POTEBENKO

Ukraina

252601 g. Kiev-II

ul. Reznitskaya, 13/15

Prokuratura Ukrainy

Generalnomu prokuroru

POTEBENKO M.

Fax: + 380 44 296 89 03

Telegrams: Prokuratura, Kiev, Ukraine

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Ukraine accredited to your country (which can be found at the following website <http://www.brama.com/ua-gov/diprep.html>)

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 January 2001.