



CHECHNYA

Chechnya / Austria - Israilov Case

31 May 2011

Israilov Case: Court in Vienna to reach verdict on murder of refugee who accused Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov of torture

On 1 June 2011 the jury will pass a verdict for the three men accused of murder of Umar Israilov, a Chechen refugee in Austria who accused Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov of grave human rights violations, and in if these persons are found guilty, sentences will be pronounced.

On the eve of the verdict the coalition of human rights groups monitoring the trial wants to emphasize the importance of this emblematic case and expresses its regret at the absence of cooperation of the Russian Federation with the Austrian justice.

Umar Israilov is one of a handful of victims who dared to pursue complaints about grave violations of human rights and absence of the Rule of Law in contemporary Chechnya, where the climate of fear prevails and all opponents of the current regime have been systematically and often violently silenced. In his application to the European Court on Human Rights (ECtHR), Umar Israilov implicated the incumbent Chechen President of being personally involved in grave crimes, and claimed that he was personally tortured by Ramzan Kadyrov in 2003. Moreover, Israilov provided a detailed account of the system of illegal violence and secret prisons in Chechnya. Shortly before his murder, Israilov was threatened by a man who presented himself as an emissary of the Chechen President and requested him to withdraw his ECtHR application.

There is no political will to investigate similar crimes in Russia. Despite credible and well documented evidence regarding numerous crimes committed in Chechnya, their investigation has so far been inconclusive. Unfortunately, in the Israilov case, the Russian Federation again refused to cooperate with the Criminal Court in Vienna.

The Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, Yury Chaika, decided not to respond to the request for legal aid by the Viennese Criminal Court, orally formulated already in November 2010 and officially transmitted in January and March 2011. "*This absence of cooperation and even of response is disrespectful and symptomatic of the deliberate obstruction of Russia to the establishment of the truth and to a fair process of justice*", declared Souhayr Belhassen, President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH).

The Viennese Court had requested that the Russian authorities enable the questioning, via video conference, of crucial witnesses in this case:

- Lecha Bogatirov, who according to the materials of the criminal case could have fired the deadly shots at Umar Israilov. Allegedly, Bogatirov is now openly residing in the Chechen republic;

- Shaa Turlayev, former advisor to the Chechen President, Ramzan Kadyrov, who, according to available evidence, might be responsible for organising the attempt to kidnap Umar Israilov and bring him to Chechnya. Turlayev is currently residing in Chechnya;
- Ramzan Kadyrov, President of Chechnya, who, according to the evidence collected in the criminal file could have ordered Shaa Turlayev and Otto Kaltenbrunner to organise the kidnapping or murder of Umar Israilov. Kadyrov is living in Chechnya;
- Bukharu Salamov (Baraev), former speaker of the unrecognised leader of the so-called North Caucasian Emirate, Doku Umarov. The criminal file suggests that Salamov could be an accomplice to the murder. Salamov currently resides in Chechnya;
- Artur Kurmakaev, who came to Vienna in May and June 2008, in his words following the order of Magomed Daudov, a close ally of Ramzan Kadyrov, so as to bring Israilov back to Chechnya, either with persuasion or with force. Kurmakaev is residing in Russia.

The Russian Federation is unwilling and, as it seems, unable to investigate upon the crimes conducted in the recent years in the "pacified Chechnya", or influenced from there. The investigation is now conducted and the verdict is to be announced outside Russia.

After the verdict, the coalition of the human rights groups, who was monitoring the trial, will hold a press-conference.

The press conference is scheduled for 1 June, 18:00 in Café Landtmann, Dr. Karl Lueger-Ring 4, Vienna

in the presence of:

- **Ali Israilov**, the father of the victim
- **Nadja Lorenz and Andreas Schüller**, the lawyers of the family of the victim
- **Andrei Babitsky**, journalist,
- **Sasha Koulaeva** (International Federation for Human Rights, FIDH) and
- **Joachim Frank** (Austrian Helsinki Association for Human Rights).

For more information on the trial, see [special file on the ISRAILOV case on the FIDH website](#).

<http://www.fidh.org/Israilov-Case-Court-in-Vienna-to-reach-verdict-on>