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Unofficial Places of Detention in the Chechen Republic

**Background Information Memorandum to
Dick Marty, rapporteur of the Committee on
Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of
Europe on alleged secret detention centres in
Council of Europe member states**

**International Helsinki Federation
for Human Rights (IHF)**

12 May 2006

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Executive Summary

At the beginning of the second Chechen war, numerous unofficial places of detention existed throughout Chechnya, many of them in the form of earth pits. The biggest such facility was located on the territory of the headquarters of the federal army in Khankala, close to Grozny. The existence of these unofficial places of detention was denied at the time. Later, in February 2001, a large mass grave was found close to Khankala, containing more than fifty dead bodies, many bearing signs of execution. Most of the bodies that were identified belonged to persons who were last seen in the custody of Russian troops or police.

Now, in the seventh year of the armed conflict, many illegal places of detention still exist in the Chechen Republic. Most of them are run by forces operating under Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov (so-called "Kadyrovtsy"). One reason for this parallel penitentiary system is to obtain "confessions" and "testimonies" through cruel beatings and torture, which subsequently can lead to the official detention and persecution of the respective persons. A high number of such criminal cases are fabricated.

In the village Tsentoroy (Khosi-Yurt), where the "Kadyrovtsy" headquarters is located, there are at least two illegal prisons functioning.

- One consists of concrete bunkers or boxes, and kidnapped relatives of armed Chechen fighters - parents, wives, brothers or even children - are held there as hostages.
- The second prison in Tsentoroy is evidently located in the yard - or in immediate vicinity - of the house of Ramzan Kadyrov.

Some of the other illegal prison run by the "Kadyrovtsy" are:

- the premises of the "anti-terrorist centre" (ATC) in Gudermes
- the premises of the "anti-terrorist centre" (ATC) in Geldagan (Kurchaloevsky district)
- the premises of the "anti-terrorist center" (ATC) in Urus-Martan: in the buildings of the former RAIPO in the city center and in the building that used to belong to the regional Selkhoztehnika association opposite school nr 7
- the "anti-terrorist centre" in the western suburb of Avtury (Shalinsky district)
- the buildings occupied by the so-called "oil regiment" in Grozny's Yuzhnaya street
- the base of a subdivision of the "oil regiment" in the Dzhalka village in the Gudermes region
- another "oil regiment" house, being opposite the house of their commander Adam Delimkhanov
- the base of PPSM-2 in Grozny next to the building of the 'RTS Microrayon'
- the buildings of a technical college in the 12th district of the Oktyabrski region of Grozny
- in Achkhoy-Martan

The battalions "Vostok" ("East") and "Zapad" ("West"), being part of the 42nd Mechanized Infantry Division of the Russian Defense Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), also use their premises as illegal prisons.

- premises of the battalion "Vostok" in Gudermes, on the territory of the former company PMK-6 (till spring 2006, "Vostok" had an additional premise in a food factory)
- premises of the battalion "Zapad" in the Staropromyslovski district of Grozny (till spring 2006 "Zapad" was based in the Transmash Factory); plus the territory of a subunit of them in the south-eastern part of Urus-Martan

The summary special groups (SSG) of the FSB of the Russian Federation, located in different districts of the republic, also run unlawful places of detention, inter alia in the following places:

- the premises of a former private enterprise in the outskirts of Katyr-Yurt village (Achkhoy-Martan district)
- a mill near the village Starye Atagi (Groznsky rural district)

The premises of a former food factory between the villages of Avtury and Geldagan also serve as a secret prison, run by a federal structure, but it is not clear which structure.

The main military base of the Russian army in Chechnya, Khankala, seems not any longer to be the major place, where illegally persons are kept.

Even official places for detention, like the temporary detention facility (IVS) at the republican and district level, are used as illegal places of detention, where the presence of several of its detainees are not properly registered. Kidnapped people are kept there, and beatings, torture and extrajudicial executions are perpetrated there as well. The legalization of ORB-2 - the Operational-Search Bureau of the North Caucasus Operative Department of the Chief Department of the Russian Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Southern Federal District, and opening of several ORB-2 sub-offices is disputed, as it opposes Russian federal law. There are confirmed reports that kidnapped persons are still being brought there and that it is still a place where torture is used systematically.

The “Kadyrovtsy”

“Kadyrovtsy” is a term used by the population of Chechnya – as well as members of the groups themselves - for members of the former so-called *Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic* headed by Ramzan Kadyrov, son of the late President Akhmat Kadyrov, and now Chechen Prime Minister. This is the group now most feared by Chechnya’s civilian population, more than federal servicemen. This Security Service was initially created as a personal security guard of the Moscow-appointed head of the Chechen administration, Akhmat Kadyrov, without any legal status, and gradually grew into a powerful military formation. It was commanded from the beginning by Ramzan Kadyrov. Some of its sub-units were legalized in 2004 and 2005 to become parts of different structures of the Chechen Ministry of Internal Affairs. After Akhmat Kadyrov was killed in a bomb blast in May 2004, the Security Service was formally liquidated and most of the rest of its units integrated into the system of Russian law enforcement agencies and security authorities. Gradually, all structures of the Chechen Ministry of Internal Affairs are falling under control of “Kadyrovtsy”.

The total strength of the “Kadyrovtsy”, which now include the “Second Road Patrol Regiment of the Police (PPSM-2)”, the “oil regiment” and the “anti-terrorist centers” (ATC), is not disclosed. The estimations vary from 4 to 12 thousand people, although the last figure is probably an overestimation. Some are completely legalized into special structures of the Interior Ministry of Chechnya while others continue to exist in the form of paramilitary formations. By spring 2006, another reorganization of the “Kadyrovtsy”-structures started. Allegedly, the “anti-terrorist centers” (ATCs) are going to be closed down, and two new battalions will be formed: the battalions "Yug" ("South") and "Sever" ("North"). The announcement is that these two new battalions will be directly subordinated to the federal Ministry of Interior.

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1. Introduction

At the beginning of the second Chechen war, numerous unofficial places of detention existed throughout Chechnya, many of them in the form of earth pits, sometimes covered with tents. The biggest such facility was located on the territory of the headquarters of the federal army in Khankala, close to Grozny. The existence of these unofficial places of detention was denied at the time. Later, in February 2001, a large mass grave was found close to Khankala, containing more than fifty dead bodies, many bearing signs of execution. Most of the bodies that were identified belonged to persons who were last seen in the custody of Russian troops or police.¹

Now, in the seventh year of the armed conflict, illegal places of detention still exist. They are located inside military camps of the federal army, including ethnic Chechen pro-Russian troops, as well as elsewhere. While many facilities within this parallel penitentiary system are well-equipped (including for torture), it certainly remains outside the legal sphere.²

The most known unofficial places of detention in the Chechen Republic for its inhabitants, and more and more also of those from Ingushetia and other North Caucasian republics are the Russian military base in Khankala and the Tsentoroy village (also called Khosi-Yurt, in Kurchaloy district), where the headquarters of the troops of Ramzan Kadyrov (so-called “Kadyrovtsy”) are stationed

The “Kadyrovtsy”

“Kadyrovtsy” and “SB” are terms used by the population of Chechnya – as well as members of the groups themselves - for members of the former so-called *Security Service of the President of the Chechen Republic* headed by Ramzan Kadyrov, son of the late President Akhmad Kadyrov, and now Chechen Prime Minister.³ This is the group now most feared by Chechnya’s civilian population, more

¹ The investigation into the fate of the individuals discovered in the grave has yet to be finalized and no person has so far been held accountable for the killings.

In a 6 December 2005 letter, Vladimir V. Ustinov, Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, writes to PACE Rapporteur Rudolf Bindig the following: “In this case, 25 bodies were identified, 184 witnesses were questioned concerning 123 persons having disappeared without trace or been abducted in various circumstances from different localities in the republic. The preliminary criminal case investigation has been suspended while work is carried out to gather further information on republic citizens having disappeared without trace or having been abducted during the period 1.1.2001 to 24.2.2001.”

See: PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, “Human rights violations in the Chechen Republic: the Committee of Ministers’ responsibility vis-à-vis the Assembly’s concerns” (Report, Doc. 10774, 21 December 2005, Rapporteur: Mr Rudolf Bindig, Germany, Socialist Group)

² The UN Human Rights Committee has held that the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment under the ICCPR requires States to, among other things, hold detainees only in officially-recognized places of detention, and for the names of the detainees and their location of detention “to be kept in registers readily available to those concerned, including relatives and friends.” The draft *UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance* states that “no one shall be held in secret detention”.

See: Association for the Prevention of Torture (apt), “Incommunicado, unacknowledged, and secret detention under international law”, at http://www.apt.ch/secret_detention/Secret_Detention_APT.pdf.

See also: Association for the Prevention of Torture (apt), “Secret detention, transfer, and interrogation of terrorism suspects: grave violations of international law by democratic nations?”

at http://www.apt.ch/secret_detention/sd1.shtml

³ Ramzan Kadyrov was assigned Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic in March 2006, after a serious car crash of the Prime Minister Abramov in Moscow and his following withdrawal of this post. Before that he had been deputy prime minister, responsible for the security bloc.

than federal servicemen. This Security Service was initially created as a personal security guard of the Moscow-appointed head of the Chechen administration, Akhmat Kadyrov, without any legal status, and gradually grew into a powerful military formation. It was commanded from the beginning by Ramzan Kadyrov. Some of its sub-units were legalized in 2004 and 2005 to become parts of different structures of the Chechen Ministry of Internal Affairs. After Akhmat Kadyrov was killed in a bomb blast in May 2004, the Security Service was formally liquidated and most of the rest of its units integrated into the system of Russian law enforcement agencies and security authorities. Gradually, all structures of the Chechen Ministry of Internal Affairs are falling under control of “Kadyrovtsy”.

The total strength of the “Kadyrovtsy”, which now include the “Second Road Patrol Regiment of the Police (PPSM-2)”⁴, the “oil regiment” and the “anti-terrorist centers” (ATC), is not disclosed. The estimations vary from 4 to 12 thousand people, although the last figure is probably an overestimation.⁵ Some are completely legalized into special structures of the Interior Ministry of Chechnya while others continue to exist in the form of paramilitary formations. Most members are former separatist fighters, who had been wounded, captured or disappointed in the war and tried to use amnesties as a way to return to peaceful life. Instead, they were offered to join the “Kadyrovtsy”, often under torture or threats to eliminate their relatives, and fighters who refused to join became victims of extra-judicial executions. Additionally, a significant number of members of these groups are people with criminal past. In some cases a whole detachment is made up of people who had committed criminal offence and economic crimes in the period between wars.⁶ While some victims and their relatives are willing to elaborate on the violation of their rights by federal servicemen, they are far more reluctant to talk about the crimes of “Kadyrovtsy”.

Particularly feared are the *“Second Road Patrol Regiment of the Police (PPSM-2), named after Akhmat Kadyrov”*, and the so-called *“Oil Regiment”*, headed by Adam Delimkhanov, Akhmat Kadyrov’s former bodyguard, the main subdivision within the system of extra-departmental organs of the Interior Ministry of the Chechen Republic, comprising around 1,5 to 2 thousand persons by autumn 2005. Formally, PPSM-2 is aimed at ensuring security in the streets, while the “oil regiment’s” official duties comprise the guarding of oil refineries, pipe-lines, oil products and other industrial sites. In reality, however, both structures are involved in so-called “anti-terrorist operations”, accompanied by grave human rights violations.

Additionally, in 2005 so-called *“Anti-Terrorist Centers” (ATC)* were created in several Chechen districts. While so far they are not formally part of any power or law enforcement structure, they are also controlled by Ramzan Kadyrov.

Moreover, the people that emerged from these groups are now in charge of most of the police departments, including the Minister for Interior Ruslan Alkhanov himself, who was closely connected to Akhmed Kadyrov.

⁴ Another name for this unit is Road Patrol Regiment named after Akhmat Kadyrov. However, its employees prefer to call themselves “Kadyrov’s spetsnaz” (special purpose forces).

⁵ It is impossible to give more accurate information on the number of people that are part of these structures.

⁶ Thus, the “Kadyrovtsy” group in the village of Gikalovsky is under the command of Sultan Patsaev, who used to be a fighter in the Gelaev group. After the end of the first Chechen campaign he robbed oil wells and participated in kidnapping people for ransom.

By spring 2006, another (the third already) reorganization of the “Kadyrovtsy”-structures started. According to information that is available, the "anti-terror centers" (ATCs) are going to be closed down, and the persons belonging to this unit will most likely be transferred to the patrolling-duty regiments of the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Chechnya. Out of this, two new battalions will be formed: the battalions "Yug" ("South") and "Sever" ("North"). On 2 May 2006, Ramzan Kadyrov, stated in a press conference that this process is finished, that these two battalions will be part of the 46th brigade of the federal Ministry of Interior troops. According to this information, the battalion “Yug” will be headed by Muslim Ilyasov⁷, until now the leader of the “anti-terrorist centres” ATCs of the Gudermes region, will comprise 500 persons, and be based in the Vedenovskiy district. The battalion “Sever”, allegedly to be headed by Alimbek Delimkhanov, will comprise 700 persons and will be based in Grozny.⁸

Special case: ORB-2

The ORB-2 - the Operational-Search Bureau of the North Caucasus Operative Department of the Chief Department of the Russian Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Southern Federal District – occupying the former building of Staropromyslovskiy RUBOP in front of the government buildings in Grozny, was legalized in the meantime and is now under the responsibility of the anti-terrorism department of the Russian Federation’s Interior Ministry. And in the meantime there are several sub-offices of ORB-2 opened in Chechnya. However, this legalization is disputed, as it opposes Russian federal law. (see Appendix 1) There are confirmed reports that unlawfully detained (kidnapped) persons from all over Chechnya are still being brought there and that it is still a place where torture is used systematically.

Parallel penitentiary system

The parallel penitentiary system is used as a tool by the official law enforcement system, as frequently the official detention is subsequent to the “confessions” and “testimonies” obtained through cruel beatings and torture in the illegal places of detention. Closely connected to the use of torture is that a high number of criminal cases are fabricated.

One may illustrate how official law enforcement authorities take over people from kidnapers, should the kidnapers be “Kadyrovtsy”, is what happened in the Chechen village of Noviye Atagi in September 2005.

- On 14-18 September 2005, “Kadyrovtsy” carried out an operation in the **village of Noviye Atagi**. As a result of the operation seven men were kidnapped, the head of village administration illegally detained and beaten, the local bread factory burnt down. The residents of Noviye Atagi organized a protest and blocked the main thoroughfare running through the village. Several days later four of the kidnapped were released after severe torture; three others were transferred to the local police station. The fact of the enforced disappearance was registered by the police, and the public prosecutor confirmed, that on 15 September a criminal case had been instigated in accordance with article 127 (“illegal detention”). However, the

⁷ Muslim Ilyasov is a former rebel, who switched sides and went over to the federal forces together with Aslambek Yasuev and Artur Akhmadov - the latter now heads the OMON of the Republic of Chechnya.

⁸ See for example <http://lenta.ru/articles/2006/05/02/elimination/>

ROVD policemen felt free to receive the detainees from the kidnappers, a group of “Kadyrovtsy” and legalized their arrest on 18 September, since by that time the detainees had already ‘confided’ in committing the crimes. The “Kadyrovtsy” have not received any sanctions for having perpetrated the kidnappings.

Moreover, a large group of “Kadyrovtsy” visited the local mosque during the Friday prayer. Their commander announced in front of a large crowd that he personally and his men would continue to use the same methods and threatened everyone, who dared to protest. The journalists of state television “Vainakh” made a report about the kidnapping of people in Novye Atagi, but the film was expropriated and destroyed by the head of local police, Said-Selim Degiev. According to Degiev, he acted on the order of the minister of internal affairs, Ruslan Alkhanov.⁹

⁹ Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Center “Demos”, IHF, FIDH and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, In a Climate of Fear, January 2006.

2. Unofficial places of detention: Tsentoroy (Khosi-Yurt) – the headquarters of the “Kadyrovtsy”

According to testimonies of both, the inhabitants of Tsentoroy and people who managed to get free from imprisonment, there are at least two illegal prisons functioning in Tsentoroy (Khosi-Yurt).¹⁰

One consists of concrete bunkers or boxes, and kidnapped relatives, mostly parents, wives, brothers or even children of armed fighters are held there as hostages. The father and the wife of the rebel leader Doku Umarov were kept there as well as relatives of ordinary fighters. When relatives of the kidnapped persons – through unofficial sources - find out the place of their detention, they are mostly prohibited from passing on either food or clothing. If the prisoners are released, they are threatened with unavoidable persecution in case they tell where and under what conditions they were kept.

- On 30 November 2004, in the village of Oiskhara (Novogroznensky), Gudermes District of Chechnya, unknown armed men, most probably, “Kadyrov’s men” and Shali ROVD officers assigned to them, burned the house of Vakhid Murdashev’s (born in 1955) parents at 38, Karl Marx St., and abducted his mother, **Asmart Murdasheva** (born in 1935), his sister **Tamara Murdasheva** (born in 1958), and his wife **Zoya Dankayeva** (born in 1958). Vakhid Murdashev held a high official position in Aslan Maskhadov’s administration in the period between the two wars and fought on the side of Ichkeria in the second war.

In the evening of the 30 November, Zoya Dankayeva and Tamara Murdasheva were visiting with Vakhid Murdashev’s other sister, Lisa Mushkayeva, and left around 8.30 to spend the night in the house of Vakhid’s, Tamara’s, and Lisa’s mother, Asmart Murdasheva, where Tamara also lived. At 9.10, neighbors came running to Lisa’s house, saying that her mother’s house was on fire. Some time later, Lisa came to her mother’s house and saw that it was on fire, surrounded by men in military uniforms. Some of the men threw grenades in the fire. Explosions were heard. It turned out later that arsonists included members of the Shali ROVD, known for their close relations with the Chechen President’s Security Service. No one responded to Lisa’s cries “Where is my mother?” One of the arsonists was videofilming the fire.

Lisa Mushkayeva’s relatives and friends found out, using their connections in the law enforcement, that her mother, together with her sister and her sister-in-law, were first taken to Kadyrovs’ ancestral village of Tsentoroy, Kurchaloy District of Chechnya, and then transported to Gudermes. On 10 January, an unknown man in his forties drove to Lisa Mushkayeva’s house in a car. He told Lisa that her family members were in the hands of security services and recommended that for her own safety she should refrain from actively looking for them. When he heard from Lisa that her 70-year old mother had poor tolerance of cold, and her elder sister had thyroid cancer for many years and needed specific medications,

¹⁰ Note: Attempts to identify all these prisons and secrets places of detention are based on stories told by those who were kept there. However, the testimonies of these people concern the conditions of detention. These people cannot tell precisely where they were taken and to which place they were brought. In most of the cases, a mask or a bag is put over their heads. They are not allowed to raise their heads and are sometimes thrown in the boot of the car and then taken to the place where they are further detained.

the man assured her that the detainees are treated well, and had been given warm camouflage jackets.

Lisa Mushkayeva and other relatives of the kidnapped women were convinced that the kidnapping was perpetrated by “Kadyrov’s men” to force Vakhid Murdashev to surrender. Indeed, on 25 April, 2005, six weeks after Vakhid Murdashev was captured in the village of Tolstoy-Yurt in March during the operation to kill Aslan Maskhadov, Asmart Murdasheva, Tamara Murdasheva and Zoya Dankayeva were released. Lisa Mushkayeva described their experience in the following words: “The house, it turns out, was burned in front of them watching! Then they expected to be shot. They were brought to the woods. Lined up. [The kidnappers] jumped their guns. They were videofilming everything. But they did not [shoot]. They threw [the women] in a damp pit. Huge rats were running around. Kept them for three days and nights. No one approached them during those three days and nights. Then they were transported - well, you know where. They were left there in the basement. It was very cold and damp there. They did not see daylight for five months. And they were not allowed to wash themselves. When they returned home, their undershirts came flaking off them. My sister cried all the time [in detention] – she could not stand hearing people screaming from torture in other cells...”¹¹

- On 3 and 28 December 2004, **seven relatives of Aslan Maskhadov** were taken by force from their homes and driven to an unknown location, including his sister, Buchu Abdulkadyrova, (born 1937) and his brothers, Lecha Maskhadov (born 1936) and Lema Maskhadov (born 1950). All the circumstances of the kidnapping and the witnesses’ testimony point to the fact that the crime was committed by “Kadyrovtsy”. The prosecutor’s office started criminal proceedings to investigate the fact of kidnapping. However, there was no information on the fate of the kidnapped for over more than six months. On 31 May 2005, almost three months after the death of A. Maskhadov, all the kidnapped relatives were released. They had been kept together in one concrete chamber (3 by 3 meters in size) without any furniture and with a small barred window in the ceiling. They had to sit or sleep on the floor, were not given any cots or blankets, were not allowed to bath, and were taken out of the bunkers only to use the toilet. They got only bread and water. Only sometimes the drinking water was hot, but never was tea or sugar provided. They weren’t accused of anything, there were no interrogations, and they were taken outside only to let them go to the toilet.

The criminal investigation of the kidnapping of the seven Maskhadov relatives was suspended “due to the impossibility of identifying persons to be called to account as defendants”, despite the claim of Deputy Prosecutor General of Russian Federation, N.I. Shepel on 27 July 2005 during a Council of Europe initiated conference in Kislovodsk that “Maskhadov’s relatives were released as a result of a special operation organized by the governmental forces”.¹²

The second prison in Tsentoroy is evidently located in the yard - or in immediate vicinity - of the house of Ramzan Kadyrov, since recently prime minister of the Chechen Republic but also the “strong man” with the control of the (official and unofficial) security apparatus of the Chechen Republic. This

¹¹ “Demos” Center and Human Rights Center “Memorial”, “The Problem of Torture and Cruel and Degrading Treatment in Chechnya and the Northern Caucasus. The legal framework for the “counterterrorist operation” in the Chechen Republic”, as part of the shadow report of an ad-hoc coalition of Russian Human Rights NGOs to the UN Committee Against Torture CAT, March 2006

¹² IHF, Human Rights in the OSCE Region. Report 2006 (Events of 2005), 2 May 2006, see at: www.ihf-hr.org

prison is located in a building with at least two storeys. In the basement of this house there are the inmates' cells as well as the interrogation and torture rooms. On the upper storey there is a gym. Some detainees were held in the upper storey - probably because it was overcrowded in the basement at the time - and were handcuffed to the central heating pipes, sometimes for several days. Some witnesses claim to have seen Ramzan Kadyrov several times, while he was exercising there.

A third prison, but possibly identical with the one described above as detention place for relatives of fighters, is allegedly located on the south-eastern edge of the village, right from the asphalted road that leads towards the mountain range. Some sort of military subdivision is stationed behind the barrier with the booth, if you turn to the left. The local residents call this place the Kadyrov base. According to several testimonies from people within the power structures, there are arranged cells for keeping unlawfully detained people, including women.¹³

On 1 May 2006, when the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) wanted to visit Tsentoroy (Khosi-Yurt), because "it had grounds for believing that one or more facilities that could be used as unofficial places of detention were located there", it was denied access. Only the next day, with assurances of President Alkhanov, they were allowed to visit the village, which of course gave the "Kadyrovtsy" sufficient time to remove all illegally held persons as well as other traces of the illegal detention and torture of persons.

- At night on 30 July 2004, at about 2 a.m. armed "Kadyrovtsy" broke into the house of Kagermanov family, residents of Chaikina Street, in the city of Gudermes and abducted 55 year old **Adam Kagermanov**. In August 2005 Kagermanov was released. He had been kept in the Tsentoroy prison of the "Kadyrovtsy".¹⁴
- On 2 August 2004, in the Mikenskaya village of the Naursky district of Chechnya, unidentified persons in camouflage uniform speaking Chechen kidnapped **Zaira Magomadova** (born 1981), a resident of 26 Shkolnaya Street. The military servicemen explained that they were the personnel of the republican security service - 'Kadyrovtsy', that her daughter was taken to Khosi-Yurt (Tsentoroy) and promised to release her the following day.¹⁵
- On 28 February 2006, **Ali Techiev** (born 1985), living in Belgatoy (Shalinsky District), turned to the Human Rights Center „Memorial“ in Grozny to lodge a complaint about law enforcement bodys. Techiev is currently in custody at the SIZO Nr. 20/1 in Grozny, charged with article 222 pt. 2 (illegal acquisition, transfer, sale, storage or bearing of weapons and ammunition) and article 209 pt. 2 (banditry) of the criminal code of the Russian Federation.

From Techiev's complaint follows that he had been twice illegally detained by officials from the power structures of the Russian Federation. In April 2004, he was abducted from the house of his uncle in the village Chasav-Yurt (Dagestan), where he was staying as a guest. The second time, on 28 November 2005, he was taken away from his own house in the village

¹³ Left of the asphalted road that leads from the village to the south, is another place, where Kadyrovtsy and their "farm" are stationed. But apparently, they don't keep people there.

¹⁴ Human Rights Center "Memorial", Center "Demos", IHF, FIDH and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, In a Climate of Fear, January 2006.

¹⁵ Human Rights Center "Memorial", From the Conflict Zone, 17.03.2005. See at: www.memo.ru/hotpoints

Belgatoy. The first time, Techiev was kept 3 days in the village Tsentroroy (Khosi-Yurt), from where he was moved to Grozny where he had to spend two days in a basement, and then was moved to the town Shali and put into official custody. During the whole time, Techiev was exposed to illicit inquiry and investigation methods, including the use of refined torture as well as psychological methods of pressure, right up to threatening him with physical punishments. This way they forced him to confess that he was a member of an illegal armed gang. On 30 September 2005, he was found guilty by the Oktyabrsky District Court in Grozny of having violated article 208 pt. 2 (“participation in criminal groups”) of the criminal code of the Russian Federation, and sentenced to three years in prison – on probation.

On 28 November 2005, Techiev was arrested a second time. At dawn, armed and masked men broke into his house in the village Belgatoy. They beat his father Umar Techiev and his brother Usman Techiev, and put Ali Techiev in chains. Then, they brought him to the Chernorechenskyye dachi district in Grozny, where they wanted to execute him. At that very moment, someone called one of the men on his cell phone. After the phone call, the servicemen changed their plan and brought Techiev to the location of the ORB-2 in Grozny. Techiev was put into a cell and questioned, using torture. He was beaten on his head, legs, kidneys and other body parts with plastic bottles filled with sand. They demanded that Techiev should confess crimes he did not commit. The beatings and torture continued for a couple of days.

As a result, Techiev now has problems with his vision, suffers from strong and constant pain in his chest and nosebleeding. Besides that he has two broken ribs, damaged kidneys and liver.

Techiev writes in his statement that he is regularly taken from his custody to ORB-2, where he is exposed to beatings and threatened with physical punishments against himself and his relatives. In connection with this he asks to defend him from the arbitrariness of the officials from the power structures and to help his relatives to defend their legal rights: *„My situation is completely hopeless. My butchers tell me that they only subordinate themselves to Moscow, and that no one will help me. There is no use in counting on the help of a lawyer, judges, to hope for the legitimacy of the public prosecutor, not even God will be able to help. I am certain that you are my last hope. This is a cry for help of a tormented body and a crushed soul. You! And only you can help me. For the sake of all that is holy. For the sake of humanity. For the sake of God. Help me! If I should be guilty of something, I am ready to stand trial. But against lawlessness, sadism and barbaric torture I am helpless. Help me! Save me! Me and my relatives. All the hope is on you.“*¹⁶

¹⁶ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

3. Other unofficial places of detention run by "Kadyrovtsy"

Usually, when the "Kadyrovtsy" - be it the so-called "oil regiment", the anti-terrorist center or anything else¹⁷ - kidnap or unlawfully detain people, they first bring them to the premises of their troops. Neither the relatives nor lawyers receive information about the whereabouts of the abducted persons. Thus, illegal methods of investigation can be applied over lengthy periods of time.

There is an illegal prison in the premises of the "anti-terrorist centre" (ATC) in Gudermes, which is stationed along the Rostov-Baku road on the western edge of Gudermes, next to the municipal hospital number 1. There are cells arranged for holding illegally detained persons in the anti-terrorist center. Another notorious place are the premises of the "anti-terrorist centre" (ATC) in the Kurchaloevsky district.¹⁸

The "oil regiment" is also known for illegally detaining and keeping people and for torturing them. Officially, they are based in the city of Grozny, where they occupy a few buildings on the Yuzhnaya street. They have secret cells for prisoners. A subdivision is also stationed in the Dzhalka village in the Gudermes region. A separate base is being built on the eastern border of the village. Up to now, some members of the oil regiment are stationed opposite the house of their commander Adam Delimkhanov, who is also living in the eastern part of the village. Fellow-villagers and persons that were once kept in these prisons, state that there are cells in which people are detained. Moreover, there is proof that the oil regiment kept imprisoned people in earth pits and trenches within Dzhalka, but where precisely, is more difficult to say.

The PPSM-2 is stationed next to the building of the 'RTS Microrayon', at the street on the way to the airport.

There are also illegal prisons in the district centers such as Kurchaloy, Urus-Martan, Achkhoy-Martan etc. In Urus-Martan, for instance, the members of the "anti-terrorist center" (ATC) are located in two separate places: in the buildings of the former RAIPO in the city center and in the building that used to belong to the regional Selkhoztehnika association opposite school nr 7 (north-eastern part of the village). The "anti-terrorist centre" in the western suburb of Avtury is also a place, where persons are kept in illegal custody.

One armed grouping, directly subordinated to Ramzan Kadyrov, that also unlawfully keeps prisoners and kidnaped persons, is located in the in the 12th district of the Oktyabrski region of Grozny, in the buildings of the former professional technical college number 4.

¹⁷ To be mentioned is also the "Baysorovtsy". After members of this group attacked members of OMON that were guarding the Christmas tree in Grozny resulting in the death of several people, this subdivision was again removed from the so-called local power structures. There is no new information available as to which department they now belong to.

¹⁸ Until some time ago, the commandor of this ATC subunit was Lyoma Salmanov, whose cruelty earned him notoriety. Many of the people who were arrested by Salmanovs men died after being tortured, and Salmanov personally lead most of the abductions and extra-judicial executions. Obviously because of the many complaints against Salmanov, Ramzan Kadyrov dismissed him from his post as commander of the local ATC, lowered his rank to a platoon commander, and replaced him with an inhabitant of Geldagan, Anzor, who used to command a subunit of the ATC in his native village.

- On 4 July 2004 at around 4 a.m, **Adlan Ilaev** (b.1987), **Inver Ilaev** (b.1982), **Rustam Ilaev** (b.1974), and **Kazbek Bataev** (b.1983) have been abducted. from house of Inver Ilaev, in the village of Assinovskaia by about twenty soldiers in camouflage uniforms who came in the APCs and spoke Russian without accent. Unofficial sources told the family that the operation had been carried out by “GRU (military intelligence) unit no. 12”, stationed in Achkhoy-Martan.¹⁹
- On 19 November 2004 at 2 a.m., at 17 Kirov Street, 22-year-old **Zaur Khadisov** was illegally detained by a group of armed masked camouflaged persons wearing black spotted uniform. Zaur’s father managed to follow the column of cars with soldiers (four VAZ-21099, a steel-coloured Niva and a Jeep Landcruiser) to the ‘RTS Microrayon’, where power structures are located (PPSM-2, OMON).²⁰
- On 4 May 2005 at about 11 pm, in the Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny, unidentified armed people in camouflage kidnapped a woman named **Seda (the name is changed)**, born 1966. They forcefully drove her from home and beat up Seda’s mother who tried to resist the kidnapping of her daughter. On 5 May at about 2 pm, Seda returned home. According to the relatives she was kept in a private house which was rented by the head of Staropromyslovsky police Delimkhanov (brother-in-law of Ramzan Kadyrov). Delimkhanov himself was not at home, but unidentified men (8-9 people, according to relatives of the victim these were Demilkhanov’s guards) put her in the cellar and subjected her to sexual violence. The woman was strongly beaten. The same night the personnel of local police received information about the kidnapping; this information was documented in the Ministry of Internal Affairs crimes register. The relatives of the victim do not know whether a criminal case has been instigated into the rape, however, the relatives demanded redress from the head of Staropromyslovsky police. Delimkhanov said that the rapist had already been severely punished but he did not say who this man was. Such an answer did not satisfy the relatives of the victim and they turned to the local Elders for help. Apart from physical and moral abuse the family was looted: the kidnappers stole gold valuables, 11.500 rubles and 100 USD. They also stole golden things, which the woman had on her. After Elders’ interference the stolen items were returned.²¹
- At the night of 5 May 2005, in the village Oktyabrskoye, Groznenskiy (Selskiy) district, the servicemen of the Chechen law enforcement agencies abducted three local residents, **brothers Chersiyevs: Adam** (b.1952), **Kureish** (b.1954), and **Movla** (b.1958). Their relatives traced the abductors to the so-called oil regiment. After the picketing of the regiment, the relatives received the confirmation that the three brothers were kept in the territory of the oil regiment as hostages, since of one of the members of this family participated in the armed resistance. The condition of their release was the fighter giving himself up. As of 27 June 2005, the brothers Chersiyevs were not released.²²

¹⁹ IHF, Chechnya – Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings in Sernovodsk and Other Villages of the Sunzha District of Chechnya. July-August 2004, 1 June 2005.

²⁰ IHF, Chechnya: More of the Same. Extrajudicial Killings, Enforced ‘Disappearances’, Illegal Arrests, Torture, 30 March 2005

²¹ Ibidem

²² Prague Watchdog, “Katayama residents hold protest rally against "oil regiment" in Grozny”, 14 May 2005. <http://www.watchdog.cz/?show=000000-000008-000001-000382&lang=1>

- In the early hours of 11 May 2005, unknown armed men, three wearing masks, reportedly entered the Saidulaev's house in the Oktyabrskiy district of Groznyi and took away **Kharon Saidulaev** (b.1951) and his son, **Apti Saidulaev**. On 12 May, relatives managed to get information which indicated that Kharon Saidulaev and Apti Saidulaev were being held by the "Kadyrovtsy" in the town of Argun. The reason given for the detention was reportedly Kharon Saidulaev's alleged links with armed opposition groups in Chechnya, and Apti Saidulaev had been taken together with his father allegedly in order to exert psychological pressure on the father to provide information.²³
- On 17 September 2005, "Kadyrovtsy" kidnapped **Ruslan Yandarkaev**, aged 16, from his house in Zavodskoj district of Grozny. Yandarkaev was delivered to the Oktyabrsky district, the building of a technical training college school in the 12th area, an illegal place of detention run by an unknown "Kadyrovtsy" group, most likely the "anti-terrorist center" of this area. There were several other seriously beaten young men, too. They told Ruslan that they had been kept there for several days and had not been given food throughout the detainment. Ruslan was accused of hiding weapon at the wasteground before the war in spite of the fact that before the war he was only 10 years old. Yandarkaev and two other teenagers were brought to the wasteground and ordered to surrender the weapon. The father of Ruslan Yandarkaev found out what his son was accused of and volunteered to dig the area of the alleged arms cache. "Kadyrovtsy" showed him the place and he dug a big hole but there was no weapon in there. The "Kadyrovtsy" demanded a grenade launcher and one 'shajtan' (Chechen fighter) in return for his son. Magomed managed to negotiate that he would pay 50,000 rubles for his son. He borrowed money and paid the ransom. Now he is selling his property in order to return debt and leave Chechnya. The fate of the rest of the teenagers, who were kept by "Kadyrovtsy" together with Ruslan remains unknown.²⁴
- On 20 October 2005, in the Trotskoye village (Sunzha district, Ingushetia), unknown armed men wearing masks and camouflage uniforms who introduced themselves as employees of the Chechen Ministry of Internal Affairs abducted **Omar Atuev**. His wife and his sister-in-law were later informed by an acquaintance that, in the first days after his abduction, Omar would have been detained in a "Kadyrovtsy" camp in Achkhoy-Martan in Chechnya, which is not a legal place of detention. From there, he would have been taken away in an unknown direction. Omar's relatives have not heard from him since then. Omar Atuev is the representative for the Northern Caucasus of the Russian State Duma member Viktor Cherepkov, who does not exclude that the abduction was carried out by the "Kadyrovtsy". Omar Atuev is widely respected in the Chechen Republic because of his efforts to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict and his refusal to join forces with either Maskhadov or Kadyrov. On 7 November 2005, the Sunzha district state prosecutor's office opened investigations into this case.²⁵

²³ Human Rights Center "Memorial", Chronicle of Violence, May 2005, at: www.memo.ru/hotpoints; Amnesty International, 1 July 2005, EUR 46/029/2005

²⁴ Human Rights Center "Memorial", Center "Demos", IHF, FIDH and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, In a Climate of Fear, January 2006

²⁵ PACE Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, "Human rights violations in the Chechen Republic: the Committee of Ministers' responsibility vis-à-vis the Assembly's concerns" (Report, Doc. 10774, 21 December 2005, Rapporteur: Mr Rudolf Bindig, Germany, Socialist Group)

- On 15 January 2006 at about 3:00 in the morning, two inhabitants of the village Kurchaloy, **Ismail Eldarov (born 1969)**, living in Nuradilov Street, and **Ruslan Jusupov (born 1973)**, living in Kurchaloevskaja Street were kidnapped by a group of armed servicemen, who were presumably officials from the anti-terrorist center (ATC). Ismail Eldarov is disabled since his childhood. One leg is injured and he can walk only with the help of a crutch.

The servicemen arrived in a 4-doors „VAZ-2131 Niva“ car. In both cases, the servicemen did not say who they were or why they took them away. However, already on the same day their relatives were able to find out their whereabouts. As it turned out, they were brought to a subunit of the ATC in the village of Geldagan. As it turned out, the two men were accused of dealing with narcotics.²⁶

- On 17 January 2006, at 3:00 in the morning, five inhabitants of the village Kurchaloy were kidnapped: **Aminat Duschaeva (born 1975)**, living in Novaya Street; **Ali Isaev (28 years old)**; **Magomed Isaev**; **Bujvasar Dushaev**, living in Kurchaloevskaya Street; and **Dzhabrail Dushaev**, living in Kurchaloevskaya Street. The perpetrators presumably were officials from the local anti-terrorist center (ATC).

The first person to be kidnapped was Aminat Dushaeva. The ATC officials, arriving in two „VAZ“ cars (VAZ-21099 and VAZ-21015), entered the courtyard of the Dushaev's family, who live on the western outskirts of the village in Novaya street, breaking through the fence and into the house, and when the owner of the house, Idris Dushaev, asked them what they wanted, they told him they came for his daughter Aminat. They did not show him any documents, nor did they explain why they wanted to take her away. Aminat was taken to a car that drove off in an unknown direction.

About half an hour later, the same servicemen came to a neighbouring street and broke into the house of the Isaev family. In exactly the same way, not explaining the reasons and not introducing themselves, they took away Ali Isaev. His older brother, Magomed, who came to his defense, was also taken away. Both brothers were pushed into the trunk of one of the cars and taken away in an unknown direction. The relatives of the Isaev brothers noticed that one person was already lying in the trunk.

Later on, it turned out that during that night two more people had been abducted in the village of Kurchaloy - the two brothers Bujvasar and Zelimchan Dushaev, both living in Kurchaloevskaya street.

In the morning, the relatives of the abducted persons undertook their own searches and found out that all the kidnapped persons were at the ATC base in the city of Gudermes (the commander of this ATC subunit is Muslim Ilyasov).

It was, however, not possible, to find out the reasons why the officials from the Gudermes ATC took interest in these people. Aminat Dushaev, a single mother, works in a polyclinic and raises her son. Magomed Isaev is a well-known doctor in his district, working in the district hospital of Kurchaloy His brother Ali has a private taxi service. It has to be noted that one relative of the Dushaev brothers, a participant of the armed resistance movement, had been killed two years ago, but the Dushaevs never had any contact with him (this is confirmed by relatives).

²⁶ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

The same day, at 11:00, Aminat Dushaev returned home. She really had been at the ATC in Gudermes. In the evening, the Isaev brothers were released. The Dushaev brothers were released only on 19 January in the evening.²⁷

- On 21 February 2006, **Ruslan Said-Alievich Makaev**, living in Grozny on Tatarskaya Street Nr. 24, applied to the Grozny office of the Human Rights Center „Memorial“ for help in the form of a written statement. He asked to defend his honor, freedom and dignity against law enforcement officers. From his statement follows that law enforcement officers broke into his house and carried out unsanctioned searches during which they tore down fences, doors, and locks. All of this happened on the pretext of accusing him being drug dealer.

On 20 February 2006 at about 12:00, two cars with armed and camouflaged men arrived at Makaev's house. They did not introduce themselves, took Makaev's passport and forced him into one of the cars. According to his own words, Makaev was brought to the location of the oil regiment on Staropromyslovsky Shosse in Grozny. He was brought into a room, handcuffed, insulted and beaten during interrogation, while being asked to name people dealing with drugs. He was hit with cudgels on his legs, his back, and, most of the time, his buttocks. He was questioned by young men. This fact, more than anything else, had a negative effective on the moral condition of Makaev because he was a lot older than they were. He tried to put them to shame, telling them the following: „What are you doing? Russian federal troops never beat me, and you are Chechens!“ After these words, Makaev was undressed, brought outside and hooked up to some building with his handcuffs. He was kept in such a state, in the cold, for about 30 minutes.

Makaev was released the same day. As a result of the physical harassment, his heart and kidneys started to ache. Fearing new provocations from the law enforcement, Makaev is afraid of sleeping at home. At the end of his statement, Makaev writes that he is a hard worker, and that he never had anything to do with the criminal world. Like all law-respecting people, he welcomes the fight against drugs in the Chechen Republic that was announced at the beginning of the year, but thinks that some non-conscientious members of the law enforcement organs of the republic, under the cover of the fight against drugs, work arbitrarily against the civil population, including himself. Therefore he asked to defend his rights.²⁸

- In the night from 10 to 11 March 2006, servicemen of the republican power structure kidnapped two residents in the village of Michurin (Urus-Martan region), **Ramzan Elmurzaev (born 1966)** and **Said-Emin Abubakarov (born 1982)**, as well as **Visit Magomadov (born 1985)**, a native of Itum-Kale, temporarily living in the former warehouse of the state farm 'Michurina', who had arrived a few days earlier.

The armed servicemen, speaking Chechen, arrived in several cars of the type VAZ-2112 in the village. The armed men did not identify themselves, forced the three men without explanation into the trunk of their cars, and drove them away. They did not tell the relatives, where these three individuals were being taken.

The next day, on 11 March, the relatives of the detained persons undertook active steps to ascertain their whereabouts. From unofficial sources they were told that the kidnappers were service men of the so-called oil regiment.

²⁷ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

²⁸ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

On 12 March, the three illegally detained persons were released. During their detention Elmurzaev, Abubakarov and Magomadov had been severely beaten with bludgeons and tortured with electric current. They do not know where they were kept. All three were so much shaken by what had happened that they refused to give any comments.²⁹

- On 14 March 2006 , two inhabitants of the village of Avtur, **Bekhan Makhmatkhadzhiev (19 years old)**, living on Internatsionalnaya street, and **Nurdi Bamataliev (30 years old)** were unlawfully detained by servicemen of anti-terror center (ATC) that is situated in that area.

On that day, together with another inhabitant of the village, they were driving on their tractors to the forest for collecting wood. On the way back, they were stopped by a group of armed men, identifying themselves as fighters and demanding to get food and clothes for them. They gave them half an hour to meet their demands and they kept the third person as a hostage. After 30 minutes, Bekhan Makhmatkhadzhiev and Nurdi Bamataliev returned as they were told. They brought everything the armed men had asked for. But this time, the “fighters” identified themselves as service men of the anti-terror center and accused the inhabitants of Avtur of helping the fighters of the Chechen resistance. As proof of this, they referred to the food and clothes that Bekhan Makhmatkhadzhiev and Nurdi Bamataliev had just brought for them. After they had taken the detainees to the base where they were stationed, the service men of the anti-terror center interrogated them and also tortured them during the interrogation.

On the second day after their detention, their relatives were able to have them released. Nurdi Bamataliev suffered so much from the beatings and torture, that he had to be hospitalized. Nevertheless, his relatives and the relatives of Bekhan Makhmatkhadzhiev refused to file a complaint to the Prosecutors office against the actions of the service men.

- On 1 April 2006, **Said-Husein Amaev (born 1978)** was kidnapped by servicemen of law enforcement agencies. He was temporarily living with his mother in Grozny in the building of the former student residence on Chaikovskaya street 24, where now one of the centres for temporary accommodation for refugees (TACs) is located.

The kidnapping took place in the cafe “Zhanetta”, situated next to the former student residence, where he was lunching with his friend, a certain Yusupov. According to witnesses, armed men in camouflage outfits arrived in several VAZ 21099 cars and one Niva car, rushed into the bar, and forced the customers and the staff to stand against the wall with their hands held high. Then they took Said-Husein Amaev and Yusupov and left. According to witnesses, they announced, before leaving, that the detainees would be taken to the oil regiment.

The relatives of the kidnapped persons immediately turned to the law enforcement agencies, but no-one could tell them at that time nor the following days where they were taken and what they were accused of.

On 5 April, Said-Husein returned home. He said that he had been kept in the village of Dzhalka in the Gudermes region, the territory of the commander of the oil regiment Adam Delimkhanov. He was put in a dug-out at the outskirts of the settlement and was beaten, while he was urged to confess that he took part in military activities on behalf of the Chechen

²⁹ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

resistance. According to his relatives, his kidneys are damaged and he now needs serious treatment. He was only released after he had agreed to cooperate with the federal forces.³⁰

- On 13 April 2006, armed men who spoke Chechen abducted **Beslan Turpulkhanov (born 1977)** from his home on the Novatorov street in Grozny. His relatives immediately went for help to the police. Unofficial sources gave them more information on where Beslan Turpulkhanov could be kept.

A man, whose name they refused to tell, told them he was being kept on the base of the oil regiment on Vostochnaya street in Grozny. They received indirect confirmation of this fact on 17 April. One of the servicemen of this subdivision stated that the detained person already confessed to some crimes and that he would not be released any time soon.

As of 19 April, Beslan Turpulkhanov was still not released. His relatives did not have any more additional information on his concrete whereabouts.³¹

- On 18 April 2006, servicemen of law enforcement agencies, calling themselves fighters of the regiment “Groza” (storm), who were presumably belonging to the anti-terror center (ATC) of the region, kidnapped **Ilman Umaev (approximately born in 1974), his wife Madina Umaeva (nearly 20 years old), his father Eisa Umaev (approximately born in 1954) and his nephew Anzor Umaev (born around 1972-1973)** from their house of in the village of Sayasan (Nozhai-Yurto region).³²

Around 5 am, a group of armed and camouflaged persons arrived in several cars at the house of Ilman Umaev, located at the edge of the village. Ilman's nephew, Anzor Umaev, was spending the night there. They rushed into the house and shot in the leg of Anzor, who was sleeping at the time. After he had heard the shots, a neighbour drove to Ilman's father, Eisa Umaev, who lived in the center of the village and took him to the house of his son. By that time, the armed men had already taken Ilman, his wife Madina and the injured Anzor, whom they had dragged over the ground. When they saw Eisa, who is sick and not young, they started to seriously beat him, until his face bled and afterwards they also took him along.

Around 16-16.30, service men of the PPSM-2, which is located in Gudermes, told the relatives of Umaev that the dead bodies of Anzor and Ilman were found on the crossroad of the roads leading to Nozhai-Yurt, Sayasan and Beno. Local residents who were driving by, saw how an

³⁰ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

³¹ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

³² *Ilman Umaev* fought on the side of the separatists from 1999-2003. In 2003, his older brother was taken out of his home by unidentified armed men in masks who spoke Chechen and disappeared without a trace. Ilman, who was the last son in the family, gave up the armed struggle and swore on the Koran that he would never take part in it again. He was accepted as a member of the security forces of Akhmad Kadyrov, but did not stay long and soon left. He has three little children, the youngest of which was born in the summer of 2005.

The father of Ilman, *Eisa Umaev*, according to his relatives, had never been involved in any armed activities on what side whatsoever.

Anzor Umaev fought on the side of the separatists during the first Chechen war. He became an invalid as a result of an injury, in which he lost an eye. The right side of his body was partially paralyzed, he limped with his right leg and had no feeling in his right arm. He also suffered from temporary loss of his mind. In 2001 or 2002, when he was on the run, he made it to Azerbaijan and was planning to go to Turkey for treatment. However, he was arrested and convicted for taking part in the armed resistance. In 2004, after three years of imprisonment in one of the correctionary prisons in Siberia, he was given amnesty and returned to Chechnya. For most of the time, he was living with his father in the Shelkovski district and sometimes went to his father's relatives in Sayasan, where he had arrived not long before the incident took place.

operational photoshoot was taking place: the killed had been dressed in military uniforms and were photographed as if they were recently neutralized active fighters.³³

According to the inhabitants of Sayasan, there had recently been no incidents in the village that could have been the reason for taking these special measures.

According to information of the relatives, Eisa Umaev and Ilman's wife Madina were being kept in the village of Beno. In the night of 18 to 19 April, Madina, was released. His father Eisa was still being kept in the village of Nozhai-Yurt, when his relatives received an anonymous phone call telling them to bury Ilman and Anzor Umaev outside the cemetery and without the traditional burial rituals. If they would not do so, they were told on the phone, they would also kill their father. On 19 April in the afternoon, also Eisa was released and returned home to Sayasan. After the village iman had visited the district administration in Nozhai-Yurt, the relatives were given permission for burial, but without the traditional and necessary mourning ceremonies.³⁴

³³ Indeed, the news agency, Ria Novosti, informed on the detention of three participants of the armed resistance in the village of Sayasan, who applied armed resistance against police officers, and it was stated that two fighters were killed when they tried to escape.

³⁴ Based on material from the Human Rights Center "Memorial", Nazran office.

4. Unofficial places of detention in military run premises: "Vostok" battalion in Gudermes and "Zapad" battalion in Grozny

Apart from the “Kadyrovtsy” there are two Russian armed formations consisting mainly of ethnic Chechens. These battalions are part of the 42nd Mechanized Infantry Division of the Russian Defense Ministry’s Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), these are the Battalions “Vostok” (“East”)³⁵ - with around 470 persons - and “Zapad” (“West”) - numbering around 400 persons - whose task is to conduct military combat against the Chechen resistance. A certain percentage of soldiers serving in these divisions are not ethnic Chechens, but fighters assigned from other regions of Russia. The core of the “Vostok” Battalion (“yamadaevtsy”), commanded by Sulim Yamadaev, consists of former fighters from the “Second Battalion of the Ichkeria National Guards”, who changed sides in the beginning of the second war and joined the federal forces. They are known to have participated in the abductions of people. The core of the “Zapad” Battalion (“Kakievtsy), headed by Said-Magomed Kakiev, is built of Chechens who opposed the idea of independence from Russia and supported the federal forces already before the first war.³⁶

The premises of the battalion “Vostok” are based in Gudermes, on the territory of the former company PMK-6³⁷ on the eastern verge of Gudermes. According to residents of the city and the region, people abducted from different places of the republic are still being brought here. Till spring 2006 they were also in the food factory.³⁸

³⁵ The leader of the Vostok battalion, Sulim Yamadaev, led the second battalion of the national guards of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in the interwar period. In autumn 1999, he rejected the command of Aslan Maskhadov and surrendered to the federal forces. He and his brother Ruslan were appointed deputies of the military commander of the republic. At the same time, their third brother, Dzhabrail, was leading the "special Chechen battalion". In March 2003, Dzhabrail Yamadaev was blown up by fighters in the village of Dyshne-Vedeno, and Sulim Yamadaev was charged with leading this battalion, on the basis of which the Vostok battalion was formed in the autumn of 2004.

The battalion, including contract soldiers from Russian regions, representing at least one third of the total number. They are called "Yamadaevtsy" by the inhabitants of Chechnya and the surrounding North Caucasian republics.

On 7 February 2006, an explosion destroyed the building in which they were located and killed at least 13 persons. The separatists claimed responsibility, but the official version states that gas cylinders were the cause of the explosion.

Sulim Yamadaev, as well as his brothers Dzhabrail (posthumous) and Ruslan received the "Hero of Russia" award. Ruslan Yamadaev is also the leader of the regional branch of United Russia and a member of the State Duma of the RF. Their other brother, Badrudin, was arrested in 2001 and convicted in 2003 for the attempted murder of the deputy of the main sanitary inspectorate of Moscow.

³⁶ Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Center “Demos”, IHF, FIDH and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, In a Climate of Fear, January 2006.

³⁷ Previously the so-called Vega battalion, which does not longer exist, was located at this place. When the “Kadyrovtsy” were formed, the different division were given symbolic, menacing, self-confirming names. When someone nowadays states that a person was taken to the Vega-base, the “anti-terror center” (ATC) in Gudermes is meant

To reach the base from the center of Gudermes, you first have to pass the railroad crossing, turn right and without turning to the opposite side of the village, drive ahead for another 200 metres. The railroad is at your right and at your left you can see the PMK-6.

³⁸ In the spring of 2006, by order of Ramzan Kadyrov but against his wish, members of the Vostok battalion were forced to leave the grounds of the food factory. The so-called oil regiment secured the execution of the PMs decision.

The Zapad battalion was formed in the beginning of 2005. It was stationed in the Transmash Factory in the Staropromyslovski district of Grozny. By spring 2006, it was relocated to the center of Grozny, in the building on the right side of to the Staropromyslovski road when one drives from the center of Grozny, not far from the so-called governmental complex.

One of the subdivisions of the Zapad battalion was formed out of the 42nd division of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation after the incidents in the village of Poshin-Chu in August-September 2005. On 22 April 2006, the territory that formerly belonged to the regional PMK in the south-eastern part of Urus-Martan was still the place where they were stationed.

- At night of 5-6 May 2005, the “Kadyrovtsy” kidnapped **Khamid Akuev**, born 1981, a resident of the town of Gudermes, Mosdokstaka street. His mother Akueva Roza tried to establish the whereabouts of her son and turned to the security service of Ahmad Kadyrov. She was told that her son was in Gudermes at the base of battalion “Vega”, located on the western outskirts of Gudermes near hospital #1 at the highway Rostov-Baku. Last time she received the same information two weeks after the kidnapping. She did not believe the “Kadyrovtsy” and went to the militia station of Kurchaloy, where she was shown the pictures of eight persons, who were presented as fighters killed in an armed clash that took place on 9 May at about 4 p.m. at the outskirts of the village of Alleroi, Kurchaloy district of Chechnya took place between a small group of fighters and the “Kadyrovtsy”. In one of them she recognized her son Khamid.³⁹
- In the afternoon of 4 June 2005, in the village of Borozdinovskaya (Shelkovsky district), a unit of the “Vostok” Battalion wearing gray police and camouflage uniform carried out a special operation. They broke into the houses, brought all the men to the local school, ordered them to lie on the ground with their faces down and to cover heads with their shirts almost until 10 p.m. All men, including the elderly, the handicapped and the adolescents, were severely beaten with gun butts and kicked with boots. From what the security services shouted out, the villagers understood that they were accused of killing the forester and of the attempt on the life of the head of local administration. The names of eleven men were read out from a list. Those men were then forcefully taken away and since then are “disappeared”. Several houses were burnt down with one old man being burnt alive inside his house. The local residents recognized in one of the officers a fighter of the “Vostok” Battalion, who is also the leader of the local branch of “United Russia” party. This could also be verified by the prosecutor’s office. One of the “Vostok” officers received a conditional sentence “for exceeding his official powers”. The fate of the “disappeared” persons remains unknown.⁴⁰
- On 25 June 2005 at dawn, **Amhat Asuev** was kidnapped by unknown armed people in camouflage uniforms and masks, most probably representatives of the power structures. Asuev is resident of the village of Ukrech-Kiloy in the Shatoi district of Chechnya.

At about 5 a.m., two armed persons in masks and dressed in camouflage uniforms came into the house of Asuev family. First they went to the room where Aslanbek Asuev (born 1970) slept. Aslanbek works as a district policeman of the Shatoi Regional Police Department. A

³⁹ Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Center “Demos”, IHF, FIDH and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, In a Climate of Fear, January 2006

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

submachine gun was held to his head, and he was ordered not to move. They took his revolver and demanded that he should also give them his submachine gun. They spoke Chechen. Aslanbek showed them where his submachine gun was lying and asked them not to shoot in the house, where his parents, his brother, his uncle, and two pregnant women and children were sleeping.

At first, Aslanbek thought they were armed rebels, but judging their manners and speech he soon understood that they were representatives of the Chechen security structures, most probably so-called “Kadyrovtsy”. The unknown persons told him that they knew that he is a policeman and once again warned him not to make any unnecessary moves.

Soon another masked man entered the house. He went to the room where Aslanbek’s brother, Amhat Asuev, was sleeping. Before waking him up, they also pointed a submachine gun at his head. Aslanbek understood that the unknown persons actually wanted to take away his brother, and knowing that he is a policeman and might be armed, they first neutralized him. As he did not want to passively watch his brother being kidnapped, he started to offend the unknown assailants. In response, they started shooting randomly. The shooting woke up the rest of the family. Aslanbek’s mother and sister rushed into his room. They were weeping and crying, and when the unknown men started to remove both Aslanbek and Amhat, their mother approached the unknown men, begging them to let her sons go. They started shooting in front of her, discharging a whole bullet clip.

The noise attracted the neighbors from nearby houses, but they could not interfere in the situation since the kidnappers shot non-stop in the air and on the sides. They threw Aslanbek down near the gates and dragged Amhat into one of the cars - there were two cars, a VAZ-2107 and a VAZ-2116, a hatch back - and drove him towards Shatoi.

After a few hours a joint group from the Ministry of Interior and the Prosecutors Office came to the house of the Asuevs. They examined the place of the incident, gathered the fired cartridges and interviewed the relatives. Already before the visit of the group, Aslanbek Asuev had gone to Grozny, and approached his connections in the law enforcement structures about finding his brother. The Asuevs did not officially address the law enforcement structures.

In a conversation with the representatives of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, the head of the Shatoi Regional Police Department, Said-Ali Kurashev, said that Amhat Asuev has been taken to Gudermes by officers of the Anti-terrorist Center, subordinated to the Vice-Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov.

On June 28, Amhat Asuev, in an extremely severe condition, was thrown out of a car at the side of the road in the Michurin settlement in Grozny. This street leads to the military base in Khankala.

From the interview with Aslanbek Asuev, brother of the kidnapped:

“He was all over bruised and obviously beaten up, bandaged with some kind of a rag, and barefoot. Friends of ours picked him up, so that I would not see him in such a condition. He did hardly breathe when they found him. (...) Now he is staying with some relatives of ours. He still can hardly walk, and if, then in small steps. There is not one unhurt spot on his body. They first beat him with construction spades, breaking four spades on him. Then they beat him with rubber hoses and the butts of revolvers. They told him, that they have information about him, that he is allegedly an amir of the Shatoi jamaat, that he used to walk along the village with a “Stetchkin” revolver and with a grenade, that he traded in arms, and in trotyl (an

explosive material). They demanded that he confesses everything, and asked him, where he has stored the arms, and how many people are subordinated to him. During all these days they only once gave him a few sips of water. No food at all was given to him. He did not sign anything. They beat him non-stop for 24 hours. Then they did not touch him any more – in such a bad condition was he (...).I would like him to get some medical treatment, and then to send him somewhere else in Russia, or somewhere abroad. I am scared for him, he is young, his wife is young and they are any moment expecting their second child. I have all my life honestly earned my bread. In the last 5 years I have worked as a district policeman. But whom shall I now protect, when I can't protect my own family? I feel ashamed to put on my uniform now. Everyone is shouting 'Where is the police?' But has anyone the slightest respect for the police now?"⁴¹

- In early October 2005, “**Ali**”⁴², a 49-year old resident of Grozny, was released after having spent ten months in illegal detention in the basement of the “Kadyrovtsy” headquarters in Gudermes. Ali was detained along with his wife and another female relative by unidentified servicemen and first brought to one of Kadyrovtsy’s unofficial detention facilities in Tsentoroy. His wife was released after a couple of days, but Ali was kept there for about a week. He was severely tortured, including with electricity, and witnessed the torture and interrogation of numerous other individuals during his stay. Afterwards he was transferred to Gudermes, and stayed there until his release in the beginning of October, apparently in connection with the beginning of Ramadan. Some of the individuals he met during his detention were killed or “disappeared”. Ali claims that on one occasion he personally witnessed Ramzan Kadyrov torturing people: rotating the handle of electric shock machine and “warming up” his mules by inflicting heavy punches on the victims.

The background for the detention and torture of Ali were the activities of his son, “Khamzat”. Khamzat joined the Ichkerian fighters, but was captured in 2003 by the “Kadyrovtsy”, tortured and threatened. As a result, Khamzat joined the ranks of the “Kadyrovtsy” and became a unit commander in his home village in order to reveal and eliminate his former colleagues. Khamzat was looking for ways to escape the “Kadyrovtsy”. After an accident in the fall of 2004, Khamzat was severely injured. When attempting to seek medical assistance in clinics in Southern Russia, he was apprehended and questioned by the FSB. Apparently scared by these encounters, and the prospect of conflicts with his superiors among “Kadyrovtsy”, Khamzat used the opportunity to leave Chechnya and apply for asylum in a European country. His former colleagues apparently assumed that Khamzat had returned to the Ichkerian fighters, and consequently detained his family. However, the SB continued to hold his father even after having established his current whereabouts in Western Europe, in order to make him return, warn and punish the family for Khamzat’s “desertion”. Ali was released without documents, and is afraid that he may be detained again in the future.⁴³

- On 3 October 2005, unknown armed men, presumably officers of the law enforcement bodies kidnapped **Bislan Yunusov** from his home in the village of Ilashan-Yurt, Gudermes district. The armed men entered the house without presenting any documents or offering any explanations, took Bislan and drove away. On the next day, the same people returned and

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² “Ali” is not his real name. The name was changed for security reasons.

⁴³ Ibidem.

offered his father, Magomed Yunusov, to bring him to his son. Magomed agreed. Shortly after they had left, Bislán came home, and said that he had been sitting in the car during this second visit of those people to their home. He was forced to leave the car as soon as they had taken his father.

Relatives tried to find out by themselves where Magomed was. According to local people, they managed to establish that men from the Chechen power structures, headed by Ramzan Kadyrov, had been involved in the kidnapping of Magomed, and that he was being kept in Gudermes. The members of the Yunusov family are afraid to discuss the subject. Magomed remained “disappeared”.⁴⁴

- On 17 October 2005 at about 6.00 pm, in the village of Sernovodsk, Sunzha district, unknown armed men in camouflage uniforms, presumably officers of the law enforcement structures, kidnapped **Rustam Idrisov and Rizvan Kushaev** from their homes. The two men live close to each another in Sovkhoskaya street.

The armed men arrived in the village in two grey UAZ cars. One of the two groups burst into Idrisov’s home, the other in Kushaev’s. Without identifying themselves or offering any explanation, the men grabbed the two young men and started dragging them toward the cars. The noise attracted the attention of some neighbors. They came out of their homes and crowded around the cars, trying to prevent the young men from being kidnapped. In response, the armed men shot into the air and broke through the circle of people. Idrisov and Kushaev were forced into the cars, which then drove to the center of the village and, according to witnesses who followed them, drove into the compound of the Regional Department for Internal Affairs of the Sunzha district.

When the relatives of the kidnapped approached this office, they were told the unit itself had nothing to do with the kidnappings. These officials refused to provide them with the name of the institution, which was conducting this so-called “special operation” on their territory. However, according to one of the officers - who asked the relatives not to quote his name - the young men were held under suspicion of involvement in the murder of the district policeman, Lom Ali Khildikharoev, which had taken place four days earlier.

On October 19, Rustam Idrisov, returned home. His relatives, fearful of new repressions, refused to comment on his kidnapping, but one of the relatives said that on the day of the kidnapping, the two young men had been taken to the forest, interrogated about Khildikharoev’s murder, beaten and tortured. They were also asked who in the village was a vakhabite. Then, they were taken to Gudermes.

Idrisov was eventually released through the influence of his personal contacts. Kushaev’s fate is unknown.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Based on material from the Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Nazran office.

⁴⁵ Human Rights Center “Memorial”, Center “Demos”, IHF, FIDH and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, In a Climate of Fear, January 2006.

5. Unofficial places of detention run by the Federal Security Service (FSB)

The summary special groups (SSG) of the FSB of the Russian Federation, located in different districts of the republic, also run unlawful places of detention. For example, in the Achkhoy-Martan district, based in the premises of a former private enterprise in the outskirts of Katyr-Yurt village, it is servicemen of this group that act as “death squads”. In the Groznensky rural district they use a mill near the village Starve Atagi.⁴⁶ Both these places are of bad renown among Chechens. Suspected fighters are brought there, tortured and summarily executed. Local human rights NGOs are not aware of any cases where suspects, who had been brought there, were put to court trial afterwards, but they are aware of many extrajudicial executions perpetrated by the servicemen of these troops.

Kidnapping victims are also taken to the former food factory between the villages of Avtury and Geldagan, run by federal structures. The anti-terror center of the Shalinski region is now stationed there.

- On 4 July 2004 at about 5 a.m., a group of camouflaged, armed and masked men burst into the family home of **Aslan Tazurkaev**, 3 Ordzhonikidze Street, in the village of Novye Atagi and abducted him. Tazurkaev’s relatives followed the abductors’ vehicles and saw them entering a military base near the village, located at an abandoned grain milling complex known to locals as “the mill”, where the Federal Security Service and military intelligence units are based along with regular Ministry of Defense troops. At the relatives’ request, the prosecutor’s office in Shali opened a criminal investigation into Tazurkaev’s abduction (**case no. 36084**). On 1 December 2004, the case was handed over to the military prosecutor’s office attached to military unit no. 20116, based in Shali district.⁴⁷
- On 23 September 2004, **Aslan Inalov** (b. 1977) “disappeared”. Through unofficial contacts in the local branch of Federal Security Service in Magas, Ingushetia, Inalov’s relatives found out that on the night of 23 September 2004, Inalov had been detained on his way to Sernovodsk at a mobile checkpoint, and that the soldiers had then delivered him to the main Kavkaz checkpoint on the main road from Ingushetia to Chechnya. The relatives also managed to learn that for the first two months after his detention, Inalov was held by the Federal Security Service in Magas, and then transferred to the Federal Security Service in Groznyi on 12 November 2004.⁴⁸
- On 22 March 2005, **Osman Bogatyrev**, resident of Ingushetia, disappeared in Nalchik, capital of Kabardino-Balkaria. Via unofficial channels, the family got the information that he was arrested by members of law enforcement structures and was detained in the FSB premises in Nalchik. The lawyer hired by relatives stated that Osman Bogatyrev was subjected to ill-

⁴⁶ It is possible that other groups are located there too that are subordinated to other departments. But apparently, everything there is still led by FSB-officials.

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Worse Than a War: “Disappearances” in Chechnya – a Crime Against Humanity*, March 2005. See at: <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/chechnya0305/>

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

treatment – he was beaten several times - and torture.⁴⁹

- On 11 March 2006 at about 4:30, the resident of the village Sernovodsk (Sunzha district), **Rustam Umarov (born 1980)**, living in M. Mazaev street Nr. 3, was kidnapped by a group of armed and masked men, who presumably were officials from the FSB and ROVD of the Sunzha district in Ingushetia.

Several armed and masked servicemen entered Umarov's house by breaking up the entrance door. Before that, some streets next to their house had been sealed off and the house itself had been blocked. At that time, all the members of the Umarov family were asleep. The servicemen forced Rustam out of bed and onto the floor. His mother, Petimat Akublatova, tried to find out, who was taking him away and why, but one of the masked men threw the woman against the wall. Petimat hit the wall and fell down, and when she got up from the floor and moved towards the kidnapers, the same serviceman threw her again against the wall. Another man asked a couple of times, who else was in the house. Petimat answered that no other person was in the house (her minor-aged daughter was also in the house). Satisfied with the answer, the masked servicemen took Rustam out to the street, put him in one of their cars and drove away towards Ingushetia. Petimat managed to notice up to forty servicemen and a couple of cars of different brands in the courtyard.

Relatives of Rustam started to search for him and went to the district police station ROVD of the Sunzha district of the Chechen Republic. The officer on duty told them that Rustam had been detained by members of the Ingush FSB. On 12 March, his relatives could find out that Rustam Umarov was being held in custody at the FSB building in Ordzhonikidzevskaya (Sunzha district, Ingushetia), and that no one was allowed to see him. When they appealed to the office of the public prosecutor of the Sunzha district of Ingushetia, one of the officials told them, that during the interrogation Umarov was being beaten and tortured. According to one version he was suspected to have been involved in an attack on an OMON officer from Tolyatti, which had taken place on 10 March in Ordzhonikidzevskaya.⁵⁰

After his relatives had paid 2.000 USD as a ransom, Rustam was released still on 12 March. He had been severely beaten up, tortured with electroshock, and several ribs were broken. At the moment, he is in a hospital in Ingushetia. His relatives do not want to name his exact whereabouts, fearing that he might again be arrested again.⁵¹

- On 6 April 2006, **Vakha Soltakhanov (born 1950)** who is living in the Groznenskaya street in the village Tsotsin-Yurt (Kurchaloevski region), was abducted by armed servicemen of the so-called anti-terror center (ATC) led by Alvi Usmanov, presumably in cooperation with the

⁴⁹ IHF, Ingushetia / North Ossetia / Kabardino Balkaria: The Spread of Chechnya-type Human Rights Violations, 2 June 2005.

⁵⁰ According to Petimat Akbulatova, on 10 March, her son really went to Ordzhonikidzevskaya to buy a new cell phone. After having bought the cell phone, he wanted to visit the local market. One of his acquaintances, whom he had met in the village, warned him that a lot of servicemen were at the market looking for someone and checking everybody's documents. Rustam decided not to go to the market and went home in the car of his acquaintance. At the checkpoint between Ordzhonikidzevskaya and Sernovodsk, during a check of his documents, OMON officers suggested that Umarov come to their little station, in order to run his passport information through the computer. One of the checkpoint officers, while looking through his passport, asked Rustam if he was related to the field commander Dokka Umarov. As an answer to this question Rustam showed him his ID from his work as a member of the firebrigade. After that he got his documents back and successfully returned home.

⁵¹ Based on material from the Human Rights Center "Memorial", Nazran office.

FSB.

After they had entered his house, the armed men did not identify themselves. Although unable to show any official search warrant, they searched the house. Afterwards, they took Vakha Soltakhanov outside and drove him away in an unknown direction. They also took his dark-blue GAZ-3110 automobile and stole the most valuable items they could find in the house.

The following day, the inhabitants of Tsotsin-Yurt noticed the car of Vakha Soltakhanov in their village. The car was driven by an official of the ATC of the Kurchaloevski region. After they had received this information, the relatives of Vakha went to talk to the leadership of this unit, including their commander Alvi Usmanov, and asked them where Vakha was being kept. They were told that the FSB was in charge of the arrest, but the commander also demanded that the wife of Vakha would come to him within two days. If she refused, so he stressed, he would not release her husband. Therefore, Vakha's wife, as well as his daughter Khadizhat and his mother-in-law went to speak Alvi Usmanov the following day.

In the morning of 10 April, Alvi Usmanov came up with a new ultimatum, that before the evening of 11 April, another daughter of Vakha Soltakhanov, Khavani, who is the widow of a killed Arab fighter, had to come to him. Although living in Azerbaijan⁵² at the time, she showed up the following day. However, the unlawfully detained Vakha Soltakhanov was still not released. No accusations have been made towards him. Presumably, he is still being kept in the building of the FSB of the Kurchaloevski region.⁵³

⁵² In the night of 10 July 2005, officials of the ATC of the Kurchaloevski region kidnapped Khavani Soltakhanova from her parents' house. Two days later she was brought home by Alvi Usmanov himself. After this incident, she left the Russian Federation.

⁵³ Based on material from the Human Rights Center "Memorial", Nazran office.

6. Russian military base in Khankala

In the first years of the second Chechen war, between 2000 and 2002, many cases of “disappeared” and extra-legally executed persons were referred to the main military base of the Russian army in Chechnya, Khankala. In the meantime, Khankala seems not any longer to be the major place, where illegally persons are kept.

- On 10 June 2005, unknown armed persons in masks and camouflage uniforms, most probably representatives of the enforcement structures, kidnapped **Ruslan Agmirzaev**, inhabitant of the city of Argun, living on Voroshilov Street.

Ruslan was in the yard of his house together with his 9-month old daughter, when armed persons in masks approached the house in two cars, one being a UAZ-469 and the other a VAZ 21099. Without explaining anything, they forced him into one of the cars and drove him away in an unknown direction. Ruslan’s wife witnessed the kidnapping and tried to prevent it, but was roughly pushed aside.

Ruslan is the youngest son in the Agmirzaev family. One of his brothers, Salman Agmirzaev (born 1977), was taken away after a “cleanup” operation in the village of Vedeno, where he visited some acquaintances. He was brought to the main military base in Chechnya, Khankala, where he was tortured for 7 hours. Later, he was thrown out of a car in the village Berdykel without any documents. From then on, he did not live at home, hiding from possible passport check-up operations. Nevertheless he got into another “clean-up” operation and was killed together with two other young people on a neighboring street.

After his death, the older brother, Aslan Agmirzaev, told his mother that he would be leaving the house, and asked his brother not to look after him, and not to believe any announcements about his death. Nevertheless, the younger brother, Ruslan, who lived at that time in a tent camp in Ingushetia, tried to find him. He got in touch with a group of armed rebels. During one of his meetings with them, Ruslan told them of how he had found a bag with batteries for a wireless station and rusted bullets, while working in his garden. Not knowing who had put it there, and fearing suspicions of officials, Ruslan and his mother, Ljudmila Agmirzaeva, buried the things in the garden again. Some time after this conversation, the group of armed rebels, with whom Ruslan was in touch, were detained. One of them told about Ruslan and his finding, and in the winter of 2004, Chechen police dug out the bag with the rusted bullets from the garden and detained Ruslan.

After keeping him for two days, he was released, and a criminal case under article 208 (“participation in bandit groups”) and article 222 (“unlawful keeping of arms”) was initiated against him. In the course of the investigation, the accusations under article 208 were removed, and a court hearing under article 222 was appointed. According to the lawyer, the charges have been easy to refute during the court procedure, as in fact no arms had been found, but only rusted bullets. The court hearing was postponed several times by the Judge. Finally, a hearing was appointed for May 23, 2005.

However, on May 21, Ruslan was kidnapped from his house by armed people in camouflage uniforms, who had approached his house in several silver VAZ-2109 cars. The kidnappers left Ruslan’s passport at home. His mother addressed the regional police station (ROVD), and was

accepted by the examining magistrate Lugansky, who accepted to take Ruslan's passport, but never told the mother, what search measures they were going to undertake.

After 13 days, the strongly battered Ruslan, with traces of torture on his body, was thrown out of a car near the quarry in a suburb of Khankala. He got home with great difficulties. His mother went again to the to the regional police station, in order to get back the passport. The investigator Lugansky returned the passport, but only after she had signed a declaration that her son Ruslan "was not kidnapped and tortured", and that he had "traveled for some time to the Naursky village and returned home on his own". On June 10, investigator Lugansky came to see Ruslan at home, asking him to sign the documents he had brought. Ruslan signed.

One hour after the investigator's visit Ruslan was kidnapped again. Since then there has been no trace of him.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Human Rights Center "Memorial", Center "Demos", IHF, FIDH and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, In a Climate of Fear, January 2006.

7. Conclusion

The existence of numerous places of illegal detention is a novel trait of the present penitentiary system of Chechnya. Filtration camps, *zindan* pits, metal storage containers put into pits and filled with water, underground pedestrian street-crossings used as illegal prisons – everything of this kind has existed for quite some time now.

But nowadays even in official temporary detention facilities (IVS) at the republican and district level - and it took a lot of time to give them proper jurisdiction under the Ministry of Interior – people are sometimes illegally held, that is without registration and notification of lawyer and relatives. Beatings, torture and extrajudicial executions are perpetrated there as well.

Appendix 1: Background information about ORB-2⁵⁵

In addition to a strict regime prison colony (in Chernokozovo, Naurski district), an investigative prisons (SIZO-1), situated in Grozny, and temporary holding facilities (IVS) of the Regional police departments (ROVD), all established by law, there are also ‘quasi-legal’ prisons in the Chechen Republic, apart from the illegal places mentioned in the main part of the report. These are the holding facilities in the operational-search bureaus (ORB). The best known of such prisons is located in ORB-2 of the North Caucasus Operative Department, Chief Department of the Federal Ministry of Interior in the Southern Federal District (ORB-2),⁵⁶ occupying the former building of Staropromyslovsky RUBOP. Most officers in ORB-2 are residents of Chechnya, but some police have been brought on temporary missions from other Russian regions.

ORB's job is detective work and search, not investigation. Holding detainees and arrested individuals in ORB facilities (i.e. having an IVS) is against the Federal Law on Custody of Suspects and Accused of Crimes, the Law on Police, and the RF Government's Decrees.

Nevertheless, since ORB-2 was set up in 2002, it continuously detains suspects and accused. As pointed out in Russia's report, there is a SIZO in Grozny, and ROVD have their holding facilities - IVS - so there is no legitimate reason to transfer people from SIZO to “ORB-2 IVS”; such a transfer can be permitted only where there is a need for daily transportation of suspects and accused between different facilities, where such transportation is impossible. The idea behind ORB-2 is to pressure detainees, i.e. by torturing them, to force confessions or other “needed” evidence.

People are regularly transported from SIZO to ORB-2, where they are usually held for more than 10 days - whereas ten days is the maximum allowed period that a detainee under investigation may be held outside SIZO for the purpose of investigative actions. In ORB-2, detainees are interrogated by prosecutorial investigators, and defense lawyers report that ORB-2 officers are always present at interrogations. When asked by lawyers to leave the room, officers rudely decline to do so. Some lawyers have reported being threatened by ORB-2 officers who reminded them of the five cases over the recent years of lawyers being kidnapped. According to defense lawyers, detainees' answers during interrogations sound like repetition of a text learned by heart, while ORB-2 officers closely follow every word said by the interrogated suspects. ORB-2 staff prevent defendants from meeting with their lawyers one-on-one. Brought back from ORB-2 to SIZO, defendants usually tell their lawyers that during interrogations they could not say anything except the version imposed on them by ORB-2 staff under threat of violence; the detainees stayed in ORB-2 following the interrogations, and the officers had every opportunity to pressure them.

⁵⁵ “Demos” Center and Human Rights Center “Memorial”, “The Problem of Torture and Cruel and Degrading Treatment in Chechnya and the Northern Caucasus. The legal framework for the “counterterrorist operation” in the Chechen Republic”, as part of the shadow report of an ad-hoc coalition of Russian Human Rights NGOs to the UN Committee Against Torture CAT, March 2006

⁵⁶ Operative-search bureaus (ORB) were set up in 2001 as part of the Federal Ministry of Interior regional departments to replace the dismantled system of Regional Departments to Combat Organized Crime (RUBOP), and RUBOP staff were transferred to ORBs. Formally the main objectives of ORB-2 are to detect, prevent and suppress activity of organized criminal groups, to fight corruption in government authorities, to oppose terrorism and criminal extremism in Chechnya.

It would have been much more difficult to conceal the signs of beatings, should the detainees be transported back to SIZO in due time. The reason why people are often detained in ORB-2 for month is to extract the "needed" evidence as well as let the most obvious signs of torture heal on them.

ORB-2 is the place where some of the kidnapped people have been brought without records of the detention. These people were subjected to intensive pressure by ORB-2 staff to force confessions. There have been cases of kidnapped people being later "legalized" in ORB-2. A few days or weeks after the incident, kidnapped people emerged in ORB-2 as formally arrested. Police and prosecutors either denied the fact of kidnapping or insisted that the "kidnappers" had freed the victim, and then he was immediately arrested by ORB-2 officers.

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment specifically pointed out this unacceptable situation to the Russian authorities: "One establishment stands out in terms of the frequency and gravity of the alleged ill-treatment, namely ORB-2 in Grozny. ORB-2 has never appeared on any official list of detention facilities provided to CPT. However, persons certainly are being held there, on occasion for very lengthy periods of time. In the course of its visits in 2002, the CPT received a large number of allegations of ill-treatment concerning this establishment which were supported in several cases by clear medical evidence gathered by its delegation.in May 2003, further allegations were received, once again supported in some cases by medical evidence. When CPT re-visited ORB-2 in May 2003, it was holding 17 persons, some of whom had been there for several months. ... All the on-site observations made at ORB-2, including as regards the general attitude and demeanour of the staff there, left CPT deeply concerned about the fate of persons taken into custody at the ORB. CPT has repeatedly recommended that a thorough, independent inquiry be carried out into the methods used by ORB-2 staff when questioning detained persons; that recommendation has never been addressed in a meaningful manner. ... CPT calls upon the Russian authorities to put a stop to ill-treatment at ORB-2 in Grozny."⁵⁷

The CPT's recommendations were ignored.

The Chechen Republic Prosecutor's Office was informed of the illegal detention facility in ORB-2: "The Prosecutor's Office of the Republic has pointed out to the Federal Ministry of Interior the need to introduce internal rules for IVS in ORB-2 (letters to the Chief the Operative and Search Bureau of the North Caucasus Operations Department of the Chief Directorate of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Commander of Temporary Operative Group of the Bodies and Divisions of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs, and the Minister for the Chechen Republic Affairs). The most recent letter was sent in February 2003 as a follow-up to the session of the Operative HQ for Counterterrorist Operations in the North Caucasus."⁵⁸:

Instead of immediately suppressing the illegal prisons, prosecutorial offices have on many occasions requested the Ministry of Internal Affairs at least to grant some legal status to the prison by naming it a temporary detention facility (IVS), but the Ministry of Internal Affairs ignored the requests, because formalizing this prison as IVS was illegal as well.

Defense lawyers of detainees held in ORB-2 have often complained that ORB staff interfere with their work and deny them private meetings with clients. Prosecutors either ignore lawyers' complaints of

⁵⁷ The CPT Public Statement Concerning the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation, dated 10 July 2003.

torture or delay medical assessments, or respond that “the facts [of torture] have not been confirmed.” In June 2004, the Chechen Republic Bar Association advised lawyers against participating in any investigative actions on ORB-2 premises, as it was impossible to carry out the defense council’s duties appropriately. The Chechen Bar Association appealed to the Federal Ombudsman asking to do everything possible to close this illegal place of detention. The Ombudsman, however, avoided active steps in this direction.

In September 2004, the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Alvaro Gil-Robles visited ORB-2. At that time, 15 people were held there: “...I did not receive any complaints of ill-treatment. At the same time, I had the impression that these detainees did not feel they could speak freely.....All the detainees being held in the IVS had been there for more than 10 days, the maximum length of time allowed under the law. Some had been there for four months or longer, considerably exceeding the statutory limits. ...it seemed that they were not allowed exercise and were therefore obliged to spend 24 hours a day in their cells....The director acknowledged this, citing the requirements of the investigation and special circumstances. Without passing any judgment on the merits of the cases in question, I firmly believe that the law should be upheld and that the statutory procedure should be followed in respect of all detainees, whatever crime they are accused of. It is only in this way that a state governed by the rule of law can take shape.”⁵⁹

It was only after this visit in November 2004, that the Ministry of Interior finally legalized this illegal prison for holding suspects and accused: “In accordance with the Ministry of Interior Order No 709 (internal) of 3 November 2004, in Operative and Search Bureau-2 of the North Caucasus Operations Department of the Chief Directorate of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Southern Federal District (ORB-2 of NCOD of CD of RMIA in SFD) a temporary holding facility has been set up for suspects and accused detained by the Temporary Operative Group of the Ministry of Interior Forces, where, alongside other services, members of ORB-2 of NCOD of CD of RMIA in SFD conduct operative and investigative activities aimed at detecting crimes committed in the territory of the Chechen Republic.”⁶⁰

But this “legalization” did not make IVS attached to the ORB legal. Prosecutorial conduct in this situation is notable. Both the prosecutors and ORB-2 are equally interested in this illegal detention facility. Prosecutors in Russia are responsible for conducting investigations and at the same time it must ensure that investigations are conducted legally. In this obvious conflict of interests the prosecutors’ choice is predictable - so we can hardly expect them to stand up against the illegal practice.

Regrettably, this practice is spreading. In 2005, subdivisions of ORB-2 were opened in a number of other Chechen regions, with illegal holding facilities attached to them.

On of these illegal prisons held Dzeitov brothers, Adlan Rukmanovich (born in 1978) and Adam Rukmanovich (born in 1983), residents of the Chechen village of Bamut. Between 1999 and 2003,

⁵⁸ Response of Deputy Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic A.B.Nikitin № 17-8-139-03 of 15 October 2003 to the enquiry of the Russian State Duma member V.V.Igrunov.

⁵⁹ Report by Mr. Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his visits to the Russian Federation 15 to 30 July 2004 19 to 29 September 2004 for the attention of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, Strasbourg, April 20, 2005.

⁶⁰ From the response of Head of Department for Supervision over Procedural Compliance by Police, Justice Bodies and the State Committee for Drug Control in the Chechen Republic I.D.Khamidov No 16-39-2000-05 of 17.05.2005, to chief of Memorial’s Legal Service in Grozny L.M.Yussupova.

they lived as refugees in Ingushetia, because Bamut was totally destroyed. In October 2003, Dzeitov brothers moved to the Chechen village of Assinovskaya. In August 2004, Adlan learned that Adam had joined rebel fighters. He found his brother and brought him back home.

Dzeitov brothers were detained on 27 November 2005 in Assinovskaya and brought to ORB-2 Division in Urus-Martan District of Chechnya. There, according to their complaints to the Chechen Republic Prosecutor, they both were tortured; the torturers demanded that they give the names of rebel fighters and confess their involvement in IAF. Both brothers were brutally beaten, in particular, on their kidneys, shoulders, back and head (Adam was hit with a hammer, as well as punched and kicked); they were tortured with electric shock and choked with a plastic bag.

Torturers demanded that Adlan should confess an assault that happened in 2005, while Adlan was away in Kazakhstan, which he could prove, because he had come back a week before the detention and still had his ticket. They did not listen to his explanations and demanded a confession. Adlan lost consciousness when he was electroshocked, but as soon as he came round, the torture continued.

Adam Dzeitov who was tortured in the neighboring room describes his state following the interrogation in the following words: "After a while, they stopped beating me and left me lying on the floor, handcuffed to the radiator. I was virtually unable to move, I felt terrible pain in my head and all over the body. In this state, I spent a day in that room. At times I would lose sight, I could not see anything, but then my eyesight would come back."

On 29 November, the Urus-Martan District Court warranted arrest of Dzeitov brothers - they were charged under part. 2 art. 208 of the Criminal Code (participation in an armed formation other than established by a federal law) and transported to ORB-2 in Grozny, where they were held until transferred to the investigative prison in Grozny (SIZO-1, facility IZ-20/1) on 9 December 2005. Dzeitov brothers were given a medical checkup only after their transfer to SIZO. In response to his enquiry, Dzeitovs' lawyer Zhabrail Abubakarov received a copy of the following document from SIZO-1: "Statement. We, the undersigned, have compiled this statement concerning Adam Rukmanovich Dzeitov, born in 1983, delivered from ORB-2 with the following bodily injuries: hemorrhage in both eyes. Samodurov, Vassilchenko." Adlan's overall condition was documented as satisfactory, but his medical record of January 2006 mentioned scars on the head, "complaints of headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, and pains in the lumbosacral section of the spine, limited mobility of the lumbar region, etc."

On 14 January, 2006, Adam and Adlan Dzeitovs sent petitions to the Chechen Republic Prosecutor requesting that only Abubakarov should be their defense lawyers and emphasizing that the appearance of any other lawyer in their case would mean that it was done against their will. They made a special request not to be sent to the ORB of Urus-Martan District because of imminent threat of torture. Adam Dzeitov stressed in his petition, "I am very afraid of torture, especially of electric shocks."

Regardless of these complaints and the efforts of their lawyer, in January – February 2006 the Dzeitov brothers were transported to Urus-Martan on a number of occasions. Dzeitov brothers' complaints sent to the Chechen Prosecutor on 8 February 2006 point to the fact that agents Aslan and Akhmed in Urus-Martan ORB threatened them with electric shocks to force confessions.

Appendix 2: An estimate of the number of “disappearances” in the second Chechen war

Below a summary table regarding abductions and “disappearances” in Chechnya for 2002 to 2005, provided by Memorial Human Rights Center.:

Summary Table on Abductions in the Chechen Republic

Year	Abducted	of them, freed or ransomed	of them, found dead	of them, disappeared	of them, under investigation
2002	537	90	81	366	
2003	497	157	52	288	
2004	448	206	24	210	8
2005	316	151	23	127	15
Total:	1799	611	180	985	23

There is more or less detailed data available to “Memorial” to support the above statistics, including the victim’s name, surname and patronym, residence address, circumstances of abduction, etc. In total, over the “second Chechen war,” Memorial has data on about 1.600 “disappearances” of people who were detained or abducted (including cases where the body was later found). Memorial monitors the situation on about 25-30% of the Chechen territory, and its data even for these areas may be incomplete. To obtain a realistic estimate, you should multiply the figures above by a factor from two to four, according to different experts.

By extrapolating Memorial’s findings and analyzing the official data, we can assume that over the entire period of “counterterrorist operation,” disappearances of people as a result of abductions, unlawful arrests and detentions were between three thousand and five thousand people. Unfortunately, we do not have more accurate numbers available to us.