

URGENT ACTION

CHECHEN MAN AT RISK IF EXTRADITED FROM BELARUS

Chechen torture survivor Murad Amriev was detained on the night of 7 June as he attempted to enter Belarus. The Chechen authorities have asked for his extradition to Russia to face charges in Grozny, the Chechen capital. If extradited, he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Murad Amriev, a Russian national from Chechnya and a torture survivor, was detained on the Russian-Belarusian border on the night of 7 June. He was initially taken to a police station in the city of Dobrush, eastern Belarus, but at midday on 8 June he was transferred to an unknown location.

Murad Amriev fled Chechnya in 2013 after complaining that he was tortured by Chechen police officers in Grozny, on 25 August 2013, and moved to Ukraine. Shortly after, with the assistance of the human rights NGO the Committee for the Prevention of Torture he lodged a complaint against the men who had tortured him.

On 4 June he was arrested in Bryansk, western Russian, on the grounds that he was on a wanted list for having forged his passport (which was originally issued with a mistake in the date of birth). He was told that he would be returned to Chechnya for prosecution. On 6 June, a court in Bryansk released him. However, Chechen police officers tried unsuccessfully to escort him to Chechnya.

The NGO Committee for the Prevention of Torture believe that the charges are being used as a pretext by the Chechen authorities in order to secure his return to Chechnya in retaliation for his torture complaint.

If extradited from Belarus to Chechnya, Murad Amriev is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Please write immediately in Belarussian, Russian or your own language:

- Urging the Belarussian authorities not to forcibly return Murad Amriev to Russia as he would face torture and other ill-treatment, and other serious human rights violations;
- Reminding the authorities that as a state party to the Convention against Torture and of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees Belarus has an obligation not to return anybody to a country where they would be at risk of torture and other ill-treatment and that this obligation overrides any mutual agreements they may have with Russia;
- Urging the authorities to release Murad Amriev and to ensure that he is protected from possible arbitrary detention by law enforcement officers from Chechnya.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 JULY 2017 TO:

Prosecutor General

Aleksandr Konyuk

Ul. Internatsionalnaya 22

220030 g. Minsk

Republic of Belarus

Email: info@prokuratura.gov.by

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Gomel Region Prosecutor

Viktor Morozov

ul. Pushkina 12

246050 Gomel

Republic of Belarus

Email: gomel@prokuratura.gov.by

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR SERGEI ALEINIK Embassy of the Republic of Belarus, 6 Kensington Court W8 5DL, 020 7937 3288, Fax 020 7361 0005, uk.london@mfa.gov.by, www.uk.mfa.gov.by

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 132/17. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR46/6442/2017/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Murad Amriev, a World Mixed Martial Arts Champion, is originally from Chechnya and now resident in Ukraine. He alleges that he was detained by three men on the 25 August 2013. The men forced him into a car and took him to a building belonging to the Ministry of Interior of Chechnya. He claimed that he was held in handcuffs for two days during which time he was beaten, tortured with electric shocks and humiliated. One of the men who detained him was a senior Chechen police officer who claimed that Murad Amriev's brother had attacked him. Murad Amriev was threatened with prosecution for a crime that his older brother was accused of having committed.

Murad Amriev managed to flee Chechnya and sought the assistance of the human rights NGO, the Committee against Torture, to lodge a complaint about torture and other ill-treatment. His lawyer has made repeated requests to the Chechen authorities to open an investigation. To date the investigator has refused 15 times to open an investigation into his torture allegations.

On 4 June he was travelling to Russia to apply for a Schengen visa when he was taken off a train by transport police in Bryansk region, South West of Moscow. He was detained for 48 hours before being released on 6 June. A group of Chechen police officers had arrived to escort him, but according to a lawyer for the Committee against Torture, Murad Amriev was not handed over to them because of missing documentation. Murad Amriev told his lawyer that he recognized one of the police officers who had tortured him among the officers who intended to escort him to Chechnya.

On the 6 June after being released, Murad Amriev went to the prosecutor's office in Bryansk to complete some formalities and the Chechen officers followed him and waited outside the building insisting on escorting him. Murad Amriev's friends arrived in a car and he was able to evade the Chechen police officers and drive off.

Further information on UA: 132/17 Index: EUR 49/6449/2017 Issue Date: 8 June 2017