

## PRESS RELEASE

**Russian Federation: Well-known activist from Ingushetia killed**

**Geneva - Paris, 29 October 2009. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) express their profound concern about the killing of Mr. Maksharip Aushev, a well-known activist from Ingushetia, on 25 October 2009, in the neighbouring Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria.**

According to the information received from reliable sources, on 25 October 2009, around 9:30 am, Mr. Maksharip Aushev was driving his car when he was shot dead by unknown assailants who approached him driving another vehicle. A relative, who was sitting in the passenger's seat, was severely wounded. According to law enforcement officers present on the scene, more than 60 gun cartridges were found on site.

According to the same information, Mr. Maksharip Aushev had already been subjected to acts of harassment and threats, as well as an attempt on his life, in his native village, early 2009. On 15 September 2009, he had also escaped an abduction attempt by masked armed men who blocked his car on the highway (knowing that his life was in danger, he had planned to leave Ingushetia and flee to Europe).

Mr. Maksharip Aushev was a leader of the Ingush opposition when former President Murat Zyasikov was still in power and became actively interested in human rights in 2007 when his son and nephew were abducted. They were eventually released following a massive peaceful protest organised by Mr. Maksharip Aushev. Furthermore, after the murder in August 2008 of the owner and former editor of the opposition website [www.ingushetiya.ru](http://www.ingushetiya.ru), Mr. Magomed Yevloev, Mr. Maksharip Aushev had taken over the responsibility of the website. When Mr. Yevkurov was appointed President in October 2008, Mr. Aushev praised this nomination, stopped being actively involved in the opposition and joined a council of experts set up by the Russian Ombudsman Vladimir Lukin. In an article published on 7 September 2009 by the new Ingush opposition website [Ingushetiyaru.org](http://Ingushetiyaru.org), Mr. Aushev claimed that he and his followers would not "stop insisting on the right to life, security and the protection of each compatriot".

OMCT and FIDH firmly condemn the killing of Mr. Maksharip Aushev, which is representative of the ongoing climate of repression and impunity faced by the civil society and human rights defenders in the Russian Federation, particularly in the North Caucasus region.

Both organisations call upon the competent Russian authorities to order an immediate, thorough, effective, impartial and independent investigation into this attack and Mr. Maksharip Aushev's killing, in accordance with international human rights standards, and the consistent jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights inter alia in cases against the Russian Federation, the result of which must be made public, in order to bring those responsible before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal and apply penal, civil and/or administrative sanctions as provided by law.

Finally, both organisations urge the authorities to guarantee, in all circumstances, the physical and psychological integrity of all activists, including human rights defenders, and to stop any kind of harassment against them, in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as international human rights instruments ratified by the Russian Federation, including the European Convention on Human Rights.

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