

EU Presidency Statement concerning the murder of human rights defender Stanislav Markelov

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The Presidency of the European Union expresses its deep concern about the murder of Russian human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and of the Novaya Gazeta journalist Ms. Anastasiya Baburova in Moscow on 19 January 2009.

Mr. Markelov, a leading European human rights defender, had represented numerous victims of human rights abuses and their families in the Chechen Republic in domestic and international jurisdictions.

The Presidency of the European Union sends its condolences to the families and colleagues of Stanislav Markelov and Anastasiya Baburova. Sadly, the murder of Mr. Markelov is only the latest in a series of attacks on human rights defenders, journalists and NGO activists. The Presidency calls on the Russian authorities to ensure a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation, to bring all the perpetrators to justice.

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Russia: Investigate Murder of Prominent Rights Lawyer
Markelov Sought Justice for Abuses in Chechnya
January 19, 2009

Russian authorities should immediately investigate the killing of Stanislav Markelov, a prominent Russian human rights lawyer, and bring his killers to justice, Human Rights Watch said today. Markelov was shot dead on the afternoon of January 19, 2009, on Prechistenka Street in central Moscow, and a newspaper intern with him was fatally wounded.

"We are appalled and deeply saddened by Markelov's murder," said Rachel Denber, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "For victims of human rights abuses in Chechnya, Markelov's name was synonymous with hope for justice. His murder shows that those who speak out against abuses and work to hold abusers to account risk their lives."

An intern for the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, Anastasiya Baburova, who was with Markelov at the time of the murder, was hospitalized with a severe head injury as a result of the shooting, and died in hospital.

Markelov represented numerous victims of human rights abuses in Chechnya. His clients included the Kungaev family, whose daughter, Elza, was murdered by Colonel Yuri Budanov in 2000, and the Murdalov family, whose son was tortured and forcibly disappeared by Russian police in 2001. Budanov was sentenced in 2003 to 10 years of imprisonment for the murder of Elza Kungaeva.

Markelov also represented Mokhmadsalakh Masaev, a Chechen who said he was held in a secret prison in Tsenteroi, the native village of President Ramzan Kadyrov of Chechnya, for more than four months in 2006-2007 and subjected to inhuman treatment. Masaev was abducted in the Chechen capital, Grozny, on August 3, 2008, several weeks after *Novaya Gazeta*, a leading Russian independent newspaper, published an interview in which he accused Kadyrov of running illegal prisons in Chechnya.

Several critics of the authorities in Russia, particularly those who spoke out about torture, abductions and extrajudicial executions in the North Caucasus, have lost their lives in the past few years, most recently last week.

On January 13, Umar Israilov, a Chechen who had filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights alleging that he had been tortured by Kadyrov, was shot dead in Vienna. Magomed Yevloyev, the owner of Ingushetiya.Ru website, which reported on human rights abuses during counterterrorist operations in Ingushetia, a republic in the North Caucasus which borders Chechnya, was killed in a police car on August 31, 2008, after he was taken in for questioning by police at Magas airport in Ingushetia. In the most prominent case, Anna Politkovskaia, a

PROMINENT HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER MURDERED IN MOSCOW

19 January 2009

A prominent human rights lawyer was shot dead in the centre of Moscow on Monday. Stanislav Markelov had been preparing to appeal against the early release of a Russian former colonel sentenced for the murder of a Chechen girl. A journalist from the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* has died from wounds sustained in the same attack.

Amnesty International, who worked with Stanislav Markelov on several cases, strongly condemned the murder.

"Stanislav Markelov is yet another victim – very possibly murdered for his professional and courageous work to defend human rights," said Nicola Duckworth, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International.

Amnesty International expressed sympathy for the family of Stanislav Markelov and urged the Russian authorities to investigate the murder promptly, fully and objectively.

"Stanislav Markelov's murder is a despicable crime. The Russian authorities must take decisive steps to show that such crimes will not be tolerated. Silencing those who defend human rights and work to uphold the rule of law is absolutely unacceptable," Nicola Duckworth said.

Among high profile cases he worked on, Stanislav Markelov was the lawyer of the family of Chechen girl Kheda Kungaeva, who was abducted, raped and strangled to death in March 2000. Colonel Yuri Budanov was sentenced for the murder.

He was released early on 15 January 2009 despite the appeal filed by Stanislav Markelov. Over the last week, Stanislav Markelov had received numerous death threats for his work on behalf of the family of Kheda Kungaeva.

Stanislav Markelov was also working on behalf of anti-fascists who had become victims of hate crime

In 2004, Amnesty International campaigned on Stanislav Markelov's behalf after he had been attacked, beaten and had documents stolen relating to his work on behalf of the family of Zelimkhan Muralov. Zelimkhan was a young Chechen man who was subjected to torture and enforced disappearance by Russian law enforcement official Sergei Lapin.

Amnesty International