

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER'S DETENTION EXTENDED

The pre-trial detention of Oyub Titiev, a prisoner of conscience and head of Russian human rights group Memorial, has been extended for a further two months, until 9 May. There has also been an increase in the number of attacks on Memorial offices and its employees, which are widely believed to be connected to the ongoing persecution of Oyub Titiev. Amnesty International believes this is part of a concerted, politically motivated attempt by the authorities to intimidate and silence human rights defenders in Russia.

On 6 March, the Staropromyslovsky District Court of the Chechen capital, Grozny, extended Oyub Titiev's pre-trial detention for a further two months, until 9 May. The District Court stated that if released, Oyub Titiev could abscond and might pose a threat to the judicial process by putting pressure on witnesses and destroying evidence. The prominent human rights defender, and head of the Russian NGO, Memorial, in Russia's Chechen Republic, was arrested on the morning of 9 January and held incommunicado for several hours. He remains in detention, falsely accused of drug possession. There are serious concerns that Oyub Titiev may be at risk of torture while in detention.

The pressure from the authorities on both Oyub Titiev's family and colleagues at Memorial has escalated in the past month. His family have on numerous occasions been harassed by the police and, as a result, forced to leave Chechnya. Meanwhile, his lawyer reported being followed by plain-clothed operatives. There have also been several attacks against Memorial's offices in the North Caucasus. On the night of 17 January, unidentified masked men set Memorial's office in the neighbouring Republic of Ingushetia on fire. On 19 January, police conducted a search of Memorial's office in Grozny. While it was reported that the search was conducted within the law, the Memorial staff fear that some further "evidence" found during the search (cigarette butts contaminated with an unknown substance) could have been planted to incriminate Oyub Titiev. On 22 January, a car, which had been used by Oyub Titiev's lawyer was set on fire outside the Memorial's office in Dagestan. Around the same time, staff members of Memorial's office in Dagestan reported receiving death threats on their phones. Amnesty International believes that these incidents were connected with the persecution of Oyub Titiev in Chechnya.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Release Oyub Titiev immediately and unconditionally, and drop all charges against him;
- Pending his release, ensure that Oyub Titiev is protected from torture and ill-treatment;
- Conduct a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into both the circumstances that led to Oyub Titiev's arbitrary arrest and the attacks against Memorial offices and employees, ensuring anyone found responsible is held to account.

Contact these two officials by 24 April, 2018:

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

Ul. Ilyinka, 23

103132 Moscow,

Russian Federation

Fax: +7 495 9102134

Twitter: [@KremlinRussia](#) [@KremlinRussia_E](#)

Salutation: Dear President

Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, Embassy of the Russian Federation

2650 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington DC 20007

Phone: 1 202 298 5700 | Fax: 1 202 298 5735

Email: rusembusa@mid.ru

Twitter: [@mfa_russia](#)

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 5.18*

Here's why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.



URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER'S DETENTION EXTENDED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 9 January Oyub Titiev was arrested and held incommunicado for several hours after his car has been stopped and searched on his way to work. The Ministry of Interior confirmed that Oyub Titiev was arrested after "approximately 180 grams of a substance with a specific marijuana odour" was found in his car during the search. Oyub Titiev denied the allegations and insisted that the drugs had been planted in his car. He stands accused under Article 228 of the Russian Criminal Code for unlawful possession of drug substances. If found guilty, he could face up to ten years in prison.

Oyub Titiev has been working in the Grozny office of Memorial for many years and has been threatened on numerous occasions in connection with his human rights work. He became Head of the office shortly after the murder of human rights defender and Memorial staff member, Natalia Estemirova in 2009. Following her killing, many of Memorial's staff members had to leave the country fearing for their lives, and Memorial had to suspend its work in Chechnya for five months.

For the last few months, Oyub Titiev together with other Memorial colleagues, were working on the case of 27 Chechens allegedly forcibly disappeared, and shot dead by the police on the night of 26 January 2017. Russian independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta wrote extensively on this issue. Oyub Titiev's colleagues believe that his detention is an attempt by the authorities to stop him from doing his legitimate human rights work.

Name: Oyub Titiev
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 5/18 Index: EUR 46/8037/2018 Issue Date: 13 March 2018