

Chief Military Prosecutor of the Russian Federation  
g. Moskva 103160  
pereulok Khul'zunova 14  
Prokuratura Rossiiskoi Federatsii  
Glavnomu voennomu prokuroru  
Gen.-lt. Savenkovu A.  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Dear Lt. Gen. Savenkov:

I seek your assistance with a matter of great importance. Russian soldiers apparently seized **Aset Yakhiaeva** and **Milana Betirgirieva** during a raid on a house in Serzhen Yurt, Chechnya, in the early hours of November 9, 2001. Neither woman has been seen since.

According to witnesses interviewed by Amnesty International, the soldiers cut the electricity to the house. They threatened to rape and kill a group of five girls sleeping in one room of the house. They searched the house and demanded money. After the soldiers left, the girls went to the room in which Aset Yakhiaeva and Milana Betirgirieva had been sleeping. The room was empty. In the street, the girls found some of the women's clothing, including Milana Betirgirieva's blouse and skirt.

The manner in which the two women were apparently taken away is consistent with other reported incidents where people have been detained by Russian forces. Amnesty International has documented numerous credible reports that Russian forces have been responsible for widespread human rights violations in Chechnya, including "disappearances," extrajudicial executions and torture, including rape. Amnesty International was informed in March 2002 that the military procuracy would look into the case. However, the fate of Aset Yakhiaeva and Milana Betirgirieva remains unknown.

I urge you to immediately initiate a criminal investigation into the "disappearance" of Aset Yakhiaeva and Milana Betirgirieva and to bring to justice in a court of law those responsible. I thank you for your assistance with this serious matter, and I look forward to hearing from you regarding your progress with this case.

Sincerely,

*copy to:*  
Ambassador Yury V. Ushakov  
Embassy of the Russian Federation  
2650 Wisconsin Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007