



Pat-MedMUNC III Security Council

Situation in Chechnya

Last year, as Russian troops in Chechnya were committing hundreds of forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, widespread acts of torture and ill-treatment the U.N. Council on Human Rights rejected a resolution that would have expressed concern about the situation in Chechnya. The armed conflict in Chechnya continues and humanitarian law violations appear to be increasing. Human Rights Watch research conducted in the region in late March found that Russian troops had "disappeared" at least twenty-six people between late December and late February, or roughly three people per week. This is the highest rate of "disappearances" Human Rights Watch has documented since the beginning of the conflict.

In more than fifty interviews with victims and eyewitnesses, it was also documented that new cases of extrajudicial execution, torture, ill-treatment, and arbitrary detention have been found. The Russian government's long-standing failure to investigate thoroughly such abuses and to prosecute the guilty remains unchanged.

Chechen rebels are believed to be responsible for a continuing pattern of assassinations of village administrators and other civil servants working for the pro-Moscow government in Chechnya. This briefing paper summarizes these findings, and describes government efforts to compel internally displaced people living in Ingushetia to return to Chechnya, despite the life-threatening conditions civilians face there.

Unpublished government statistics confirm the high risk of abuse civilians face in Chechnya. According to an unpublished report on criminal activity in Chechnya in 2002 - 1,132 civilians were killed, between five and eight times the murder rate for Russia.

A second unpublished report, providing crime statistics for the first months of 2003, stated that for January and February there were seventy murders, 126 abductions, and twenty-five cases in

which human corpses were found. Accompanying the statistics were detailed descriptions of more than 185 crimes in Chechnya committed in January and February 2003; in many of these attacks federal forces are implicated.

Throughout the past year, the Russian government sought to limit the flow of information to and from Chechnya. It barred outside scrutiny of the conflict by refusing to renew the mandate of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Assistance Group to Chechnya, forcing its closure, and by refusing to arrange visits to the region by several U.N. special mechanisms. The government also denied Human Rights Watch access to the region for the tenth time since the outbreak of the conflict in 1999. Finally, the government harassed several Chechen human rights advocates, one of whom subsequently "disappeared" after being taken into custody.

Human Rights Watch urges the Commission to adopt a resolution on the Chechnya conflict, calling on Russia to issue invitations so that the U.N. could aid them in whatever way possible, to agree to renew the mandate of the OSCE Assistance Group, and to invigorate the domestic accountability process.

Our goal as the security council is to find the reasons behind the constant dangers that the Chechnya people are facing because of issues related to Russia. We must also come to a compromise with the Russian government to allow the U.N. to enter the country and investigate the situation. Last, one of the major compromises should include the safety and displacement of Chechnya refugees.

Points to Consider

- How can we help to ease the tensions between Russia and Chechnya?
- Is it beneficial to house the citizens of Chechnya in other countries?
- How can compromise with Russia in order to allow the U.N. to enter the country and investigate the situation?