

STICHTING CHECHNYA JUSTICE INITIATIVE

MOSCOW NAZRAN UTRECHT

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i. Letter from Chair

22 January 2003

Dear friends and supporters,

CHECHNYA CONTINUES to be the only place in Europe where civilians die or "disappear" every day as the result of human rights violations committed in armed conflict. The persistent failure of the Russian government to act on abuses perpetrated by its forces in

Chechnya has served to perpetuate this dynamic and is a key obstacle to any political process that could lead to a lasting peace. Indeed, impunity fuels the conflict, as civilians lose faith in law enforcement, and military servicemen feel that they are above punishment for their actions. The Chechnya Justice Project, with its focus on seeking justice for victims of the Chechnya war, uses the Russian and international legal system as a tool to change this damaging dynamic.

As 2002 drew to a close, it was difficult to believe that not even eighteen months had passed since the establishment of the Chechnya Justice Project. During that time, we hired a professional staff, trained our employees in human rights research and litigation, set up methodology and standards for our legal work, opened offices in Moscow and Ingushetia, and established an advisory committee and committee of recommendation. These organizational developments have contributed vastly to our legal work. The Chechnya Justice Project now represent clients from sixty-two different families - more than four times the number of clients we represented in January 2002 - and has submitted twenty-six applications on their behalf to the European Court of Human Rights.

Unfortunately, the year brought Chechnya Justice Project its first major crisis: On 2 June 2002, Russian troops detained one of our clients, Said-Magomed Imakaev. Despite our immediate intervention with the Russian authorities, and an inquiry from the European Court of Human Rights about his fate and whereabouts, Imakaev "disappeared." The incident deeply shocked us all, and highlighted the vulnerability of many of our clients. We have put extra security procedures in place to better protect them but, to our great regret, that has not brought back Said-Magomed Imakaev.

Although developments inside Chechnya inspired little hope, early 2003 brought encouraging news from Strasbourg: in January, the European Court of Human Rights admitted the first six applications regarding human rights violations in Chechnya, meaning it will now hear them on their merits. The applications, which the Russian nongovernmental organization Memorial introduced in 2000, concern summary executions in Grozny and two incidents of bombing of civilians fleeing active fighting. The admissibility decisions set a crucial precedent for many of the cases the Chechnya Justice Project has introduced to the European Court of Human Rights.

It is with this news in mind that we continue our task of helping our clients pursue justice. The Chechnya Justice Project looks forward to working with you as we meet the challenges of 2003 and beyond.

Sincerely yours,

*Diederik de Savornin Lohman
Chair*

1. Executive Summary

THE WAR in Chechnya, now well into its fourth year, continues. Along with it, so do the violations of human rights and impunity that have become the sad hallmarks of this conflict.

In this region tarnished by a decade of war and lawlessness, the Chechnya Justice Project seeks to promote justice for human rights violations. It pursues its goal by providing accessible and expert legal aid to a selected group of victims and their families, and representing them before Russian judicial organs and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The year 2002 was Chechnya Justice Project's second year of operation. A crucial year, as its implementing partners, the Netherlands-based Stichting Chechnya Justice Initiative and the Ingushetia-based *Pravovoiia initsiativa po Chechne*, faced the challenge of turning what had previously been an ad-hoc initiative into a professional and sustainable project. In order to achieve this, the project's board set a series of ambitious goals, including:

- ! Hire and train a professional staff;
- ! Develop a methodology for research and legal work;
- ! Develop a quality control mechanism;
- ! Establish the Chechnya Justice Project among partner NGOs and international organizations;
- ! Put in place a committee of recommendation and an advisory committee.

In addition, the board asked that the project identify ten new cases and that ten new applications be filed with the European Court of Human Rights.

By January 1, 2003, all these goals had been met:

- ! In early 2002, the project hired skilled professionals for all available staff positions;
- ! Over the course of the year, all project staff attended two or more quality human rights research and litigation courses. In September 2002, the project organized an advanced legal training seminar, tailored to the needs of the staff and taught by lecturers with highly relevant experience;
- ! Over the course of the year, an effective methodology was put in place for identifying and approaching potential new clients, collecting evidence, exhausting domestic remedies, and maintaining contact with clients over a period of numerous years all exceedingly difficult tasks

when working in a war zone;

! We furthermore identified leading public figures and legal experts to take a seat on our committee of recommendation and advisory committee, and established working contacts with over a dozen Russian and international NGOs;

! Last but not least, the project secured funds to cover most of its 2003 budget.

In 2002, the project's research and legal staff identified twenty-one new cases, bringing its total number of cases to thirty-one. The project submitted sixteen new applications to the European Court. The total number of applications pending before the European Court is now twenty-six.

The project's new clients include victims of a number of high-profile human rights incidents. For example, the project represents the relatives of three young men and a woman whose dead bodies were found in a mass grave near Russia's main military base in Chechnya.

As intended, the project's cases concern a broad range of human rights violations, including forced disappearance, extrajudicial executions, torture and ill-treatment, and arbitrary detention.

In 2003 to 2005, the project will continue to pursue its 2002 course, bringing new cases to the European Court and investing in staff and institutional development. The project will also undertake several new initiatives aimed at making its work accessible to a maximum audience.

2. Context

Why bring cases to Strasbourg?

THE EUROPEAN Convention on Human Rights, first adopted in 1950, establishes a common set of civil and political rights across the member states of the Council of Europe.

The European Convention differs from other human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in that it provides for the right of individual petition. Any citizen of a European Convention signatory state may bring a case against his or her government for failing to protect the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Convention.

The European Court of Human Rights was established in 1959 to hear these cases. Largely due to the European Court's work, the European Convention is now widely

recognized as one of the most effective international human rights instruments in the world. At present, forty-three member states of the Council of Europe participate in the European Court of Human Rights.

The Russian Federation ratified the European Convention on Human Rights in May 1998. Because Russian citizens have had the right to bring complaints to the European Court of Human Rights for less than five years, the European Court's rulings on cases from Russia are on the cutting-edge of international law.

Thus far, the European Court has passed only two judgments against the Russian Federation, both in 2002.

Although the European Court has not yet made a judgment on a case from Chechnya, in January 2003 the European Court admitted the first six applications regarding violations committed in that armed conflict.

The European Court of Human Rights is not a criminal court and does not bring sentences against perpetrators. Rather, it examines the respondent government's obligations under the European Convention and makes a ruling on whether the government has violated any provisions of the Convention.

Violations can take place at three different levels: a) a public authority can commit the violation itself (for instance, a police official who mistreats someone in detention violates the prohibition of ill-treatment); b) public authorities can fail to properly investigate alleged violations and fail to provide an adequate remedy; and c) the state can fail to protect someone from potential violations. In most of its cases, the Chechnya Justice Project argues that a violation occurred on all three levels.

When the European Court makes a judgment in favor of the applicant, it may order the respondent government to pay the applicant's legal costs as well as pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe is charged with overseeing the implementation of the European Court's judgments.

Moreover, a judgment that finds a substantive violation of one of the fundamental Convention rights serves to vindicate the applicants, who domestically sought, but never found, recognition that their rights, or those of their relatives, were violated.

The Chechnya Justice Project believes that bringing cases all the way to Strasbourg may be the only way to motivate Russian authorities to improve their record on investigating and prosecuting serious human rights violations in Chechnya.

Situation in Chechnya

THE CURRENT conflict in Chechnya, a republic of the Russian Federation, began in September 1999, when the Russian military entered Chechnya in response to an incursion by Chechen rebels into neighboring Dagestan and a series of explosions in apartment buildings in central Russian cities that killed hundreds of people and were quickly blamed on Chechen rebels.

Although Russian forces quickly gained nominal control over the majority of Chechnya's territory, a guerilla war drags on to this day, with both the federal forces and rebel groups suffering significant losses each week.

Although the Russian government is presenting the March 2003 constitutional referendum as part of a political dialogue, few observers believe it has the potential to bring lasting peace.

Both sides to the conflict routinely violate the rights of the civilian population. Russian troops continue to conduct large-scale and targeted operations, during which they detain men, often arbitrarily, while searching for rebel fighters hiding in the civilian population. The detainees routinely face torture and ill-treatment, and, although most are eventually released, frequently one or more "disappear." Extrajudicial executions also occur frequently during these operations.

Forced disappearances have become a hallmark of targeted military operations by Russian troops in Chechnya. Typically, groups of men in military uniform, sometimes in masks, drive up to a residence in an armored personnel carrier or other military vehicle, enter the house, seize a male member of the family, and leave. The men refuse to identify themselves or their military unit, do not give any explanation for the detention, and often fail even to glance at the detainee's identity documents before taking him away.

Relatives who try to intervene are often threatened with machine guns. The detainees are often never heard from again, although some families find their loved-ones in makeshift graves.

Rebel groups also routinely target civilians. In late 2002, Chechen rebel groups carried out large attacks on civilians, including the hostage taking of over 800 people in a Moscow theater and the bombing of a government building in Grozny.

Rebel fighters have also targeted civil servants in an organized assassination campaign. These killings by Chechen rebel forces violate international humanitarian law.

Accountability in Chechnya

INTERGOVERNMENTAL organizations and NGOs alike note the Russian government's glaring failure to hold accountable perpetrators of serious human rights abuses in Chechnya.

In its January 2003 resolution on the conflict in Chechnya, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concluded that "the prosecuting bodies [in the Russian Federation] are either

unwilling or unable to find and bring to justice the guilty parties." It also stated that the "climate of impunity which...reigns in the Chechen Republic... makes normal life in the Republic impossible."

Although in many instances, local prosecutors do launch criminal investigations into civilians' complaints of serious abuses, they routinely suspend these investigations shortly afterwards claiming it is impossible to establish the identity of the perpetrator. Yet, in most cases investigators fail to take basic investigative steps, including questioning eyewitnesses, visiting the scene of the crime, or collecting physical evidence. As a result, prosecutions are extremely rare, even in straightforward cases.

To compound things, it is exceedingly hard for individuals in Chechnya to pursue protection of their rights themselves. The unstable security conditions, the lack of information on rights and on domestic or international remedies, the lack of qualified lawyers in the region, the poverty of the general population, and the lack of basic telecommunications services place almost insurmountable obstacles before those who would wish to do so.

3. Goals and Achievements of 2001-2002

THE FIRST eighteen months of its operations were a busy time for the Chechnya Justice Project. In order to fully establish the project as a professional and sustainable organization, the initiators of the project set a series of ambitious goals. By 1 January 2003, most of these goals had been met.

Project Structure and Administrative Developments

PRIMARY GOALS under this subheading included: recruiting professional legal, research and administrative staff, securing funding for 2002 and beyond, establishing relationships with European academics and legal experts, setting up a quality control procedure, and organizing a committee of recommendation and an advisory committee.

Staff Recruitment

After the project began operating independently in fall 2001, it recruited Elena Ejova, a Moscow-based lawyer, as a Moscow office coordinator; Anastasia Maltseva, a Ekaterinburg-based lawyer and active member of the local Memorial branch, as a part-

time lawyer; Arsen Sakalov, a Human Rights Watch consultant, as Ingushetia coordinator; and Maria Pulzetti, formerly with Human Rights Watch in New York, as Netherlands coordinator. We also hired an administrative assistant for our Moscow office and a research assistant for the Ingushetia office.

In May 2002, to manage an increasing case-load, we hired Andrei Nikolaev, instructor in law at Moscow State Social University, as a third staff lawyer, and increased the responsibilities

of several part-time staff members to full-time. After the project's start-up phase, in September 2002 the board decided to move the Netherlands coordinator position to Moscow and change the title to executive director (in this report, we refer to the executive director even for the period before the title change).

Securing Funding

Throughout the year, the executive director worked closely with the board in order to secure funding. She submitted funding proposals to the Open Society Institute in Budapest, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Le Secours Catholique (Caritas France), the U.N. Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Amnesty International Netherlands, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Moscow.

The executive director also assisted the Ingushetia coordinator in obtaining funding for a legal training seminar from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Moscow and UNHCR Moscow. To date, the project has secured funding commitments from the Open Society Institute, Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Royal Netherlands Embassy in Moscow, UNHCR Moscow, and Amnesty International Netherlands; other proposals are pending.

Expert Advisors

The executive director expanded contacts with European academics and legal experts, and developed a quality control procedure for the project's work. She established close working relations with a variety of law professors and legal academics in several European countries, as well as with a number of practicing lawyers.

At the request of Chechnya Justice Project, these lawyers have filed eight applications to the European Court and are currently preparing another three applications. The executive director also put in place a procedure to ensure consistent quality of the applications the project submits to the European Court.

Prior to submission to the European Court, applications are reviewed by experts such as Professor Bill Bowring of London Metropolitan University; Maxim Ferschtman of the Dutch law firm B hler Franken Koppe De Feijter Advocaten and a former lawyer at the European Court; or Karinna Moskalenko, a lawyer at the International Protection Center in Moscow who won the landmark 2002 case *Kalashnikov v. Russia* in the European Court.

The executive director also identified twelve outstanding individuals to serve on the project's committee of recommendation and advisory committee. Members of the committee of recommendation are people of high moral authority, including internationally recognized human rights activists, journalists, policymakers, and others. They have all made significant contributions in the field of human rights and have taken a keen interest in the Chechnya conflict. The members of the advisory committee are all experts in international law, the European Court, or Russian law. They take an active role in advising the project on legal issues.

Developing a Methodology

A MAJOR GOAL for 2001-2002 was to develop a methodology for identifying and approaching potential new clients, collecting evidence, exhausting domestic remedies, and maintaining contact with clients over a period of numerous years.

The situation in Chechnya poses enormous challenges to any litigation project. Any travel requires crossing numerous military checkpoints where soldiers routinely solicit bribes. Private persons do not have telephones, email or other modern means of communication.

Material evidence of human rights violations often does not exist or is almost impossible to obtain. Witnesses often feel vulnerable and intimidated, and are reluctant to step forward. And finally, filing an application with the European Court of Human Rights can be dangerous.

The executive director, board, legal and research staff developed a unique methodology for working with clients that allows us to overcome most of these difficulties. The mechanisms now in place allow our research staff to maintain contact with all clients on a regular basis and inform them on progress made in their cases. We can establish contact with clients on very short notice when necessary.

In most cases, we have been able to obtain detailed eyewitness statements from key witnesses to violations, and to secure medical or other evidence of violations where relevant. As a result, we have been able to submit applications to the European Court that are based on numerous eyewitness statements and on material evidence - a distinctive achievement for applications that concern events that happened in a war zone.

Our methodology also allows us to contact potential new clients within weeks after a violation has taken place and explain procedures to them.

Training Seminars

ORGANIZING TRAINING for legal and research staff on human rights research and litigation in the European Court of Human Rights was a key objective for 2001-2002.

In September 2002, Chechnya Justice Project organized a special training seminar for its staff on litigation in the European Court. The project also invited several other human rights lawyers from Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Moscow to attend the seminar.

At the seminar, Philip Leach, Senior Lecturer in Law at London Metropolitan University and formerly the legal director of the Kurdish Human Rights Project, and Maxim Ferschtman of the Dutch law firm BIIhler Franken Koppe De Feijter Advocaten and former staff lawyer at the European Court, lectured on key elements of preparing applications to the European Court of Human Rights, with a particular emphasis on Russian law, the situation in Chechnya, and the relevant precedents set by cases brought against Turkey by Kurdish applicants.

The seminar covered issues such as admissibility, exhaustion of domestic remedies, collection of evidence, intimidation of witnesses, and the right to individual petition. The Ingushetia coordinator and executive director jointly raised funds for the seminar from the Royal Dutch Embassy in Moscow and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

All relevant staff members of the project also attended training seminars held by other organizations. These include:

! One of the staff lawyers attended a yearlong training course for human rights activists from the former Soviet Union sponsored by the **Helsinki Federation for Human Rights in Poland**;

! The Ingushetia coordinator attended the Winter School for Human Rights sponsored by the **Helsinki Federation for Human Rights in Poland**, March 2002;

! The Moscow coordinator attended the Russian Human Rights Summer School in June 2002, organized by the **Institute of Human Rights**, Moscow;

! The Ingushetia coordinator attended the **Moscow Helsinki Committee** seminar on the rights of refugees in the North Caucasus, Pyatigorsk, July 2002;

! All relevant staff attended the **Avocats sans Frontieres France** training for lawyers bringing cases to the European Court of Human Rights, Moscow, July 2002;

! One of the staff lawyers is attending "Protecting Human

Rights at the European Court of Human Rights," a 2002-2003 yearlong seminar organized by the **International Protection Center Moscow and Interights**;

! The Moscow coordinator attended the **Netherlands Helsinki Committee** and

! **Interights** practical training on the European Convention, November 2002.

Work on Cases

THE CHECHNYA Justice Project's goal for 2002 in terms of case-work was to select ten new cases and submit those applications to the European Court of Human Rights.

The Chechnya Justice Project far exceeded these targets. It accepted twenty-one new cases and submitted sixteen applications and five supplements to previously submitted applications. In total, the project now works on thirty-one cases with clients from sixty-two different families.

The majority of the cases, nineteen, regard forced disappearances; eight of the cases regard extrajudicial executions; four of the cases regard torture and ill-treatment. For example, Chechnya Justice Project filed applications with the European Court on behalf of:

! Alaudin Sadykov, a fifty-three-year-old gymnastics teacher and torture victim. In 2000, Russian police detained him and held him for over two months at a precinct in Grozny, where his torture included a police officer severing one of his earlobes.

! Magomed Musaev and the parents of two other young men, whom Russian troops detained in December 2000, took to their main military base, and who then "disappeared." Three months later,

! Musaev and the others found the mutilated dead bodies of their sons in a mass grave just outside the base.

! Tsalipat Isigova and Khadisat Umkhanova, the mothers of two young men whom Russian soldiers detained during a July 2001 sweep operation in Sernovodsk along with hundreds of others. All the other men were eventually released, but our clients never saw their sons again and the Russian authorities have been unable to explain what happened to them.

! Members of nine families from the village of Starye Atagi, who each have a relative detained by Russian troops during a March 2002 sweep operation along with dozens of other men

from the village; most were released, but these nine men “disappeared.”

For greater detail about the project’s cases, please see the case summaries below, on page 28.

In 2002, the project also set up a system for the translation of its applications. We hired a Moscow-based freelance translator and, with him, developed a lexicon for translating specific legal terms from Russian into English and vice-versa.

The translator has since translated all submissions to the European Court into English or Russian. The project keeps all submissions on file in both English and Russian. Clients receive copies of submissions in Russian, and the European Court requires that all submissions after admissibility be in English or French.

Because the European Court is so overloaded with applications, the first step in processing the case, communication, generally takes over two years. With communication, the European Court informs the respondent government that an application has been submitted and gives the government’s representative the opportunity to comment on its admissibility.

As of this writing, none of the applications submitted by the Chechnya Justice Project had been communicated, although we expect the first communications to take place in 2003.

Emergency in the Imakaev Case

A DEEPLY disturbing incident happened in one of the cases Chechnya Justice Project filed with the European Court in 2002.

On 2 June 2002, Russian federal forces detained a client of the Chechnya Justice Project, Said-Magomed Imakaev, at his home in Novye Atagi. Through the Chechnya Justice Project, Said-Magomed Imakaev and his wife Marzet Imakaeva had introduced an application to the European Court in February 2002 regarding the December 2000 “disappearance” of their son Said-Magomed Imakaev.

Realizing the imminent threat of Imakaev “disappearing” like his son, our staff immediately contacted the Russian prosecutor’s office to seek an intervention. As that office failed to respond in any manner, we proceeded to inform the European Court and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, as well as several international human rights groups. We also helped Marzet Imakaeva collect evidence that Russian soldiers detained her

husband and submitted this evidence to the prosecutor’s office.

In subsequent months, we tried to ensure that the Russian government was asked constantly about the Imakaev case at varying international forums, hoping that the government would eventually start looking for him and release him. Unfortunately, all these efforts have failed to bring about Imakaev's return home. He is still missing, yet another person "disappeared" in Russian custody.

In response to our appeal, the European Court required the Russian government to state whether Russian federal troops had detained Imakaev, and what investigative measures had been undertaken to establish the circumstances of his detention and his whereabouts. The government responded that, most likely, Chechen rebels disguised as Russian soldiers perpetrated the disappearance in order to discredit the federal forces.

After receiving a copy of the government's memorandum, Chechnya Justice Project submitted to the European Court overwhelming evidence that Russian troops detained Imakaev and that law enforcement agencies failed to take the most basic steps in investigating his "disappearance." Although the European Court has prioritized this application, as of this writing, the case has not moved on.

This case, and several other security incidents involving Chechnya Justice Project clients, has evoked serious discussions about the need and limited ability to protect our clients and eyewitnesses. We remain unsure whether Russian troops targeted Imakaev because of his application to the European Court, or for other reasons.

Cooperation with other nongovernmental organizations

ANOTHER GOAL for the Chechnya Justice Project was to develop institutional contacts with Russian and international human rights groups and establish an exchange on questions related to human rights monitoring in Chechnya, the Russian justice system, and the European Court of Human Rights.

During 2001 and 2002, the project established relationships with many Russian and international organizations. These relationships have been instrumental in achieving several of the project's other goals: identifying and contacting new clients; securing evidence of abuse in our clients' cases; determining legal strategy vis a vis Russian legal institutions and the European Court of Human Rights; arranging participation of our staff in training seminars; and securing funding.

In 2002, staff members of the project attended or contributed to the following seminars and conferences:

! "Grave Abuses: International Reaction Repertoire,"
organized by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Oslo,

August 2002;

! “For Ending the War and Bringing Peace to Chechnya,”
organized by the Public Committee for Ending the War in
Chechnya, Moscow, November 2002;

! “OSCE and Russia: Old Bridges, New Divisions,”
organized by the International Helsinki Federation, the Hague,
November 2002.

In Russia, the project cooperates with:

Civic Assistance

International Protection Center

Memorial Human Rights Center, www.memo.ru

Moscow Helsinki Group

Nizhny Novgorod Committee Against Torture, www.pytki.ru

TACIS Legal Protection of Individual Rights

UNHCR Moscow

International partners include:

Amnesty International, www.amnesty.org

European Human Rights Advocacy Center

Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org

Interights, www.interights.org

International Helsinki Federation, www.ihf-hr.org

Kurdish Human Rights Project, www.khrp.org

Netherlands Helsinki Committee, www.nhc.nl

Norwegian Helsinki Committee, www.nhc.no

Pax Christi Netherlands, www.paxchristi.nl

Swedish Helsinki Committee, www.shc.se

Academic Research Projects

IN ORDER to develop the theoretical foundations of our legal work, the Chechnya Justice Project commissions promising legal scholars to conduct academic research on new and unexplored issues. In 2002, the project commissioned three such studies:

! *Forced Disappearances as Continuing Violations of International Law*. Amsterdam International Law Clinic. For several of Chechnya Justice Project’s cases it was crucial to argue that forced disappearances are “continuing violations,” to which the six-month statute of limitation for introducing an

application does not apply. At the project's request, the Amsterdam International Law Clinic surveyed the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on forced disappearances and continuing violations, and examined whether other international bodies considered forced disappearances to be of a continuing nature.

! *Independence of the Military Justice System in Russia and the Jurisdiction of Military and Civilian Prosecutors.* A.I. Panicheva, candidate of science, Moscow State Law Academy. Russian law provides for a separate justice system for crimes committed by military servicemen. The Chechnya Justice Project has often found that a lack of clarity of jurisdiction between the civilian and military prosecutor's offices hindered the effectiveness of investigations into complaints of abuses committed by servicemen. At the project's

! request, Ms. Panicheva defined each the roles of the military and civilian prosecutors in the context of Article 13 of the European Convention, the right to effective remedy.

! *The Exhaustion of Domestic Remedies in the Russian Legal Arena.* M.R. Voskobitova, International Protection Center, Moscow. Individuals who wish to bring applications to the European Court of Human Rights must exhaust all effective domestic remedies available to them under domestic law. This research project sought to identify which local remedies Russian citizens are obliged to exhaust in order to meet the European Court's exhaustion requirement. It also aimed to identify which formally existing remedies should be deemed ineffective, and on what grounds.

4. Project Plan 2003-2004

Developments in the Project's Legal Work

IN 2003, the project will assist its clients to submit complaints to local courts protesting the inaction or ineffectiveness of the procuracy's investigation. Such complaints have become possible with the entry into force of Russia's new Criminal-Procedural Code.

The project will submit approximately twenty new applications to the European Court annually during 2003 and 2004.

During 2003 and 2004, as the project's cases progress through the European Court, the project will prepare annually 5-10 additional submissions, such as responses to government observations. By 2005, we expect that the bulk of the project's legal work

will be related to applications in more advanced stages before the European Court.

In 2003, the project will hold an advanced training seminar on the European Court of Human Rights specifically tailored to working on cases from Chechnya. This seminar will follow up on the seminar organized in 2002 and focus on practical training on the more advanced stages of proceedings before the European Court. The project will invite lawyers and human rights advocates from other Russian NGOs to attend the seminar as well.

In 2003, the project will publish its first annual citizens' guide, a pamphlet with detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to submit an application to the European Court regarding a forced disappearance. These pamphlets will lower the threshold for human rights advocates but especially also ordinary persons in

Chechnya to submit cases to the European Court independently and will address the severe lack of qualified and accessible legal representation in Chechnya. These guides will make the project's expertise accessible to a wider audience so that a maximum number of people in Chechnya can benefit from its work.

In 2003 and 2004, with the assistance of the Swedish Helsinki Committee and a Swedish university, the project will produce a bi-annual summary of new European Court case-law (judgments and admissibility decisions) that are relevant for cases from Chechnya. The summary will also include relevant reviews of academic articles from European law journals.

Organizational and Administrative Developments

DURING 2003, the project will register the Moscow office as a Russian NGO affiliate of Stichting Chechnya Justice Initiative, thus officially establishing a presence in Moscow as a registered non-governmental organization.

During 2003, the project will launch its website at www.scji.org.

During 2003 and 2004, the executive director and the interim Board will work to replace the interim Board with a Governing Board; and the project will continue to expand its Advisory Committee and Committee of Recommendation.

With the assistance of the Swedish Helsinki Committee, in 2003 the Director will attend a training on NGO management and fundraising. In 2004, the Moscow coordinator and Ingushetia coordinators will attend training sessions on NGO management. In

2003, the project will hire a regular bookkeeper and arrange for a bi-annual audit of the project's finances.

5. Cases of the Chechnya Justice Project

NOTE: For security reasons, clients of the Chechnya Justice Project whose applications have not yet been introduced to the European Court of Human Rights are not included in this list, with the exception of the Murdalov case.

1. *The Disappearance of Musa Akhmadov:*

On 6 March 2002, federal forces detained Musa Akhmadov as he was driving to see his father in the village of Makheti. The soldiers brought Akhmadov to the military base in the village of Khattuni. The next day, military servicemen told his relatives that he had been transferred to Khankala military base. Akhmadov's family has not been able to obtain any further information about his whereabouts or fate. The official investigation into the "disappearance" has not been effective. In September 2002, the Chechnya Justice Project (CJP) filed a preliminary application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Akhmadov's wife. Our team currently assists the family in their attempts to seek justice within Russia.

2. *The Disappearance and Summary Execution of Shamil Akhmadov:*

During a March 2001 sweep operation in Argun, Russian federal forces detained Shamil Akhmadov, along with at least ten other men. Although the dead bodies of four of the men were found days later outside the Khankala military base, Akhmadov's relatives searched for him for over a year. In May 2002, they found his remains, bearing signs of extrajudicial execution, in a vacant lot on the outskirts of Argun. CJP filed a preliminary application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Tamusa Akhmadova in October 2002.

3. *The Disappearance of Lom-Ali and Umar-Ali Aziev:*

On 24 September 2000, after midnight, armed masked men burst into the house of the Aziev family in Grozny. They beat up Leche Aziev and took away his two sons. Leche Aziev and his wife have been looking for their sons ever since. Russian prosecutors did not conduct a meaningful investigation. CJP filed an application with the European Court on behalf of Leche and Zulai Aziev in July 2001. The case is currently awaiting communication.

4. *The Disappearance of Shakhid Baisaev:*

Russian federal troops detained Shakhid Baisaev during a sweep operation in Pobedinskoe (near Grozny) on 2 March 2000. Baisaev's wife Asmart Baisaeva has been looking for her husband ever since. In August 2000, armed masked men sold her a videocassette containing footage of her husband's detention. Russian prosecutors opened a criminal investigation but failed to conduct a meaningful investigation. CJP submitted the videotape to the prosecutor's office with a request to identify the individuals on the videotape and question them but never received a response. In April 2002, CJP filed an application to the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Baisaeva.

5. *The Disappearance of Bekkhan Bargaev:*

On 14 January 2001, federal soldiers detained Bekkhan Bargaev at his home. After beating both Bargaev and his mother with rifle butts, they forced him into an armored personnel carrier (APC) and drove away. He has not been seen since, and all of his family's attempts to establish his whereabouts and fate have been unsuccessful. CJP and Menno Kamminga, Professor of Law at University of Maastricht Faculty of Law filed a preliminary application with the European Court in March 2002. The full application will be filed shortly.

6. *The Unlawful Detention and Torture of Arbi and Adam Chitaev:*

Russian federal troops detained Arbi and Adam Chitaev in April 2000. They were held in Chernokozovo until their release in September that year, and both men suffered ill-treatment and torture. Criminal charges against them were dropped shortly after their release. Memorial Human Rights Center filed a complaint on behalf of the brothers to the European Court of Human Rights in July 2000. In summer 2001, both sides requested that CJP represent the brothers in further proceedings. CJP initiated appropriate action in the domestic legal system and filed an additional submission to the European Court in November 2002.

7. *The Disappearance of Said-Magomed Debizov and Iznovr Serbiev:*

During a 14 January 2001 sweep operation in Starye and Novye Atagi, Russian federal forces detained Iznovr Serbiev and Said-Magomed Debizov, who worked at an auto repair shop. Their relatives have not been able to establish their whereabouts or fate since. The procuracy opened a criminal case into their disappearance, but no effective investigation was ever carried out. CJP and Netherlands-based law professor Menno Kamminga filed a preliminary application with the European Court in March 2002. The full application will be filed shortly.

8. *The Disappearance of Magomed Dokuev:*

On 14 February 2001, at 6:00 in the morning, Russian soldiers seized Magomed Dokuev and his father Vakhid Dokuev from their home in the village of Novye Atagi. Vakhid Dokuev was released on the following day, but Magomed Dokuev has not been seen since. A former detainee later informed the family that Magomed died in detention and was buried on a Russian military base, but the family has not been granted access to the purported burial site. CJP and Maxim Ferschtman of the Dutch law firm BIIhler, Franken, Koppe, de Feijter Advocaten filed an application regarding this case with the European Court in February 2003. The case is currently awaiting communication.

9. *The Disappearance of Islam Dombaev:*

On 28 June 2000, a Russian ministry of interior unit detained then fifteen-year-old Islam Dombaev and two of his friends, Murat Lianov and Timur Tabzhanov. Dombaev's mother has been looking for her son ever since. Russian prosecutors opened a criminal investigation into the disappearance but have failed to question key witnesses. Although the investigation established the units involved in their detention, prosecutors have not identified any suspects in the disappearance and the investigation was subsequently suspended. The CJP team filed an application with the European Court on behalf of Rasha Alieva, Dombaev's mother, in July 2001. London-based barrister Gareth Peirce represents the family. The case is currently awaiting communication.

10. *The Summary Execution of Five Members of the Estamirov family:*

On 5 February 2000, Russian federal troops summarily executed five members of the Estamirov family in the Novye Aldi suburb of Grozny. Among the victims were a one-year-old boy and a woman who was eight months pregnant. The criminal investigation into the killings failed to conduct full forensic medical examinations of the bodies and forensic analysis of the crime scene, secure physical evidence at the scene of the crime, and question witnesses. The CJP team filed an application with the European Court on behalf of the Estamirov family in August 2000. London-based barrister Gareth Peirce represents the family. The case is currently awaiting communication.

11. *The Arbitrary Killing of Amkhad Gekhaev and Zalina Mezhidova:*

On 27 October 2001, Zalina Mezhidova and Amkhad Gekhaev were driving home from a turnip field in Komsomolskoe when military helicopters opened fire on their car. Although soldiers took them away alive, though injured, the military returned their

dead bodies, both missing limbs, to the families several days later. The official investigation has failed to identify any suspects in the case and the military procuracy informed the applicants that no wrongdoing had been found in the 27 October operation. The CJP team filed a preliminary application with the European Court in April 2002 and will submit the full application shortly.

12. *The Summary Execution of Mariam and Magomet Goigov:*

In January 2000, Russian federal troops summarily executed fifty-nine-year-old Mariam and thirty-one-year-old Magomet Goigov in the Staropromyslovskii district of Grozny. A medical examination by an Ingush forensic expert shows that Magomet Goigov was severely tortured before his death. Russian prosecutors opened a criminal investigation into the summary executions but the investigation has not been meaningful. In September 2001, CJP filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Petimat Goigova and her four children. The case is currently awaiting communication.

13. *The Disappearance of Said-Khusein and Said-Magomed Imakaev:*

On 17 December 2000, twenty-three year old Said-Khusein Imakaev was driving home from the market when a group of armed men stopped his car and detained him. Said-Khusein subsequently disappeared. Investigators failed to question key witnesses and soon suspended the investigation. In February 2002, Said-Khusein's parents filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights. Four months later, on 2 June 2002, Russian federal forces detained Imakaev's father, Said-Magomed Imakaev, at his home. Said-Magomed subsequently also "disappeared." The official investigation failed to follow leads that could lead to identifying the officers who detained Imakaev. That same month, CJP filed an application regarding the second disappearance to the European Court. In response to a request from the European Court about the father's disappearance, the Russian government asserted that, most likely, rebel fighters disguised as federal forces had detained Said-Magomed Imakaev. CJP submitted a large body of evidence of Russian federal troops' involvement in the disappearance to the European Court. The case is currently awaiting communication.

14. *The Disappearance of Sultan Isaev:*

On 29 April 2001, Russian troops conducted a sweep operation in Alkhan-Kala. In the course of the operation, they detained eleven men, including Sultan Isaev, who subsequently disappeared. Isaev's wife, Khamila Isaeva, has since sought to establish the whereabouts of her husband, but to no avail. At CJP's request, Professor Bill Bowring of London Metropolitan University filed an application

with the European Court on behalf of Isaev's wife in December 2002. The case is currently awaiting communication.

15. *The Disappearance of Aпти Isigov and Zelimkhan Umkhanov:*

During a 2 July 2001 sweep operation in Sernovodsk, Russian troops detained hundreds of men, including Aпти Isigov and Zelimkhan Umkhanov. Most men were released the same evening but Isigov and Umkhanov "disappeared." Their relatives have since unsuccessfully sought to establish their whereabouts. A criminal investigation was opened but later suspended on grounds of failure to identify a suspect, despite the fact that the procuracy questioned several servicemen who participated in the sweep operation and even members of the APC crew that detained the two men. CJP filed an application with the European Court on behalf of the relatives of the two men in December 2002. The case is currently awaiting communication.

16. *The Unlawful Detention and Torture of Salambek Khadisov and Islam Tsechoev:*

On 23 September 2001, Salambek Khadisov and Islam Tsechoev were detained by Russian police from their homes in the Sunzha district of Ingushetia. After a day in an Ingush police cell, a military helicopter transported them to Khankala military base in Chechnya. Russian guards brutally beat them with rifle butts, extinguished cigarettes on their skin, and forced them to sign documents denying that any mistreatment occurred. CJP introduced an application to the European Court on behalf of the two men in April 2002 and will submit a full application shortly.

17. *The Arbitrary Killing of Khamid Khatsiev and Kazbek Akiev:*

On 6 August 2000, a Russian military helicopter opened fire, without apparent reason, at a group of men who were mowing grass in the hills near the Ingush village of Arshty (just across the border with Chechnya). Two of the men were killed. The military prosecutor's office opened a criminal investigation but the investigation has not been meaningful. In December 2001, CJP filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Khazman Akieva and Laila Khatsieva, mothers of the two killed men, as well as a number of other close relatives. The case is currently awaiting communication.

18. *The Disappearance of Magomed and Kharon Khumaidov:*

On 12 February 2002 federal forces surrounded the Khumaidov home in the village of Makheti, broke into the courtyard, detained Magomed Khumaidov and his father Kharon and drove them away to the military base in Khattuni. At the base, federal servicemen told relatives that the two men had been transferred to the military base at Khankala. All subsequent efforts to establish their whereabouts have been in vain. Law enforcement agencies never adequately investigated the “disappearances.” In August 2002, the Chechnya Justice Project filed a preliminary application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Esila Akhiatova, Magomed’s

wife. Presently our team assists the family in its attempts to seek justice within Russia and is preparing a full application to the European Court of Human Rights.

19. *The Disappearance of Ramzan Kukuev:*

On 3 May 2001 during a special operation in the village of Tsa-Vedeno federal forces detained Ramzan Kukuev. After his detention, his wife appealed to various authorities in an attempt to establish his whereabouts or his fate, but all of her attempts were in vain. The procuracy opened a criminal investigation into his disappearance, but failed to conduct a thorough and effective investigation. In June 2002, CJP filed a preliminary application with the European Court on behalf of Kukuev’s wife, Mariam Atabaeva. Presently CJP assists Atabaeva in her attempts to seek justice within Russia and is preparing a full application to the European Court of Human Rights.

20. *The Disappearance and Extrajudicial Execution of Nura Lulueva:*

On 3 June 2000, armed masked men on an armored personnel carrier detained Nura Lulueva, her cousins and several other people at the Northern market in Grozny, where they had been selling strawberries. In March 2001, Lulueva’s body and those of her cousins were discovered among those retrieved from a mass grave in Dachny village, outside Grozny. Russian prosecutors failed to conduct a meaningful investigation. No full forensic examination was conducted on the body and physical evidence, including clothing and blindfolds, was not saved as material evidence. Almost two years after the discovery of the body, the investigation has led to no results. The CJP filed an application with the European Court on behalf of Said-Alvi Luluev, Lulueva’s husband, in March 2001. London-based barrister Gareth Peirce represents the family. The case is currently awaiting communication.

21. *The Unlawful Detention and Torture of Suleiman Medov:*

Russian federal troops detained Suleiman Medov in January 2000. Medov was held in a

variety of detention centers, including Chernokozovo, for the next three months. During this period, Medov was tortured and beaten frequently. Members of the CJP team gathered evidence of Medov's illtreatment and corresponded with the prosecutor's office regarding his case. By June 2001, domestic remedies had been exhausted. At the request of CJP, Maxim Ferschtman of the Dutch law firm BIIhler, Franken, Koppe, de Feijter Advocaten filed an application to the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Suleiman Medov in December 2001. The case is currently awaiting communication.

22. *The Disappearance and Extrajudicial Execution of Odes Mitaev, Magomed Magomadov, Said-Rakhman Musaev:*

During a 10 December 2000 targeted operation in Raduzhnoe and Dolinskii villages, masked men on military vehicles detained twenty-one men, including Magomed Magomadov, Said-Rakhman Musaev, and Odes Mitaev. While eighteen of the detainees were released in subsequent weeks, the bodies of Magomadov, Musaev and Mitaev, each with clear signs of extrajudicial execution, were found in the Dachny village mass grave on 21 February 2001. The official investigation into the men's deaths failed to conduct a full forensic autopsy on the bodies or to save physical evidence, such as the clothing and bindings found on the bodies, as material evidence. Two years after the discovery of the bodies, the investigation has not made any progress. CJP filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of the three families in February 2003. The case is currently awaiting communication.

23. *The Disappearance of Zelimkhan Murdalov:*

On 2 January 2001, Russian police officers in the October district of Grozny detained Zelimkhan Murdalov and brought him to the local police station. Murdalov subsequently disappeared, although police assert they released him the next day. The official investigation found that Murdalov was severely beaten on the night of 2 June and that police officers who drove away the following day told their colleagues that they had blown up his body. The investigation has failed to establish Murdalov's whereabouts or find his remains. Although one police officer was charged for ill-treating Murdalov, no-one has been indicted for his "disappearance." The criminal proceedings are currently suspended.

24. *The Unlawful Detention and Torture of Alaudin Sadykov:*

Police detained Alaudin Sadykov on 5 March 2000, and held him in the October district temporary police precinct for over two months. During those months, police cut off one of his ears, broke several

ribs and caused numerous other physical injuries. Sadykov was eventually released in May 2000. He reported the ill-treatment in June 2000 to the prosecutor's office but the official investigation has failed to identify any suspects. CJP filed an application to the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Sadykov in July 2002. The case is currently awaiting communication.

25. *Disappearances after a sweep operation in Starye Atagi:*

During a 6 to 11 March 2002 special operation in the village of Starye Atagi, federal soldiers detained Amir Pokaev, Islam Chagaev, Said-Selim Kanaev, Aslan Akhmadov, Magomed Isambaev, Ibragim Magomadov, Adlan Baisarov, Timur Khadzhiev and Abdul-Naser Zakev. Since their detention, their relatives have unsuccessfully sought to establish their whereabouts and fate. The official investigation into the "disappearances" have produced no results. In September 2002 CJP filed a preliminary application with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of the families of the detained and disappeared men. Presently our team assists the families in their attempts to seek justice within Russia and is preparing the full application to the European Court.

26. *The Disappearance of Khadzhimurat Yandiev:*

On 2 February 2000, Russian federal troops detained a wounded Khadzhimurat Yandiev at a hospital in Alkhan-Kala. Video footage of the detention, submitted to the prosecutor, showed how a Russian officer questioned Yandiev and then ordered his execution. Yandiev's mother has been looking for her son ever since. Russian prosecutors have refused to open a criminal investigation into Yandiev's disappearance and have not identified the officer clearly visible on the video footage. The CJP team filed an application with the European Court on behalf of Fatima Bazorkina, Yandiev's mother, in April 2001, and submitted a supplement to the application in September 2002. London-based barrister Gareth Peirce represents the family. The case is currently awaiting communication.

27. *The Disappearance of Abdulkasim Zaurbekov:*

On 17 October 2000, Abdulkasim Zaurbekov entered the temporary police precinct in the October district of Grozny to collect his pay for work done at the precinct as a car mechanic. Zaurbekov never exited the police precinct and remains missing to this day. Zaurbekov's wife, Roza Yusupova, has unsuccessfully looked for her husband ever since. Russian prosecutors launched a criminal investigation, but the investigation has yielded no results. CJP filed an application with the European Court on behalf of Roza Yusupova in May 2002. The case is currently awaiting communication.

6. Project Staff, Board, and Committees

Staff

INGUSHETIA

Tanzila Arsamakova, *research assistant*

Arsen Sakalov, *Ingushetia coordinator*

MOSCOW

Elena Ejova, *Moscow coordinator and lawyer*

Anastasia Maltseva, *lawyer*

Andrei Nikolaev, *lawyer*

Lyudmila Polshikova, *Moscow office manager*

Maria K. Pulzetti, *Executive Director*

Board

Jan ter Laak, *Netherlands Helsinki Committee*

Diederik de Savornin Lohman, *Human Rights Watch*

Egbert G.Ch. Wesselink, *Pax Christi Netherlands*

Committee of Recommendation

Lyudmila Alekseeva, *President, Moscow Helsinki Group and International Helsinki Federation*

Andr  Glucksman, *Philosopher*

Erik Jurgens, *Dutch Senator and member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*

Nata a Kandic, *Humanitarian Law Center, Belgrade*

Nathalie Nougayrede, *Le Monde*

Lord Russell-Johnston, *Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (formerly President)*

Advisory Committee

Anne Bouillon, *Avocats sans Fronti res France*

Professor William Bowring, *London Metropolitan University Faculty of Law*

Professor Andr  Nollkaemper, *University of Amsterdam Faculty of Law*

Gareth Peirce, *Birnberg, Peirce and Partners, London*

Borislav Petranov, *Interights*

Ruslan Yandarov, *prominent Chechen lawyer*

7. Finances and Supporters

THE CHECHNYA Justice Project is fortunate to have received generous support for its work from a variety of donors. As a result, it has been able to develop into a fully operational project during the eighteen months since its founding.

In the summer of 2001, the project received two start-up grants, from the Netherlands-based organization KerkinActie and the Dutch section of Amnesty International. These grants, in the amounts of 3.750 and 5.000 euros respectively, made possible the transition from an ad-hoc volunteer based project to a professional organization, and resulted in the establishment of Stichting Chechnya Justice Initiative and *Pravovaia Initsiativa po Chechne* in November 2001. The funds allowed the project to work with clients in Chechnya and Ingushetia, purchase two computers and a printer, register non-governmental organizations in Ingushetia and the Netherlands, send applications to Strasbourg by courier, and covered three months' salary for the Moscow coordinator.

In October 2001, the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands awarded Stichting Chechnya Justice Initiative a grant in the amount of 97.440 euros for its first year of operations (1 November 2001 - 31 October 2002). In May 2002, the Open Society Institute provided additional year-long funding to enable us to upgrade several part-time positions to full-time, hire an additional lawyer, and rent office space in Moscow and Ingushetia. Below is a detailed account of the project's finances during the 2002 fiscal year.

Appendix

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHECHNYA JUSTICE PROJECT

The project's clients

THE CHECHNYA Justice Project represents victims and the families of victims of forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, indiscriminate attacks, and destruction of property. The project's clients include victims of numerous high-profile scale violations, including the massacres in Staropromyslovski and Novye Aldi districts of Grozny in early 2000, the mass grave discovered in Dachny village in 2001, and the large-scale sweep operation in Starye Atagi in March 2002.

The project seeks to represent victims of major human rights incidents so as to ensure that, if domestic justice fails, the European Court of Human Rights will eventually review most of these incidents.

The project also works on individual violations, which are also, unfortunately,

representative of the conflict. The project's research team in Ingushetia monitors the situation in Chechnya and identifies potential clients.

Additionally, the project closely follows reports on Chechnya by NGOs and intergovernmental groups such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and strives to ensure that its work accurately reflects the most serious violations documented by these groups.

Project history

SINCE THE beginning of the conflict in 1999, Russian and international human rights groups have documented a pattern of very serious violations by Russian troops and rebel forces in Chechnya, including extrajudicial executions, torture and ill-treatment, and forced disappearances.

The watchdog groups also found that Russian law-enforcement and judicial organs refused to investigate the violations adequately or prosecute their perpetrators.

During mid-2000, as it became increasingly apparent that victims of human rights abuses in Chechnya could not find justice within Russia, staff members of the international human rights organization Human Rights Watch in Moscow and Ingushetia started to put victims of some of the most serious abuses in contact with experienced European lawyers, who, in turn, prepared applications to the European Court on the victims' behalf.

By mid-2001, as a growing number of victims of serious abuses expressed a desire to bring proceedings to Strasbourg, it became apparent that the ad-hoc efforts of the Human Rights Watch staff were no longer sufficient and that a more formal structure needed to be set up in order to develop the ad-hoc project into a professional and long-term litigation program.

Thus, in late 2001, a group of human rights activists founded Stichting Chechnya Justice Initiative in the Netherlands and *Pravovaia Initsiativa po Chechne* in Ingushetia, which jointly implement the Chechnya Justice Project.

During 2001 and 2002, the project has successfully made the transition into a fully independent and sustainable program. The project structure has been formalized, and the personnel have developed procedures for quality, consistency, institutional memory, and regular feedback.

All staff members have attended training sessions and seminars to increase their expertise on the European Convention, and a growing network of advisors and supporters connects the project to the wider European human rights community.

Project Structure

THE CHECHNYA Justice Project is a collaboration between the Dutch NGO Stichting Chechnya Justice Initiative and the Russian NGO *Pravovaia Initsiativa po Chechne*.

Stichting Chechnya Justice Initiative formally represents the project's clients before domestic Russian legal institutions and the European Court of Human Rights.

Its staff in Moscow includes the Executive Director, the Moscow coordinator, a full-time legal drafter, a part-time legal drafter, and an office manager. The Moscow-based team is responsible for proceedings before the relevant domestic law enforcement agencies and courts, and the European Court.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall management of the project, including fundraising and financial reporting, setting strategies and policies, quality control, and maintaining and developing a network of contacts with legal academics and lawyers

willing to provide theoretical and practical legal assistance.

The staff of *Pravovaia Initsiativa po Chechne*, based in Ingushetia, the province bordering Chechnya, monitors developments in Chechnya and identifies potential new clients. It collects information on and evidence of violations of the project's clients, advises clients on domestic legal remedies, and maintains contact with the victims throughout the proceedings. The staff in Ingushetia consists of a researcher and a research assistant.

Governing Board

THE GOVERNING Board is charged with overall direction and governance of the Chechnya Justice Project. Members of the board lend professional expertise to the organization, assist in fundraising endeavors, and act as a public face for the organization. The board meets four times a year and delegates responsibility for day-to-day operations to the staff. The executive director reports to the board.

Advisory Committee

IN ORDER to ensure the highest quality of its work, the Chechnya Justice Project regularly consults with experts on Russian law, the European Convention on Human Rights, and proceedings before the European Court. The project has established an advisory committee, made up of legal academics and experienced international lawyers who take an active role in advising the project on legal issues.

Committee of Recommendation

THE CHECHNYA Justice Project has also established a committee of recommendation, which consists of individuals from around Europe who have made significant contributions in the field of human rights. This committee, which demonstrates the support enjoyed by the Chechnya Justice Project in the international community, has no governing or advisory responsibilities in the organization. Rather, the committee literally “recommends” the Chechnya Justice Initiative by virtue of its members’ high standing as internationally recognized human rights activists, journalists, policymakers, and others in positions of moral authority.

Project Objectives

THE OVERRIDING goal of the project is to secure legal redress and reparations for victims of serious human rights abuses committed during the ongoing war in Chechnya and to promote respect for rights enshrined in the Russian Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights. The project believes that its work will contribute to promoting justice for all victims of serious crimes in Chechnya by addressing key failures of the justice system in both domestic and international fora. In particular, the project seeks to hold perpetrators accountable for specific violations by representing its clients before Russian authorities and bringing cases to the European Court of Human Rights. The long-term goals of the project include:

- ! Secure **legal redress and reparations** for victims of serious human rights abuses committed during the current conflict in Chechnya, when domestic proceedings have been ineffective
- ! Contribute to a **peaceful resolution** of the Chechnya conflict by establishing accountability for serious human rights abuses, which we believe will decrease tensions and provide a model for resolving disputes through legal means rather than through violent conflict;
- ! Strengthen **local capacity** in the North Caucasus and throughout Russia by supporting local NGOs and training lawyers and human rights defenders in human rights litigation;
- ! Publish accessible **resource materials**, specific to the Chechen context and to Russian law, that will allow private citizens and human rights advocates to bring cases independently to the European Court;
- ! Address the lack of effective **domestic remedy** for serious human rights abuses committed both in Chechnya and in other regions of Russia and compel Russian authorities to halt widespread abuses in Chechnya and provide adequate

domestic remedies that hold perpetrators accountable;

! Develop a body of **ECHR case-law** that will clarify Russian obligations under the European Convention, set a framework for reform of the Russian judiciary and law enforcement structures, and contribute to the international legal system for the protection of human rights;

! Institute reforms in **Russian legislation and law enforcement** to adequately protect rights and freedoms enshrined in the Convention;

! Require the **Council of Europe Committee** of Ministers, as stipulated in the Convention, to supervise the implementation of the European Court's rulings and take measures to prevent further violations.

Acknowledgements

THE CHECHNYA Justice Project gratefully acknowledges its supporters during 2001 and 2002: ACT KerkinActie, Amnesty International Netherlands, the Open Society Institute Budapest, United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees Moscow, and the Royal Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project also is honored to count the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Amnesty International Netherlands, and United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees Moscow among its donors for 2003.

The project's work would not be possible without the contributions of our Ingushetia security team, which protects the safety of the project's staff and clients when in Ingushetia. We are also indebted to our colleagues at Human Rights Watch and Memorial Human Rights Center, who are generous with both their wisdom and their friendship. The patient and prudent guidance of our advisory committee has been crucial in developing the project's legal strategy. The backing of the members of our committee of recommendation has also made a major contribution to the project's growth.

Others who have offered special assistance to the project include: Anna Berezova, Esselien van Eerten, Maxim Ferschtman, Menno Kamminga, Alexander Kozhin, Aleksei Krasnov, Philip Leach, Alexander Semenov, Ivan Weiss, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, the Swedish Helsinki Committee.