

FOR AN INTERIM UNITED NATIONS ADMINISTRATION IN CHECHNYA

Appeal to the Secretary General and to the Heads of State and of Government of the member countries of the United Nations

We citizens of Chechnya, of Russia, and of the whole world

address this appeal with confidence to the United Nations and to all States that hold dear the fate of human life and civilisation in this far corner of Europe, cancelled from the conscience of the West and of the free countries and consigned for the last ten years to the Russian occupying forces.

The Russian State is renewing a tragedy that has dragged on for three centuries, from one occupation to the next, from one deportation to the next, from one massacre to the next. This centuries-old colonisation is a source of shame for the whole of humanity and a tragedy that unites, rather than divides, the Russian and Chechen peoples in a common fate.

We Chechens,

have, in the last ten years, seen our country devastated, our capital Grozny razed to the ground, our villages, fields and woods, and our people itself, become the daily target of a war that seems to have no end or epilogue other than our definitive annihilation.

We have seen our sons and daughters, our fathers and mothers, our husbands and wives, our brothers and sisters, rounded up in the middle of the night, deported, imprisoned, tortured, raped, mutilated and murdered.

We have seen, with great anguish, the growing risk that some of those younger and weaker than us, brought up in a world that knows nothing but war, will yield to the temptation of terrorism and entrust their hopes to a "murderous courage" that would put them on the same level as the occupiers.

We have seen that our fragile institutions, consecrated by a democratic election in 1997 and recognised by the international community and by the Russian Federation itself, were first delegitimised, then replaced by a straw government, and finally swept away by a sham referendum.

We Russians,

know that thousands of our soldiers have been killed, their bodies returned secretly to the cemeteries in our towns and villages.

We know that our soldiers are condemned to commit innumerable atrocities and crimes on the orders of cynical, mercenary autocrats and generals.

We know that this war kills tens of thousands of men and women, and with them the hopes for democracy and freedom that we have been nurturing in our hearts since the end of the Cold War.

We citizens of the whole world,

share the sense of horror felt by many Russians and the sense of terror that haunts the Chechens in the face of the devastation of this small piece of Europe and of the world, which is still called Chechnya.

We believe that what is happening in this deliberately and blamefully abandoned region increasingly resembles a full-fledged genocide.

Dear Secretary General, dear Heads of State and of Government,

We believe that it is intolerable that the international community should continue to ignore the daily unfolding of this terrible tragedy, and that we cannot continue to turn a blind eye and shirk our responsibilities with respect to what is happening in Chechnya.

We support the plan for "conditional independence" presented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Ilyas Akhmadov, which proposes the establishment of an interim United Nations administration on the basis of the disarmament of all the Chechen forces and the withdrawal of all the Russian military and administrative personnel. At the end of this period of transition, during which the UN would be charged with administering the country and co-ordinating the re-establishment of the civil, political and material order of a country strewn with ruins and common graves, the surviving population would be called to elect its own parliament and government.

We citizens of Chechnya, of Russia, and of the whole world

ask you solemnly and with confidence to take all the necessary steps to ensure that the Akhmadov plan for peace and democracy in Chechnya is first studied and then implemented.

We hope that, in this framework, a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Chechnya will be appointed as soon as possible.

The security of the Russian people and the lives of the Chechen people cannot be sacrificed to the logic of a conflict that no-one can hope any longer to win on the battlefield. It is up to the international community and to the United Nations to enable two peoples who are both losing a shameful war to join forces in order to win an honourable peace.

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