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**CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTIONS OF
TORTURE AND DETENTION
DISAPPEARANCES AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS**

**Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-
governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 February 2006]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Civil and political rights – Torture and detention in the Russian Federation, Chechen Republic

The second war in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation has played an integral role in the rollback of human rights in Vladimir Putin's Russia and has affected its political trajectory, helping to strengthen those in favour of authoritarianism. The war and the concomitant impunity led to a rise of terrorism not only in Chechnya, but also in the neighbouring republics and the Russian Federation.

In the meantime, the war in Chechnya continues and spreads into the neighbouring republics. The Society for Threatened Peoples is appalled by the failure of international human rights mechanisms regarding this war which has amounted to the most severe and longest human rights crisis on European ground, leaving every eighth Chechen dead and nearly half of the population as internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees in other countries, especially in Europe. A worsening of specific areas like ecology, hostage-taking of relatives of alleged Chechen fighters or political figures occurred in 2005. There is no end to gross human rights abuses, like murder, enforced disappearances, torture, hostage-taking, arbitrary detentions and a constant climate of impunity which is spreading to the neighbouring republics where the conditions has begun to resemble the situation in Chechnya. Statistics by the Russian NGO Memorial reveal a familiar picture. The organisation recorded a total of over 300 abductions in 2005. Memorial stresses that their statistics are based on research conducted in about one-third of the territory of the Chechen Republic, and that the real numbers are three to four times higher.

The Society for Threatened Peoples has documented examples of the different types of human rights abuses:

Killings, disappearances, torture and arbitrary detention/hostage taking

In the night of October 18th 2005, masked and camouflaged security service personnel, reportedly Chechen speaking, abducted Salman Arsanukaev (65) and his son Khamzat (22) from their home in the village of Pobedinskoe and killed them. In the evening of October 18th 2005 the mutilated corpses of the two men were found in a dump outside the village. On October 2nd 2005, another son of Salman Arsanukaev, Supian, had been killed in Grozny. Before that, in April, his brother Selim had been detained and killed. On October 2nd 2005 the house where the Buraev family lived in Grozny was surrounded by more than one hundred operatives of the Ministry of Defence, the FSB and the Anti Terrorist Center. At the time, Sazita Buraeva, her daughter Zarema Buraeva, 24, and her sons Ali, 18, and Baudin, 22, as well as Zarema's two 2 and 4-year-old children, were at home. After entering the house, the servicemen forced Ali and Baudin Buraev to lie down the ground and beat them severely. The mother tried to stop them, but they pointed a gun at her. After about an hour, the commander asked Zarema about her deceased husband, who had killed in April, and then ordered her to follow him through the house. Zarema has been missing since. The servicemen also took Ali and Baudin with them. Their mother has not received no information about their whereabouts. The servicemen also stole 9,000 rubles, the TV set, the computer and other items.

The following report stands as an example for numerous such accounts of severe torture from Chechnya:

“Late in the evening of 12 March 2005, we had gone to bed. Four cars stopped outside of my house. They came into my house and asked for my son. I asked what he was guilty of, but they just asked for our passports. I handed over the passports. There are five males in our family: four sons and my husband. (...) They took away the passports, then came back and said they were taking away my eldest son. I asked why they were taking him away and they replied that they were going to ask him about something and then he would be released. For ten days I had no news of my son. Then they dumped him somewhere. They stripped him down to his underpants, tied his hands and beat him up. This was in some kind of car repair shed where gas was burning from a pipe. They beat him up and then, standing round him in a semi-circle, they pushed him onto the gas flame. He jumped over to the other side of it. They threw him back again and again, he jumped over. Then they tied his hands behind his back with a rope, pushed a long stick through the rope and stuck it in the fire. When he started twitching with pain, his hands got untied. He began to beat the flames away from himself. They told him that he appeared to be too hot and took him out into the street in just his underpants where they tied him to a stump and poured cold water over him. His back was beaten. String was tied tightly round his head and a stick inserted in this, which they said they would turn until his eyes popped out. Tufts of his hair were pulled out. They released some rats and he was bitten all over by rats.”

So called “Zachistkas” or mop-up operations still occur in Chechnya: On January 14th-16th 2005 a military operation was carried out in the village of Zumskoi. On January 14th the village was subjected to an aerial attack. One house was razed to the ground, several others were seriously damaged. On the same day, troops landed in helicopters. In the village the servicemen carried out a mop-up operation with looting, destruction of property and abductions of residents. Three men and a 15-years-old teenager were abducted. Their whereabouts of Shirvani Nasipov, Magomed Ibishev, Vakha Mukhaev and his son Atabi Mukhaev remain unknown.

The Society for Threatened Peoples is worried about another trend: Relatives of alleged Chechen resistance fighters are taken hostage. For example, May 10th 2005, members of the security services detained 70-year-old Maret Usmanova Khutsaeva and her granddaughter Lipa Tsaeva, 16, from their home in the village of Gekhi. The following day the women returned home, having been released on the condition that Arbi Khutsaev, Maret Khutsaev's son, would surrender to the authorities. If he refused to do so the men would return and detain Maret Khutsaeva once again.

Human Rights Defenders and applicants to the European Court of Human Rights and their family members are deliberately targeted, harassed, threatened and discriminated against.

The civilian population of Chechnya lives in constant fear. In the middle of the night, masked men armed with heavy weapons may enter their homes without warning and permission. People are abducted and often do not return. Once in detention, they are systematically tortured. The international community of states has not been able to put an end to these severe violations of human rights. The humanitarian and ecological situation is equally disconcerting. According to information from official sources of the ministry of health in Chechnya, 1,104 out of 2,173 newborn babies are ill. In a run-down factory in

Grozny the radioactivity was 58.000 times higher than the normal level. There are still more active facilities where radioactivity is released, i.e. a facility called "Rodon" near the village Gorjachevodsk and a garbage dump close to the main street linking the towns of Argun and Grozny. Cancer and tuberculosis rates continue to rise.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the Commission to:

- learn from past experiences and decide on a resolution condemning Russian politics, especially impunity and the severe violations human rights that occur in the Chechen Republic.
- enable the UN special procedures like the special rapporteurs to visit the Republic and thereby start a monitoring process breaking down the information blockade which is still in place in Chechnya.

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