

22 March 2016

Russian Federation – Raid on the office of Joint Mobile Group and attack on the head of the organisation Igor Kalyapin

On 16 March 2016, human rights defender Mr **Igor Kalyapin**, head of the **Joint Mobile Group** (JMG), was attacked by a group of approximately 15 unidentified masked men during a visit to Grozny, the capital of the Chechen Republic. On the previous day, the office of the JMG in Grozny was raided by the police.

[Igor Kalyapin](#) is chairman of **Committee for Prevention of Torture** (CPT), an interregional human rights organisation which carries out public investigations, represents the interests of torture victims before national and international courts and government agencies, and provides assistance to victims in obtaining compensation and medical rehabilitation. In November 2009, following the murder of human rights defender Ms [Natalya Estemirova](#), the [JMG](#) was established by the CPT, together with several other human rights organisations, to provide victims of human rights abuses in Chechnya with legal aid. Igor Kalyapin currently serves as the group's head.

On 16 March 2016, Igor Kalyapin travelled to Grozny, where he had meetings with journalists. An hour after checking in at the Grozny City Hotel, the hotel manager informed the human rights defender that he had to leave immediately as people who criticised Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of the Chechen Republic, were not welcome there. When Igor Kalyapin left and walked out onto the street, he was attacked by a group of about 15 masked men. The attackers punched him and threw chemicals, eggs and flour at him, before fleeing. The human rights defender did not suffer any serious injuries as a result of the attack. When police appeared at the scene, they took Igor Kalyapin to the police station where his statement was recorded and his clothing photographed. Police officers, however, refused to open a criminal case related to the attack. Subsequently, a federal investigator came to the police station at Igor Kalyapin's request, so that he could safely leave the territory of the Chechen Republic under his supervision.

Late on 15 March 2016, the office of the JMG, located in the former apartment of Natalya Estemirova in Grozny, was raided by police officers. Upon arrival, the police ordered all of the neighbours to leave their apartments, then broke the lock on the door to the office, and proceeded to search it before leaving, sealing the door as they did. The door to the office remains sealed. It is unclear whether anything was taken from the office by the police.

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the attack on Igor Kalyapin and raid on the office of the Joint Mobile Group, which it believes to be directly linked to the peaceful and legitimate work of JMG and CPT for the protection of victims of torture in the Chechen Republic.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Russia to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attack on Igor Kalyapin and raid on the office of Joint Mobile Group, with a view to publishing the results and bringing

- those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Igor Kalyapin and other members of Joint Mobile Group and Committee for Prevention of Torture;
 3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Russia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (b): “*Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms,*” and to Article 12 (2): “*The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.*”

Yours sincerely,



Mary Lawlor

Executive Director