

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0028/04

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Bart Staes, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, Olivier Dupuis and Gianfranco Dell'Alba
to the Commission

Subject: Abduction of 30 members of the Khanbiev family in Chechnya

In the past weeks Russian forces and pro-Russian Chechen militias have rounded up some 30 members of the family of Umar and Magomed Khanbiev, respectively the Minister for Health and the Minister for Defence in the government formed following the most recent elections in Chechnya, which were recognised by the international community.

Since the end of February, dozens of masked men have encircled whole villages, beaten and insulted the inhabitants, fired shots, threatened to 'kill the Khanbievs until there are none left' and taken all the members of the Khanbiev family that they could find to a destination which could be Tsentoroi, the home village of 'President' Kadyrov, where his son is said to have set up prisons and places of torture. In Benoi, the home village of the Khanbievs, around 700 men took away Velid, Amroudi, Daoud, Issa, Amroudi, Usman and Zaindi Khanbiev and Vakhidat Khanbieva, injured two other members of the Khanbiev family and demanded the surrender of Umar and Magomed Khanbiev.

On 1 March 2004 in Grozny, Chiita and Aslambek Khanbiev, both medical students, were arrested at the university. It has been reported that Chiita Khanbiev was later found dead, his body badly mutilated, whilst Aslambek Khanbiev was released following the mobilisation of lecturers and students. On 4 or 5 March, Mr Aslan Khanbiev, the son of Ali Khanbiev who was himself abducted in September 2002, was taken to an unknown destination, and Ali Khanbiev's daughter has also received threats. A further round-up took place in Benoi on 7 March, during which other members of the Khanbiev family were arrested. In the wake of this campaign of blackmail against Umar and Magomed Khanbiev, the latter gave himself up to the authorities to save the men and women who had been abducted from undergoing fresh violence and torture or being executed.

What steps will the Commission take to condemn these unspeakable actions and demand that the integrity of the 30 abducted members of the Khanbiev family and Mr Magomed Khanbiev must not be abused? Will the Commission call for the Red Cross to be allowed to visit the detainees and Mr Magomed Khanbiev as soon as possible?

Tabled: 15.03.2004

Forwarded: 17.03.2004

Deadline for reply: 24.03.2004