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REPORT
BY MR ALVARO GIL-ROBLES,
COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS,
ON HIS VISIT TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
AND THE REPUBLIC OF CHECHNYA
25th February to the 4th March 2001

for the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly

Introduction

1. On the request of the Committee of Ministers, the Commissioner for Human Rights travelled to Moscow and then on to the Republic of Chechnya from the 25th February to the 4th March 2001. The purpose of the visit was to gain an accurate view of the situation in general and, in particular, of the respect for human rights and the follow up to the Commissioner's earlier recommendations resulting from his two previous visits in December 1999 and February 2000 to the Russian Federation, as well as the seminar in Vladikavkaz on the 30th May 2000.

I was especially concerned during this visit to acquaint myself directly with the activity of the office of the Special Representative of the Russian Federation, Mr. Kalamanov, and to examine the various means of effecting the political, social and economic reconstruction of the region. The examination of the judicial machinery, with a view to addressing the current climate of impunity surrounding crimes committed against the civilian population, was also a primary objective.

2. In accordance with the program appended to this report, I held meetings with senior officials of the federal administration, the Duma, the provisional Chechen government and the military authorities as well as with representatives of NGO's.

3. I would like to thank the Russian authorities for their generous welcome and the full cooperation they extended to me throughout my visit. Thanks to their efforts, I was able to meet with everyone I had hoped to. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Kalamanov for his unfailing assistance, the owners of the house in Znamenskoye for our accommodation for two nights, the officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who accompanied us throughout my visit and all those who worked to guarantee our security whilst travelling in Chechnya.

I take this opportunity also to acknowledge the contributions of Mr. Mika Boedeker and, especially for acting as interpreter, Mr. Alexandre Guessel.

I. The overall situation in Chechnya.

1. Following my third visit to Chechnya in 18 months I am obliged to remark that the overall situation remains fraught with difficulty and conflict. The fabric of the Chechen society has disintegrated and its primary infrastructure (the provision of gas, electricity, hospitals, schools etc), which was largely destroyed during the war, remains unreconstructed, rendering normal life in the Republic virtually impossible. Grozny has become a ghost town, its ruins untouched since my last visit and the end of the war. Circulation within Chechnya is severely restricted by the pervasive presence of checkpoints, manned primarily by the army, and public order is a long way from being re-established.

It is to be noted also that the environment around Grozny and the Northern regions of the Republic is being heavily polluted by leaking oil wells. The effects can already be detected in a number of rivers, in particular the Terek - inevitably contaminating the water supply. Other wells continue to burn without any remedial action being taken.

The large number of civilians who have been forced to evacuate their homes continue to live under extremely difficult conditions in refugee camps both within Chechnya and in the surrounding regions. They are for the most part deprived of any opportunity of work and their well-being is endangered by the lack of adequate health care. Whilst visiting the Severny refugee camp in Znamenskoye, the commanding officer told me that there were more than 180 persons suffering from tuberculosis in the camp and that the medical treatment available was totally inadequate due to the lack of medication.

Access to food represents another serious problem. Food, even when to be found on the open market, in stalls lining the streets of Chechen villages, is exorbitantly priced in relation to the surrounding regions and, obviously, to the average income. This situation is the inevitable result of the near total absence of an organised system of food distribution. Neither local nor federal authorities appear capable of organising deliveries. Individual initiatives are exploiting the gap, bringing in food from the neighbouring areas and profitably lining their pockets in the process. I heard of several cases in which foodstuffs provided for free by the humanitarian assistance groups had appeared on the Chechen markets, which clearly demonstrates the existence of an unacceptable trafficking and corruption.

2. Security also remains a real difficulty in Chechnya. Disappearances constitute a prominent problem. A significant number of people have disappeared without trace, such that, despite the Federal army's intervention being at an end, it cannot be said that the Russian authorities are any closer to being able to guarantee the personal safety of the people in Chechnya. According to several reports I heard, the perpetrators of these acts are not just the federal forces, but also Chechen combatants.

3. On my arrival in Moscow I held a series of talks with NGOs (Memorial, Glasnost, Human Rights Watch and the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers) all of which spoke of the many personal safety problems prevailing in Chechnya as a result of the continuation of violence directed at the civilian population and disappearances. According to the NGOs, some of the persons reported missing have since been found in mass graves. The NGO's also accused the military forces of a number of other crimes committed against the civilian population, most notably of summary executions, torture, unauthorised detentions, and extortion. The representatives of the NGOs emphasised the fact that none of these offences were being adequately investigated by either the civilian or the military procuraturas, whilst known witnesses were rarely questioned.

It was frequently asserted that the apparent ineffectiveness of both judicial organs has significantly contributed to a sense of impunity within the military and the special forces of the Ministry of the Interior.

4. The representatives of the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers spoke to me about the "zindans", or holes dug into the ground in which prisoners are kept and which, they maintain, are also used for the punishment of soldiers. The Committee of Soldiers' Mothers also drew my attention to the number of deaths and suicides of soldiers as well as the inadequate medical treatment they received. Amongst other things, they requested that future inspections of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (CPT) include the inspection of the sites of detention of military personnel, wherever they are based.

5. It is necessary to mention that on the eve of my arrival in Moscow two developments were made public. These concern, firstly, the revelations of Mrs. Anna Politkovskaya, a well-known journalist from the "Novaya Gazeta". She reported that she had been arrested on the 21st February 2001 in the territory under the control of the 45th regiment of the Russian Army based in Khouttouni, as a result of her investigations in Chechnya. She maintains that she was detained for two days by the military authorities during which she was subjected to harsh treatment and psychological pressures, before being released on the 23rd February. The second item of news concerned the discovery of a mass grave allegedly containing some 200 bodies, of which a number had, according to NGO's, disappeared as a result of action taken by the federal forces.

6. In the light of these early interviews, and bearing in mind the conclusions of the Seminar in Vladikavkaz, there are, I think, at least three main areas that need to be urgently addressed. The first is the material reconstruction of Chechnya, which has been completely destroyed by the war. It will be necessary to concentrate on the provision of housing and the reestablishment of public services, which represents a condition sine qua non for the return of refugees. The second priority must be the reestablishment of political and representative institutions, such that a properly democratic system is given a chance to develop. Finally, before either of these tasks can be addressed, it is essential that an end is put to the current climate of impunity surrounding the crimes committed, and that continue to be committed, by both the federal and the Chechen forces.

II. Official programs for economic regeneration and social reconstruction.

1. In my interview with Mr. Yelagin, the Minister of the Russian Federation for Coordination of Activities of the Federal Executive Bodies on Social and Economic Development of the Chechen Republic, I was assured of the seriousness with which the Russian government was addressing the reconstruction of Chechnya. According to the Minister, the Russian government is acutely aware that the normalisation of the situation in Chechnya cannot be accomplished without the restoration of ordinary living conditions for those currently residing there and for those who will return from the neighbouring regions as soon as the situation allows.

To this end, the Russian government adopted an "Economic and Social Reconstruction Program for Chechnya in 2001" (hereafter referred to as "the Program") on the 9th February 2001.

2. It is expected that the program will be implemented in the course of 2001. It is to be financed through the federal budget, special funds and non-governmental donations.

Humanitarian and Reconstruction aid.

3. As the social and economic reconstruction of Chechen society cannot be accomplished without the assistance of the international community, it is important that it lends not only its support but organises a system of coordination and supervision of its investments.

4. In my meetings with Mr. Yelagin and Mr. Kadyrov, they both insisted on the importance of and the urgent need for international humanitarian aid for the reconstruction of Chechnya. Furthermore, it is widely felt that the time has come for this aid to be directed at Chechnya itself. In short, I believe that it is of the utmost importance that the international community should act to bring to this devastated area, whose population has lacked all basic products for so long, as much humanitarian assistance as possible.

5. A special effort will have to be directed at the reconstruction of housing if refugees are to be encouraged to return. According to the Russian authorities, the aid for the reconstruction of housing will primarily be distributed in the form of materials rather than money. It is hoped that this will ensure that the aid reaches its intended destinations without finding others en route. Aid in the form of ready money will only be used for the payment of the necessary labour.

6. At the same time, it goes without saying that the effectiveness of all international aid depends on the existence of an effective mechanism capable of guaranteeing donors that their aid will arrive where it is intended. This would require the creation of a body containing international experts responsible for financial coordination and the supervision of aid distribution. This body, jointly composed of Russian and international agents, would have to define the investment priorities and act as the auditors of international investments. I was able, towards the end of my visit, to discuss this proposal with Mr. McCallin, the UNHCR representative in Moscow, who expressed his approval of this initiative.

7. Finally, Russia's entry into the Council of Europe's Reconstruction Bank seems to me to be an effective way of financing the reconstruction of Chechnya by supplementing Russia's own financial resources. This was also suggested by the Parliamentary Assembly during its last session in Recommendation 1499 (2001) 8q.

III. The restoration of political and administrative institutions.

1. During my visit to Gudermes on the 28th February 2001, I met with The Chief of the Chechen Administration, Mr. Kadyrov, who shared with me his impressions of the political and economic situation in Chechnya and presented me with his normalisation plan.

This wide-ranging program includes, inter alia, proposals for institutional reconstruction. He envisages, in this regard, the creation of a consultative organ attached to his administration, which would be composed of representatives of the civil society, elders and religious authorities, amongst whose tasks it would be to confer on a future Constitution for the republic and to formulate electoral laws.

2. Regarding the security proposals of his program, Mr. Kadyrov emphasised the importance of creating a new network of agencies for the maintenance of public order deploying, in his plan, Chechen policemen in at least 130 offices in towns and villages throughout Chechnya. His plan envisages a simultaneous significant reduction in the number of federal armed forces remaining in the territory of the Republic.

3. The social and economic components of his plan envisage the formation of a provisional Chechen government responsible for the supervision of the reconstruction of Chechnya. I was informed that the Mr. Ilyasov, appointed Prime Minister by President Putin on the 19th February 2001, had, by the end of my visit, almost completed the formation of his government.

The implementation of the institutional reconstruction program.

4. Given that the administration does not operate throughout the Chechen Republic and that there is, in any case, no consensus amongst Chechen citizens as to the future path of their country, the political situation remains fraught. Certainly, as the institutional reconstruction cannot be effected by anyone other than the Chechens themselves, it will be necessary for them to begin to define their priorities themselves. It is essential, therefore, that the Chechen people are given the opportunity to plan their future themselves and that democratic institutions are restored as rapidly as possible.

Recognizing this, and taking the work initiated in Vladikavkaz in May 2000 into account, I suggested the organisation of a follow-up seminar directed at the institutional reconstruction of Chechnya. As a means of elaborating on the ideas launched in Vladikavkaz, this seminar would aim to encourage dialogue amongst Chechens on institutional reconstruction and the restoration of democracy. It seems to me that much would be gained from holding this seminar on Chechen soil. It might bring together representatives from all levels of Chechen civil society and international experts from, in particular, the Council of Europe.

IV. Impunity and the restoration of the judicial system.

1. I have arrived at a point I consider to be of the utmost importance for the restoration of peace and ordinary living conditions in Chechnya. As I have already suggested, an environment of fear and insecurity obtains throughout the territory of the Chechen Republic. This is attributable to the actions of Chechen combatants as much as it is to those of the Federal forces. As investigations into such acts are rarely carried to their proper conclusion, an impression of lawlessness and impunity is increasingly pervasive.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly made its stance on this matter clear in recommendation 1498 (2001), in which it requested “that the Committee of Ministers take an active role in ensuring that the Russian authorities – without further delay – hold accountable all those who have severely violated human rights in the Republic of Chechnya, regardless of their position or nationality. The Assembly encourages the Committee of Ministers to support all efforts aimed at safeguarding human rights in the Chechen Republic.”

3. Representatives of NGOs and international observers stressed the fact that very little progress had been made in this area. It is notable that although the office of Mr. Kalamonov has received a large number of complaints, very few of these had subsequently been pursued by the organs of the procuratura.

4. According to its annual report, Mr. Kalamanov's office received more than 12,000 complaints in the year 2000. Of the 5485 written complaints filed with his office, 2097 concerned allegedly illegal acts committed by the Russian Federal forces, 853 alleged a lack of information concerning intercepted or detained parents, 657 related to arrests and/or illegal detentions and 212 complained of violations of freedom of movement and extortion at check-points.

Of all the complaints transmitted to the procuratura very few have so far received an adequate response. On the 28th February the Council of Europe experts in Mr. Kalamanov's office reviewed the figures relating to the number of complaints passed on to the military and civil procuraturas in the Republic of Chechnya. The office had sent a total of 511 complaints to both procuraturas. The procuraturas had responded to 172 of them, that is to say 34%. 429 of these cases had been sent to the civil procuratura, 169 or 39% of which received a response. Of the 82 sent to the military procuratura only 3 or 4% were acted upon.

5. Taking these facts into account I managed, for the first time, to arrange direct talks with both the civil and military procuraturas about their work and the allegations of passivity surrounding their investigations. They supplied me with statistics relating to their work and informed me of the problems with which they were confronted in the exercise of their duties. They reiterated their desire to lift this impression of impunity.

As proof of this General Kislitsine, the Chief Military Prosecutor, suggested that I visit to the military base of the 45th regiment in Khouctoni to inspect the sites reported on by the journalist Mrs. Politkovskaya. I declined his offer, considering that such an inspection might more appropriately be carried out by the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Human Rights in Chechnya, Mr. Kalamanov.

Mr. Kalamanov agreed with me on this matter and subsequently conducted an inspection, which, in so far as I am aware, was the first of its kind to have been made by a civil institution of a military establishment. On top of this, General Kislitsine provided me with information both orally and in writing relating to Mrs. Politkovskaya's allegations and the recent discovery of several bodies in a village near Grozny.

He informed me further, that his office had dealt, or was dealing with, some 538 files on criminal offences committed by the military. His procuratura had received these files through from a number of different sources but notably from the office of Mr. Kalamanov. All of the allegations had been investigated and resulted in judicial decisions of some form. Judicial proceedings had been launched in respect of 58 of these files since August 1999. Of these 58 cases 18 concerned allegations of assassination, 1 murder through excessive self-defence, 12 theft, 7 traffic offences, 3 alleged acts of hooliganism, 2 violations of regulations concerning the use of arms, 3 kidnapping, 8 deaths in unexplained circumstances and 4 miscellaneous other offences. Having dropped 9 of these cases, the military procuratura brought 13 to the military courts. These cases alleged offences committed by a total of 18 military personnel. They concerned 4 cases of pre-meditated murder, 4 thefts of destroyed property and 5 other offences. The military courts convicted 7 military officials, amongst them 2 officers, 4 professional soldiers and one conscript. However, 37 cases remain unresolved.

6. The very small number of cases to have resulted in investigations or judicial proceedings clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of the judicial machinery in Chechnya. Naturally, I insisted on this point in my meetings with representatives of the civil and military procuraturas both in Znamenskoye and in Moscow. The responses I received highlighted a number of significant problems regarding judicial investigations. Problems of security featured prominently amongst them. Agents of the procuratura work in threatening conditions. Five of them were killed in the year 2000. Other problems include the very high number of complaints filed and the reluctance to testify of witnesses fearing reprisals. Whilst maintaining that the conditions of their work were difficult, the prosecutors I spoke to agreed that it was crucial that investigations were conducted thoroughly if the prevailing impression of impunity within the federal forces was to be changed.

7. During my visit to Chechnya, the Chief Public Prosecutor, Mr. Tchernov, informed me that investigations were currently being conducted in Zdorovie, following the discovery there of a mass grave. 16 bodies have so far been recovered, with more still expected. I insisted that all attention be directed at this matter, from the top down, and that forensic examinations be conducted immediately with a view to establishing the time and cause of the deaths and the identities of the corpses. The relevant authorities assured me of their readiness to carry out such an investigation without delay and to keep me informed of its developments. Ominously, representatives of Memorial have claimed that a number of families of persons detained for many months by the federal forces had already identified their relatives amongst the victims.

8. I insisted with the organisers of my visit on travelling to the Khankala military base outside Grozny to meet with the Commander of the Federal Military Forces, General Baranov. This meeting proved particularly interesting. In the course of an intense conversation, General Baranov strongly denounced the treatment received by Russian soldiers who fell captive to the Chechen militia. He showed, and subsequently gave me, a video apparently recorded by Chechen militants, in which they were to be seen slitting the throats of Russian soldiers.

I informed the General of my strong conviction that the authors of such crimes must be brought to justice, but insisted that he had to acknowledge that a democratic state adhering to the rule of law (which is what is required from member states of the Council of Europe) cannot use the same methods as criminals. I will add that, as I was sure of his agreement on this point, I requested that he actively cooperate with all investigations into the crimes and human rights violations imputed to the federal forces under his control.

Profiting from the presence of the media, I denounced, at the end of this meeting, the prevailing impunity and, joined by General Baranov and Mr. Kalamonov, insisted that justice be done; for, without justice, there will be neither peace nor reconciliation.

9. On my return to Moscow, Mr Kislitsine disclosed that, in so far as he was aware, the journalist Mrs. Politkovskaya, had been arrested for a lack of correct accreditation with the military base in Khankala. Her allegations of the use of zindans at the military base of the 45th regiment were dismissed as a confusion resulting from holes in the ground serving as waste disposal units; a claim which merits the closest scrutiny.

10. In response to the Committees of Soldier's Mothers' allegations that such zindans were used not only for Chechen detainees but also for punishments internal to the Russian army, General Kislitsine assured me that he had ordered an inspection of all military bases with a view to terminating this practice.

11. Given the difficulties faced by the procuratura and the judicial system in general in the accomplishment of their duties, and the current inability of Mr. Kalamanov's office to pursue any further the progress of complaints transferred by it to the procuratura (due to a lack of competence) I proposed the creation of a collaborative commission composed of representatives from the procuratura and Mr. Kalamanov's office, in which Council of Europe agents are currently active. Such a bi-partite commission could keep track of the progress of transferred files in monthly meetings.

On my return to Moscow, Mr. Kislitsine expressed his support for this proposal.

Final considerations.

1. Before the close of my visit I met one last time with the representatives of the NGO's I had seen on my arrival. This meeting with the representatives of Memorial, Human Rights Watch and the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers, afforded me the opportunity of sharing with them my impressions of the human rights situation in Chechnya. I informed them, in addition, of the civil and military procuraturas' willingness to fully investigate crimes committed against the civilian population and to accept and investigate all the complaints they received. Regrettably, representatives of Memorial have informed me of the very limited means available to the agents of the procuratura working on the ground.

2. Even if the situation remains precarious, it is possible nonetheless to trace a few positive developments. Foremost amongst them is the beginning of the reestablishment of the judiciary. It is important to note, in this regard, that since the 27th December 2000, courts have once again been sitting in Chechnya. The Supreme Court has selected new judges and 10 district courts are functioning alongside the Supreme Court. They have already delivered a number of rulings and judgements. I made a point of visiting the Supreme Court of Chechnya in Goudermes to talk with its judges. The process of re-establishing the Chechen judicial system must be encouraged. I hope that it will be provided with sufficient means to satisfy the needs of Chechen citizens

Moreover, the trial of Colonel Boudanov, for which the investigations had been dragging on for many months, has finally opened in Rostov, in a particularly charged atmosphere.

3. In the course of my meeting of with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivanov, on the 3rd March, I was able to relate the impressions I had formed during my visit as well the recommendations and suggestions referred to in this report.

When I insisted on the need for the immediate return of the OSCE assistance group, Mr. Ivanov expressed his full agreement. He also expressed an interest in considering another visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Towards the close of my meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and following discussions of his own with the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Ivanov assured me of the convergence of my recommendations with the views of the federal authorities.

ANNEX

**Programme of the visit
of the Human Rights Commissioner in Russian Federation
(Moscow, North Caucasus)
25 February - 4 March 2001**

- Sunday 25 February**
- Arrival of the delegation in Moscow at 15.20
- 17.30 Meeting with Mr. Kouznetsov and Ms Ganoushkina, representatives of « Memorial » and Mr. Diederik Lohman, Director of the « Human Rights Watch » Moscow office;
- 19.00 Meeting with Ms Melnikova, Ms Kouklina and Ms Goriatcheva, representatives of the Coordination Council of the “Committees of Soldiers’ Mothers”;
- 20.00 Meeting with Mr. Grigoriants, President of the « Glasnost Foundation »;
- Monday 26 February**
- 9.30 Meeting with Mr. Yelagin, Minister of the Russian Federation for Coordination of Activities of the Federal Executive Bodies on Social and Economic Development of the Chechen Republic;
- 11.00 Meeting with Mr. Iastrjembsky, Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation;
- 13.00 Lunch given by Mr. Ordjonikidze, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation;
- 15.30 Meeting with Mr. Mironov, Ombudsman of the Russian Federation;
- 17.30 Meeting with Mr. Birukov, Deputy Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation and Mr. Kislitsin, Chief Military Prosecutor of the Russian Federation;
- 20.00 Interview for radio « Echo of Moscow »;

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Tuesday 27 February

- 10.50 Departure to Mineralnie Vodi with Mr. Kalamanov, the Special Representative of the RF President on Observance of Human Rights in the Chechen Republic, flight with “Kavminvodiavia” airline company;
- 13.00 Departure from Mineralnie Vodi to Znamenskoe (Chechnya) by cars (Arrival on 16.45);
- 17.00 Meeting with the Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic Mr. Tchernov and the Military Prosecutor of the Chechen Republic, in the presence of Mr. Kalamanov, staff members of the Kalamanov office and the Council of Europe agents;
- 18.15 Visit to the refugees camp « Severny » in Znamenskoe;
- 19.30 Meeting with Mr. Zavgaev, Head of Administration of the Nadterechny, commanders of police and security forces of the district;
- 21.30 Meeting with Mr. Britvine, Deputy Representative of the RF President in the South Federal Region;
- Night in Znamenskoe

Wednesday 28 February

- 9.30 Departure from Znamenskoe for Goudermes by helicopter;
- 10.00 Meeting with Mr. Kadyrov, Head of the Administration of the Chechen Republic;
- 12.00 Visit to the Supreme Court of the Chechen Republic, meeting with the President of the Supreme Court, with Mr. Tchernov, Prosecutor of the Supreme Court and Mr. Gousev, Head of the Justice department of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation in presence of Mr. Kadyrov et Mr. Kalamanov;
- 13.00 Lunch with Mr. Kadyrov;
- 14.00 Departure by helicopter for the headquarters of the Federal Military Group in Chechnya, situated in Khankala, near Grozny;

- 14.30 Meeting with General-lieutenant Baranov, Commandant of the Federal Military Forces in Chechnya;
- 17.00 Return to Znamenskoye ;
- 18.00 Meeting with Mr. Kalamanov, the Special Representative of the RF President on Observance of Human Rights in the Chechen Republic;
- 19.30 Diner with Mr. Zavgaev, Head of the Administration of the Nadterechni district, Mr. Britvine, Deputy Representative of the RF President in the Southern Federal Region and the Council of Europe agents;
- Night in Znamenskoe

Thursday 1 March

- 9.00 Departure from Znamenskoe to Mineralnie Vodi by car;
- 12.30 Arrival in Mineralnie Vodi ;
- 12.40 Lunch with Mr Korobeinikov, First Deputy Representative of the RF President in the Southern Federal Region;
- 14.50 Departure from Mineralnie Vodi to Moscow, flight with “Kavminvodiavia” airline company;
- 16.40 Arrival in Moscow;
- 17.30 Meeting with General Kislitsine, Chief Military Prosecutor of the Russian Federation;

Friday 2 March

- 9.30 Meeting with Mr. Tchaïka, Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation;
- 11.30 Meeting with Mr. Rogozine, Chairman of the State Duma Committee for International Affairs;
- 13.30 Meeting with Mr. McCallin, UNHCR Regional Representative in the Russian Federation;
- 15.00 Meeting with Mr. Laptev, Russian Government Agent at the European Court of Human Rights;

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21.00 Interview with the 9 o'clock News of the ORT TV channel;

Saturday 3 March

9.30 Meeting with Ms. Kasatkina and Mr. Orlov, representatives of « Memorial », with Ms. Rachel Denber, Human Rights Watch Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia and Ms. Melnikova and Ms. Kouklina, representatives of the Coordination Council of the « Committees of Soldiers' Mothers »;

10.45 Meeting with Mr. Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation;

13.00 Interview at the « Interfax » press agency;

14.30 The continuation of Meeting with Mr Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation;

16.30 End of the official part of the visit.

Saturday 4 March

16.10 Departure from Moscow to Strasbourg;

21.40 Arrival in Strasbourg.