

Press Release

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Statement by Dick Marty, PACE rapporteur on the human rights situation in the north Caucasus, on the murder of Stanislav Markelov

Strasbourg, 20.01.2009 – Dick Marty (Switzerland, ALDE), Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) rapporteur on the human rights situation in the north Caucasus, expressed his profound indignation following the murder of prominent human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov, who represented, among others, the family of the victim of Colonel Budanov, the Russian officer sentenced to 10 years in prison in July 2003 for the murder of a young Chechen woman, and who was released last week. Stanislav Markelov had just left a press conference at which he announced that he planned to appeal against Colonel Budanov's conditional release. Mr Marty also deplored the death of Anastasia Baburova, journalist at Novaya Gazeta, who was accompanying Mr Markelov.

"I was deeply shocked to learn of the murder of Stanislav Markelov, whose untiring efforts to combat the impunity of those responsible for human rights violations in Chechnya and elsewhere in the north Caucasus cost him his life. This murder shows that the remedies against human rights violations are still fraught with pitfalls and dangers. Urgent action is needed by the competent Russian authorities to shed full light on this matter and to send out a strong signal against these criminal acts going unpunished and becoming more widespread, and calling for the establishment of the rule of law."

Stanislav Markelov also defended other Chechen victims and was involved in other sensitive cases, some of which reached the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC) ; Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

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ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).