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Russia Ordered to Pay $1.8M Over Chechen Abductions

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Yelena Afonina / TASS

Russia must pay $1.8 million to the families of 20 people abducted from Chechnya during separatist fighting in the 2000s, Europe's top human rights court has ruled.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has in recent years awarded damages to the relatives of individuals who disappeared during the second Chechen war of 1999-2009. Activists say the France-based court has awarded compensations in at least 36 cases in the past week alone.

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The ECHR issued three rulings on Tuesday ordering Russia to pay a total of 1.64 million euros in damages to the relatives of 20 Chechens who had disappeared between 2000-2005.

Russia should conduct an investigation into the disappearances in Chechnya and nearby Ingushetia, said Justice Initiative, a Netherlands-based NGO that helped represent some of the applicants who won their cases.

“But, as we see in practice, the enforcement of ECHR rulings is limited only to the payment of compensation,” Justice Initiative lawyer Rustam Matsev said.

Russia fought two wars against separatists in the majority Muslim republic of Chechnya in 1994-1996 and 1999-2009.

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