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ECHR Demands Russia Pay Damages to Kadyrov Critic's Jailed Mother

May 28, 2024



Zarema Musayeva. **Yelena Afonina / TASS**

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on Tuesday ordered Russia to pay $56,500 in damages to the jailed mother of a prominent critic of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

Zarema Musaeva, the mother of exiled Chechen human rights lawyer and activist Abubakar Yangulbaev, was violently detained in Nizhny Novgorod and forcibly taken to Chechnya in January 2022. Musaeva, 54, was sentenced last year to five years in a prison colony on charges of fraud and assaulting police.

The ECHR ruled Musaeva's arrest to be "arbitrary and intended as retaliation against her family," who were involved in human rights work and opposition activities in Chechnya. The court also decided that Russian authorities ignored Kadyrov and his allies' threats to "hunt down" her family and "cut their heads off."

"The hurried administrative proceedings against her, without legal representation and while she was quite obviously unwell, had breached fair trial guarantees," the ruling read.

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The Strasbourg-based court ordered Russia to pay 52,000 euros ($56,500) in damages to Musaeva. It also ordered Russia to pay 6,500 euros each to Musaeva's husband — retired Chechen Supreme Court judge Saidi Yangulbayev — and daughter Aliya Yangulbayeva for injuries suffered during Musaeva's detention.

Chechen security officers had tried detaining Yangulbayev but were unable to arrest him due to his judicial immunity.

Civil rights activists criticized Musaeva's jailing as retaliation for the political activities of her three sons Abubakar, Baysangur and Ibragim Yangulbaev — who are all vocal critics of Kadyrov.

While Russia joined the European Convention on Human Rights in 1988, it was shut out of the Council of Europe, the human rights club of signatory countries which includes the ECHR, following its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Since September 2022, the Russian authorities have not been required to ensure that convention rights are upheld, although the government must still answer for violations committed while it was a signatory.

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