Save Halimat Taramova from Inhuman Treatment in Chechnya
Statement by the Working Group “Gender Equality” of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum

On 10 June 2021 in Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan, the 22-year-old Chechnya resident Halimat Taramova was forcibly taken by the police from a shelter for victims of gender-based violence, where the young woman was hiding from violence and threats, and returned to Chechnya.

Several days earlier Halimat had fled Chechnya, where she had been regularly subjected to physical and psychological violence from her family and to threats from the Chechen authorities. However, as a result of the ‘operation’ led by the police forces of Makhachkala, the young woman was unlawfully taken away from the shelter and ‘returned’ to her family members, who took her to Chechnya despite her desperate resistance, as witnessed by her friend – Anna Manylova.¹

The women who were in the shelter that day were dragged out, some of them also beaten by the police.² At the same time several volunteers of the crisis centre and the advocate for women's rights Svetlana Anokhina were detained and had to spend the night in detention. The women were charged with resisting state authority.

Thus, instead of protecting the victims of abuse, the state authorities cooperated with abusers, violating, among others, the ‘Law on police’ which states that “[the purpose of] the police is to protect life, health, as well as rights and freedoms of citizens of Russian Federation”.³

Currently Halimat’s relatives claim that she had been kidnapped and taken away from her family, lured by deceitful promises made by her friends and LGBT activists. According to them, Halimat herself does not belong to LGBT-Community because “sexual minorities do not exist in Chechnya”⁴.

According to the statement by the Chechen Minister on National Policy Akhmed Dudaev, Halimat Taramova is allegedly suffering from a mental disorder.⁵ Such statement raises concerns about Halimat’s safety and even her life. According to local human rights activists, she may be forced into

¹ See https://meduza.io/en/feature/2021/06/11/she-could-be-killed
² See e.g. https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/55809/
³ See https://en.mvd.ru/doc/On_Police
⁴ See https://chechnyatoday.com/video/346562 (in Russian)
⁵ See https://meduza.io/amp/en/feature/2021/06/14/we-begged-not-to-be-handed-over-to-chechnya
involuntary psychiatric treatment or even fall victim to honour killing, which is practiced in Chechnya and the Northern Caucasus region overall and which is often disguised as suicide.\(^6\)

We consider the events that took place in Makhachkala a gross violation of human rights and basic freedoms, which are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, as well as international conventions ratified by the Russian Federation, including the right to protection from inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to liberty and security of a person, the right to respect for private and family life, and the right to protection from any discrimination.

We call upon human rights activists, international organizations, as well as the international community as a whole to make everything possible to save Halimat Taramova, whose health and life are threatened, and to demand that Russian authorities protect Halimat’s rights and freedoms, particularly by securing her safety and freedom to leave Chechnya.

18 June 2021

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The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum was established in 2011 by non-governmental organisations as a permanent common platform. At the moment, 185 NGOs from Russia, the European Union and the United Kingdom are members or supporters of the Forum. It aims at development of cooperation of civil society organisations from Russia and EU and greater participation of NGOs in the EU-Russia dialogue. The Forum has been actively involved, inter alia, in the questions of facilitation of visa regime, development of civic participation, protection of the environment and human rights, dealing with history and civic education.

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