

Human Rights Center Memorial Considers Rasul Kudayev a political prisoner

Rasul Kudayev — a Russian citizen from the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic (KBR) in the North Caucasus region — was convicted under article 105 of the Russian Criminal Code (“Murder”), article 166 (“Hijacking a transport vehicle”), article 205 (“Terrorism”), article 209 (“Banditry”), article 210 (“Criminal Organization”), article 222 (“Illegal possession of firearms”), article 226 (“Attempting to steal and stealing of firearms”), article 279 (“Armed rebellion”) and article 317 (“Attempt to kill a law-enforcement officer”). He was sentenced to life imprisonment in a special regimen penal labor colony and has been imprisoned since 2005.

Kudayev is accused of actively participating in an attack on Nalchik, a city in foothills of the Caucasus Mountains. On October 13, 2005, using the code name Amigo, he allegedly stormed the Khasanya traffic police station with six other armed men, killing one policeman and one civilian and wounding twelve policemen and seven civilians.

Kudayev maintains that he could not have participated in the attack because, at the time, he was attending a funeral, which assertion was confirmed by the testimony of several witnesses. Moreover, he apparently suffers from several chronic disabilities that severely limit his mobility. On October 23, 2005, ten days after the attack, Kudayev was arrested and maintains that he was forced to sign a confession under threat of torture. The lawyer Irina Komissarova, who examined him two days later, reported that, “When I went to the pre-trial detention center to talk to Rasul, two employees carried him to me because he could not move independently. Rasul could not lift his head, on the right side of his face was a large hematoma, his eye was covered in blood, his head had an abnormal shape and size, his right leg was broken, and he had open wounds on his hands.” The other defendants who had testified against Kudayev refused to testify at the trial, claiming that they had also been forced to testify under threat of torture.

Kudayev has a history of persecution from various regimes. In 2001 when he was travelling to Pakistan to study Islam, he was detained in Afghanistan by the Taliban and imprisoned for espionage. He was shot while trying to escape, and the bullet remains in his thigh. After the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, he was detained and transferred to Guantanamo where he was held without being charged for three years. Due to inadequate medical attention, he developed chronic liver and stomach disease and suffered wound inflammation. On February 28, 2004 Kudayev and other Russian inmates of Guantanamo were handed over to Russian authorities.

The Memorial Human Rights Center calls for the immediate release of Rasul Kudayev and demands the dismissal of all charges against him.

The Memorial Human Rights Center does not necessarily endorse the views, statements or actions of persons recognized as political prisoners.

More details on this case are available in Russian [here](#).