

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
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Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to you to express my concern with the ongoing trial against Oyub Titiev, a prominent Chechen human rights defender and the head of the Grozny office of the Russian NGO Memorial.

Oyub Titiev was arbitrarily arrested on 9 January 2018 on fabricated drug-related charges and has since remained in detention. The hearing of his case started in Shali City Court on 19 July 2018 and is expected to conclude in the coming weeks. The trial has been marred by numerous irregularities and Oyub Titiev's right to fair trial might have been repeatedly violated ever since his arrest by police. During the court hearings, it became apparent that the prosecution's case does not stand up to basic scrutiny. Thus, prosecution witnesses – almost all of them members of the Chechen police – continuously “forgot” the circumstances of Oyub Titiev's detention, could not provide a coherent account of the events on that day or denied some obvious facts, including those that are supported by photographic evidence. At the same time, the prosecution kept insisting that perfectly legitimate requests by the defence (for instance, forensic examination of materials or admission of documents) be rejected, and the judge consistently upheld the prosecution's position. This strategy was particularly apparent during the last few hearings when the defence team attempted to present evidence that would strongly indicate that charges against Oyub Titiev had been fabricated.

Oyub Titiev faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted. Oyub Titiev is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful human rights work, to silence him and obstruct his organisation's human rights work.

I urge you to use your authority to ensure that fabricated charges against Oyub Titiev are dropped and he is released immediately and unconditionally.

Yours sincerely,