

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Igor Viktorovich Krasnov
Russian Federation
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Genproc>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/genprocrf/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/genprocrf/>

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am deeply concerned about the abduction of Zarema Musaeva, on 20 January 2022, from her home in Nizhnii Novgorod by men who were later confirmed to be Chechen officials. On 21 January Chechen authorities reported that Zarema Musaeva was serving 15 days of administrative detention for “petty hooliganism”. She suffers a serious medical condition, which should preclude her administrative detention under Russian law, and she reportedly does not have access to vital medicines. She has been held incommunicado and her lawyers have been denied access to her, ostensibly because she refused their services. On 2 February, media reported that she had been detained on remand, initially for two months, on fabricated charges of using violence against a police officer, a crime punishable by up to 10 years’ imprisonment.

For years, Zarema Musaeva’s next of kin have faced reprisals from the Chechen authorities. One of her sons complained of secret imprisonment and torture in 2015 – 2016 and of subsequent unfounded criminal prosecution. Her husband, federal judge Saydi Yangulbaev, was forced to resign in 2015 and subjected to an unlawful house search, and her oldest son, human rights lawyer Abubakar Yangulbaev received anonymous threats. On 21 January 2022, Head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov publicly threatened that the right “place” for members of their family was “either in prison or in the ground”.

Zarema Musaeva has committed no crime and is unlawfully deprived of her liberty by the Chechen authorities in retaliation for her family members’ revelations about the abuses they had suffered and for their activism.

I urge you to take all the necessary steps to stop Zarema Musaeva’s unfounded criminal prosecution and ensure that she is immediately released, that the circumstances of her abduction and unlawful deprivation of liberty are effectively investigated, and those responsible are held accountable in fair trial proceedings.

Yours sincerely,