

The first parliamentary Assembly report on HR to fail to foment protests

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The resolution in question was drawn on the basis of Dick Marty's report. Marty had visited Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia in late March and met with Duma deputies, representatives of law enforcement agencies, and human rights activists. His report later on plainly stated that the Chechen authorities maintained "atmosphere of fear in the republic", that disappearances there continued, and that courts were "demonstratively passive" with regard to gross abuses on the part of law enforcement agencies. All of that was happening against the background of "personalization of power" unacceptable for democracies. As for Ingushetia and Dagestan, the report commented on soaring violence and frequent terrorist acts in both republics. In a word, the situation in these three Russian republics of the Caucasus was judged to be the gravest throughout all of the Council of Europe's area of responsibility.

The resolution called for a war on terrorism and prosecution of all human rights violators including those from law enforcement agencies and security structures.

Critical of the Russian authorities as it was, the report was still seconded by the Russian delegation. "This is the first time in a decade that the Russian delegation is voting on a draft resolution on the Caucasus," said Leonid Slutsky, Duma's International Affairs Committee Assistant Chairman. "The resolution is fair. It is neither complimentary nor biased." Slutsky said that the initial draft had been more stiffly-worded. He explained that strangers could take Ramzan Kadyrov's portraits all over Chechnya for the budding cult of personality but that was it only because strangers would not know that it was just the way the Chechens were thanking their president for peace in the republic. "I know that this is something an average European will find difficult to comprehend," acknowledged Slutsky.

"Paradoxical as it might be, but we agree with Slutsky in this particular case," said Oleg Orlov of Memorial. "The resolution offers an objective evaluation of the state of affairs in the region." Orlov added that sponsors of the document had been correct to pinpoint the worst problems - atmosphere of fear in Chechnya and violence in Ingushetia and Dagestan. "The report emphasized the necessity to fight terrorism and, at the same time, abide by the law."

Session of the Parliamentary Assembly will discuss the raft resolution later this month.