



CHECHNYA PEACE FORUM

FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY,
RULE OF LAW
AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHECHNYA

HOME

ABOUT US

EVENTS

CAMPAIGNS

NEWS & MEDIA

SPEECHES & ARTICLES

REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS & FILMS

EXTERNAL LINKS

FAQs

CONTACT US

SITE MAP

SUPPORT / DONATIONS TO CPF

info@chechnyapeaceforum.com

Company Registration: 5990870
PO Box 5628, London, W1A 5WQ
+44 (0) 20 7166 5253

© 2008 Chechnya Peace Forum



CPF BLOG

→ 01-07-2010

Chechnya Peace Forum at the Council of Europe

Historic recognition of the situation in the Northern Caucasus by the Council of Europe

Dick Marty is a Swiss senator and a member of the Council of Europe. He is rapporteur for the Northern Caucasus to the Council's Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee. Last March Mr. Marty and his team undertook a tour of the region and met with a representative group of people that conveyed to him a true picture of the situation there.

Mr. Marty has summed this up in a very strong and compelling report, pointing to the large number of human rights abuses that prevail in the country. Violence is getting out of hand, terrorism is on the increase, and there is a general climate of fear and oppression and lack of rule of law. Local presidents appointed by the Kremlin and their governments must take their share of the responsibility. Their suppression of freedom fuels a reactionary extremism- which only further contributes to a state of perpetual violence.

Akhmed Zakaev and I went to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg for the debate on Mr. Marty's report and proposed resolution last week. We witnessed an energetic and engaging debate of historic importance. The Council of Europe has until now been very tame on issues of human rights abuses in Russia - and we should recall that the Council was founded with the very objective of defending human rights, democracy and the rule of law in our corner of the world. To its shame, the Council accepted Russia as a new member state in February 1996 - when the country was in the middle of conducting a brutal war on its own republic of Chechnya, killing as many as a hundred thousand of its own citizens. Three years later Russia again went to war on Chechnya, probably killing as many as another 100,000 of its people. This has been largely

© 2000 Chechnya Peace Forum

The Chechnya Peace Forum is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.

unaddressed by the Council of Europe.

What was most significant about the debate was the acclaim for Mr. Marty and his report, from the chamber at large but also from the Russian delegates. This is indeed a new tone, and if it represents a new and more realistic Russian approach to the increasingly problematic Northern Caucasus, it is a promising development. I sincerely hope that the defining moment last week will inspire the Council of Europe to follow up with constructive and effective involvement and have full Russian cooperation for peace and freedom in the region.

In Chechnya there are now four factions: The Russian authorities; the Russian appointed Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov and his Government; the increasingly fundamentalist and extremist militia opposition, represented by Doku Umarov; and the Chechen people, which I believe is most truly represented by Mr. Akhmed Zakaev, a secular and liberal democrat who is the Prime Minister of the Chechen Government-in-exile, and given political asylum in the United Kingdom.

The only two sides that can solve the problems of the Northern Caucasus are the Russian authorities and its administration in Moscow - and the Chechen exile government, represented by Akhmed Zakaev. Mr. Zakaev has repeatedly underscored his readiness to enter into a dialogue with the Russians. I hope they in turn realise that it is their own interests - as well as Europe's, to start such a process.

Ivar Amundsen
Director, Chechnya Peace Forum