

30 March 2018

## **Dagestan: human rights defender Sirazhutdin Datsiyev physically attacked**

On 28 March 2018, the head of **Human Rights Center Memorial** in Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan (located in the North Caucasus), **Sirazhutdin Datsiyev**, was attacked by an unidentified person.

[Sirazhutdin Datsiyev](#) is Head of the Dagestan office of Human Rights Center Memorial, a human rights organisation that provides legal assistance to victims of gross human rights violations and is involved in human rights education, research and publications. In recent years, Sirazhutdin Datsiyev has received numerous threats linked to his human rights work.

On the morning of 28 March 2018, an unidentified person attacked Sirazhutdin Datsiyev, as he was leaving his house on Z. Arukhova Street in Makhachkala to go to work. Not far from his house he noticed a "Lada Priora" car with dark tinted windows. He heard footsteps approaching from behind, and was hit on the head, causing him to fall to the ground. Although he did not lose consciousness, he could not turn his head to identify the attacker.

A witness to the incident later informed Sirazhutdin Datsiyev that a man wearing sunglasses had jumped out of the car and hit him on the head, before running back to the car and leaving.

Sirazhutdin Datsiyev managed to return home unaided. An ambulance arrived and took him to the neurosurgical department of the Republican Clinical Hospital (Central Hospital). The police have begun investigating the incident and a criminal case will be opened once the severity of the injuries have been determined. Doctors have so far defined his injuries as moderate.

This incident is the latest of a series of violent and intimidating acts against employees of Human Rights Center Memorial across Russia.

In Makhachkala on 22 January, a car that Human Rights Center Memorial's lawyer was using to travel to Chechnya, was set on fire.

On 17 January in Nazran, the office of Human Rights Center Memorial was set on fire.

On 9 January 2018, Oyub Titiev, head of Human Rights Center Memorial's Chechen office of was arrested in Grozny on the trumped up charge of large scale drug possession under section 2 of Article 228 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

Front Line Defenders condemns the attack against Sirazhutdin Datsiyev and believes the attack to be directly connected to his work in the protection and promotion of human rights in the Republic of Dagestan.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the Russian Federation to:**

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attack on Sirazhutdin Datsiyev with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Sirazhutdin Datsiyev;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Russia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.