

05  
Dec 2017

▲ Lvl. 1

No state  
reply yet

Russian Federation

Alert created on: 09 Sep 2016

## Journalist Imprisoned on Dubious Drug Charges in Chechnya

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

📍 1 Journalist in detention

CATEGORY ⓘ ▶ Detention and imprisonment of journalists

### NO STATE REPLY YET

PARTNER: Article 19, AEJ, CPJ, EFJ/IFJ, Index, IPI, PEN, RSF

On 5 September 2016, a Chechen court sentenced Zhalaudi Geriev, a journalist working for Caucasian Knot, an independent Russian media portal, to three years in prison on charges of drug possession in large quantities.

The charges have been condemned by media freedom and human rights groups and are widely considered to be trumped up. Caucasian Knot is well known for its reporting on human rights abuses across the Caucasus and southern Russia, including investigations into corruption and other abuses committed by the Chechen authorities.

Geriev was detained by police on 16 April 2016, and held in pre-trial detention until his conviction. During his trial, he told the court that he had been abducted by three armed men, subjected to torture and ill-treatment and had drugs planted on him, before being transferred to police custody. He stated that he was then forced to sign a confession admitting that drugs found in his backpack belonged to him.

Geriev retracted his confession during the trial, on the grounds that it was made under duress. His defense lawyer has raised concerns about serious procedural flaws during the investigation and trial, arguing that no credible evidence was presented. Geriev will appeal his sentence.

### UPDATES

**05 Dec 2017:** On 10 October 2017 Geriev's lawyers filed a complaint with the chairman of the Supreme Court of Russia, asking him to cancel the 31 July decision. On 1 December 2017 the complaint was rejected.

📄 Article published by Caucasian Knot: "Russia's SC not to consider complaint to Geriev's verdict"

**04 Aug 2017:** On 31 July 2017 the Russian Supreme Court rejected the cassation appeals.

➔ Article published by Caucasian Knot: "Russian SC refuses to consider cassation appeal against verdict to Zhalaudi Geriev"

**26 Jun 2017:** On 26 June 2017 Geriev's lawyers filed a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights.

➔ Article published by Caucasian Knot: "Zhalaudi Geriev's complaint filed to ECtHR"

**05 May 2017:** On 4 May 2017 Geriev's lawyers filed a second cassation appeal to the Russian Supreme Court, asking for the violations committed by the Chechen courts to be removed and for the case to be returned to the first-instance court.

➔ Article published by Caucasian Knot: "Second appeal against verdict to Geriev sent to Russia's SC"

**01 Apr 2017:** In April 2017, Geriev's lawyers have appealed to the Investigating Department for Chechnya of the Investigating Committee of the Russian Federation (ICRF) with a request to retract the sixth refusal to open a criminal case against Zhalaudi Geriev's kidnappers.

**28 Dec 2016:** On 28 December 2016, the Supreme Court of Chechnya upheld the sentence of 3 year's imprisonment.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

➔ Statement from Article 19: "Russia: Journalist imprisoned in Chechnya must be released"

➔ Statement by the Russian Union of Journalists (in Russian)

➔ Mapping Media Freedom article: Journalist Given 3 Year Jail Sentence in Chechnya

➔ 'Caucasian Knot' article: "Caucasian Knot" correspondent Zhalaudi Geriev sentenced in Chechnya

➔ International Press Institute article: Journalist Jailed in Chechnya on Drug Possession Charges

➔ RSF article on the case

 [Human Rights Watch article on the case](#)

## JOURNALISTS IN DETENTION

### Currently in detention (1):

Zhalaudi Geriev