

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation

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(Please use this reference in your reply)

20 April 2026

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 60/21.

In this connection, I would like to bring to the attention of Your Excellency's Government information I have received **concerning the gravely and rapidly deteriorating health of Roman Ruslanbekovich Murdiev, a child born on 26 July 2009, due to the lack of access to timely and adequate medical care and the absence of appropriate specialist monitoring while in detention, which are placing his life and physical integrity at imminent risk.** I also wish to bring to attention information received indicating that his deprivation of liberty may be arbitrary, including reports of procedural irregularities that appear incompatible with international standards applicable to children in conflict with the law, as well as allegations of discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin in the context of his arrest, prosecution and trial.

I also wish to highlight that, on 29 March 2026, following the appeal hearing upholding his conviction, Roman's parents received direct threats to his life and safety, including explicit references to lethal violence during his imminent transfer to the educational colony. These threats form part of a persistent pattern of harassment and intimidation targeting Roman on the basis of his ethnic origin, which has been ongoing since December 2024 and is now manifesting in a direct and imminent risk to his life and safety.

According to the information received:

Roman Murdiev is a Russian national of Chechen ethnicity, born on 26 July 2009, residing in the Moscow region, where he attended Secondary School No. 29 in Khimki.

On 30 September 2023, at the age of 14, Roman Murdiev went to the "Aviapark" shopping centre in Moscow to repair the wheel of his scooter. In the food court area of the shopping centre, he met his school friend, a 12-years-old boy, a national of Kazakhstan of Tajik ethnicity. Together, they witnessed an altercation involving six teenagers reportedly 3-4 years older than them. One of the teenagers began directing abusive and discriminatory language towards Roman and his companion, including racial slurs and calling them "monkeys". When Roman's companion attempted to respond verbally, one of the teenagers attempted to attack him from behind. Roman Murdiev intervened in order to protect the child, at which point another teenager punched him in the face and threatened him with a knife, including words to the effect of "I have a knife, I will kill you". A forensic phonoscopic examination conducted at a later stage reportedly confirmed the existence of the knife threat. As a result of the incident,

Roman Murdiev sustained physical injuries, including scratches to his neck, bruising to his finger, and bruising and bleeding to his lips.

On the same date, three other incidents involving the same group of older teenagers reportedly took place in and around the “Aviapark” shopping centre, as well as at the “Discovery” shopping centre and Khodynskoye Pole park in Moscow. Roman Murdiev was not present at, and did not participate in, those incidents.

On 18 October 2023, the Investigative Committee of Russia initiated a criminal case against Roman Murdiev and four other teenagers under article 213(2) of the Criminal Code of Russia (hooliganism committed by a group of persons by prior conspiracy). The charges alleged that Roman had engaged in acts of public disorder involving violence against several persons across the above-mentioned locations. In relation to Roman Murdiev, the prosecution attributed responsibility for all four incidents, including those in which he was allegedly not present, on the basis that he was “ready to help” other participants. The lawyer’s requests to obtain and scrutinise CCTV footage from the shopping centre to establish Roman’s absence from the three other incidents were denied without explanation. It is further alleged that the relevant CCTV footage was attached to a separate criminal case and were not examined in the proceedings against him. Despite the lawyer’s requests, the investigative authorities did not assess the 30 September 2023 incident as potentially hate-motivated, notwithstanding the reported use of racial slurs and the knife threat. Reportedly, the investigator in charge of the case at the Main Investigative Committee of Moscow was widely known among colleagues as the “investigator in charge of ‘churkas’” (“churka”) – a derogatory term targeting migrants and persons of darker skin – and that this nickname was used informally and saved in colleagues’ phones.

On 26 December, police officers attended Roman’s school and instructed him to appear the following day at the Main Investigative Committee of Moscow. On 27 December, he attended with his mother and was subsequently detained following the issuance of a detention protocol, which authorised his detention for up to 48 hours. He was then placed in a temporary detention facility (IVS) of the North-Eastern Administrative District of Moscow; his parents were not informed of the location of his detention.

On 29 December 2023, the Zamoskvoretskiy District Court of Moscow authorised Roman’s placement under house arrest until 29 March 2024. This measure was subsequently extended multiple times, most recently until 29 September 2025. In total, Roman remained under strict house arrest for approximately 20 months. During this period, he was reportedly prohibited from leaving his home, attending school, or engaging in normal social activities, effectively depriving him of access to education and normal childhood development. Roman’s legal representatives lodged complaints against both the initial placement under house arrest and each subsequent extension, to no avail.

On 17 April 2024, a procedural hearing on familiarizing with the case files was held in the absence of parents, a lawyer, a psychologist, and representatives of

child protection authorities. Roman attended the hearing alone, requesting the court to postpone it, however, to no avail.

In December 2024, public attention to the case increased, including statements by public officials and human rights actors. On 5 December 2024, the Head of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, publicly criticised the handling of the case, stating that the Head of the Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin, and the Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Vladimir Kolokoltsev, were “not in their places”, and questioning the prosecution of the child in connection with the events of 30 September 2023. Reportedly, following this public attention, Alexander Bastrykin took the case under his personal control.

It appears that investigative case files were leaked to nationalistic media channels, contributing to a hostile public environment, including narratives portraying Roman Murdiev as a “migrant”, despite his Russian nationality. This led to threats against the life and safety of both him and his family. Roman’s father submitted repeated complaints to the police, Investigative Committee and the Prosecutor’s Office, under article 282 of the Criminal Code of Russia (incitement of hatred), he received no replies. He also requested state protection measures for his son, which were denied.

In January 2025, the criminal case was returned by the court for further investigation, which further extended the duration of pre-trial proceedings and, consequently, the period of Roman’s house arrest.

On 11 June 2025, the Zamoskvoretskiy District Court of Moscow extended Roman’s house arrest beyond the statutory maximum of 18 months, as permitted under articles 107 and 109 of the Russian Criminal Procedure Code. The hearing was held with less than 24 hours’ notice, in the absence of his lawyer and his mother, who had arrived at the court for the hearing, fell ill; an emergency was called, and she was hospitalised in an unconscious state. No psychologist or child protection representative was present. Roman requested to postpone the hearing, but his motion was rejected. His legal representatives lodged a complaint against this extension, yet the appeal court hearing concerning this complaint took place only six months later. On 25 November 2025, the First Court of Appeal of General Jurisdiction examined the complaint concerning the extension of Roman’s house arrest beyond the statutory maximum; this hearing was held without notifying Roman’s parents or his lawyer, further undermining the effectiveness of the procedural safeguards.

The certificate of 23 June 2025 reportedly indicated that Roman Murdiev’s mother had waived her right to familiarise herself with the case materials, including her alleged signature, which she claims she never signed. The document is reportedly falsified.

On 27 August 2025, the Savyolovsky District Court of Moscow commenced the examination of the case on the merits. The proceedings were conducted behind closed doors. A request from the office of the Human Rights Commissioner of the Russian Federation Ms Moskalkova to attend the hearing was denied.

During the trial, several prosecution witnesses, including childs, were not allowed to be questioned in court. The conviction relied significantly on the testimony of a 12-year-old boy, who was accompanying Roman at the “Aviapark” shopping centre and is a citizen of Kazakhstan; his testimony was reportedly obtained under pressure, including threats of deportation from Russia against him and his family. None of the defence witnesses, all of whom were present in court, were permitted to testify.

On 29 September 2025, the Savyolovsky District Court of Moscow convicted Roman Murdiev under article 213(2) of the Criminal Code and sentenced him to 1 year and 11 months of imprisonment in a juvenile educational colony. The court ordered his immediate detention in the courtroom. He was subsequently transferred to Pre-trial Detention Facility No. 5 (SIZO-5) in Moscow.

Shortly after the conviction, the court reportedly ordered additional familiarisation with the case files. On 20 November 2025, Roman’s mother attended the Savyolovsky District Court of Moscow to accompany her son during the familiarisation. During his transfer from SIZO to the court, Roman was repeatedly placed in handcuffs behind his back and physically linked by handcuffs to another accused person. These measures are alleged to have been excessive, unjustified by any risk of flight or violence, and applied in a manner intended to humiliate him. On the same date, his parents filed a complaint with the Prosecutor’s Office of Moscow who redirected the complaint to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moscow.

On 18 December 2025, the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs replied that no violations had occurred and that the measures of placing in handcuffs were lawful. The review was conducted in a one-sided manner, relying on internal documentation, neither Roman nor any witnesses have been questioned.

On 26 March 2026, the Moscow City Court upheld the conviction on appeal.

Roman is currently detained in Pre-trial Detention Facility No. 5 (SIZO-5) in Moscow, awaiting transfer to a juvenile educational colony; the name and location of the colony are not yet known.

On 29 March 2026, following the appeal hearing, Roman’s parents received, by email, threats directed at him, containing discriminatory and highly derogatory language targeting his Chechen origin, as well as explicit threats of violence, including sexual assault and death. Some messages reportedly suggested that no one from the Caucasus would be able to protect him and referred to the risk of violence during transfer to a correctional facility, including references to the use of improvised prison weapons, specifically a “заточка” (shank). On the same day, Roman’s father submitted complaints to the Investigative Committee, the police, and the Prosecutor’s Office, requesting the initiation of a criminal case in view of the direct threat to the life of his 16-year-old son, who is held in state custody and faces imminent transfer to the colony to serve his sentence, during which the threats indicated he could be killed.

Serious health condition

Roman Murdiev has been diagnosed with a serious heart condition – mitral valve insufficiency and mitral regurgitation of the second degree. Medical recommendations indicate that prolonged stress, anxiety, isolation and lack of regular specialist supervision pose a high risk of severe and rapid deterioration of physical and mental health. He also suffers from hypertrophy of the adenoids requiring timely surgical intervention (adenoidectomy), as well as second-degree scoliosis, requiring regular and intensive physiotherapy to prevent progression of spinal curvature and further musculoskeletal deformity.

Since December 2024, Roman's legal representatives have been submitting requests to secure access to specialised medical consultations, including with a cardiologist and neurologist, which have been denied.

During his house arrest, Roman experienced recurrent nosebleeds linked to high blood pressure, and his parents' requests to allow him to attend necessary medical appointments were denied.

After his placement in SIZO following the conviction, Roman experienced recurrent episodes of loss of consciousness, including most recently on 16 and 18 December 2025. Following complaints submitted by his father in December 2025, the authorities replied that his condition would be examined; however, no such examination has taken place to date.

By means of this urgent appeal, I call on the Russian authorities to ensure that 16-years-old Roman Murdiev's is provided with immediate, comprehensive and specialized medical care, including full diagnostic assessment, continuous cardiological monitoring, access to qualified specialists – in particular cardiologist and neurologist, in conditions compatible with his age. In light of his status as a child and his serious health condition, I further urge the authorities to consider his immediate release and the application of non-custodial measures, in accordance with international standards on juvenile justice and deprivation of liberty.

I am gravely concerned about the rapid and severe deterioration of Roman Murdiev's physical and mental health while in detention, in circumstances where repeated requests for specialised medical consultations and treatment have been denied and serious symptoms have manifested without adequate medical assessment or intervention, including repeated episodes of loss of consciousness, most recently on 16 and 18 December 2025. This situation raises serious concerns regarding his access to the highest attainable standard of health and to appropriate facilities for treatment and rehabilitation, as guaranteed under article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by Russia on 16 August 1990. The denial of timely and adequate medical care to a child deprived of liberty may result in severe and long-term consequences for his physical and mental development and well-being and may engage the responsibility of the State under its international human rights obligations.

While in State custody, the Russian Federation is under a legal obligation to ensure that Roman Murdiev is treated with humanity and with respect for his inherent dignity, including the provision of adequate, timely and specialised medical care, as

required under article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), both ratified by the Russian Federation on 16 October 1973, as well as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), ratified on 3 February 1987.

In this regard, I wish to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), in particular rules 1, 24, 25, 27 and 30, which affirm that the provision of health care to prisoners is a State responsibility, require continuity of treatment for chronic conditions, and guarantee prompt access to medical attention in urgent cases.

I also wish to refer to the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules), which apply to all persons under the age of 18, notably rules 31 and 49 to 52. These provisions affirm that juveniles deprived of liberty have the right to facilities and services meeting the requirements of health and human dignity, that they must receive preventive and remedial medical care without delay, including mental health care and specialised treatment where medically indicated, and that any juvenile who is ill or demonstrates symptoms of physical or mental difficulties must be examined promptly by a medical officer, with immediate reporting and intervention where continued detention poses a risk to the child's health or life.

In these circumstances, the failure to ensure necessary medical care and monitoring may amount to inhuman or degrading treatment, contrary to article 7 of the ICCPR and articles 1, 2 and 16 of the CAT. I further recall that persons deprived of liberty must at all times be treated humanely and with respect for their inherent dignity, and must have access, *inter alia*, to effective legal representation, adequate medical assistance, prompt judicial review of their detention, and effective remedies for violations, as well as the ability to communicate with their relatives and be visited by independent monitoring bodies. States have a heightened duty of care to protect the lives and health of individuals deprived of liberty, as arrest and detention place them under the full responsibility of the State (CCPR/C/GC/36, para. 25). In addition, the reported conditions of his detention, including prolonged handcuffing while transfers and exposure to humiliating treatment, exacerbate the risk of physical and psychological harm, amounting to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment under article 7 of the CAT.

I am further concerned by allegations regarding the conditions of Roman Murdiev's detention and transfer, including the repeated use of handcuffs placed behind his back and fastening him to another detainee in the same manner, effectively restraining them back-to-back during transfers, reportedly in the absence of any demonstrated risk of flight or violence and in a manner intended to humiliate him. Such treatment, particularly in respect of a child, exacerbates the risk of physical and psychological harm and may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under international law.

Furthermore, the criminal proceedings against Roman Murdiev appear to have been marred by serious procedural violations rather than any legitimate establishment of criminal responsibility. These include the prolonged placement under strict house

arrest and other restrictive measures reportedly lasting over 20 months and exceeding the statutory limit of 18 months, followed by custodial detention after conviction, repeated denial of effective access to counsel, refusal to admit and examine any defence witnesses, inability to effectively challenge prosecution witnesses, closed hearings without justification, withholding of potentially exculpatory evidence, the alleged falsification of procedural documents, and leaving the child, aged 14–15 years, alone to review criminal case files for a very limited time without the presence of counsel, parents, or any child protection representative, despite his repeated motions to postpone the hearing. Taken together, these circumstances raise serious concerns regarding the right to a fair trial, including equality of arms and the presumption of innocence, as guaranteed under article 14 of the ICCPR, as well as child-appropriate due process under article 40 of the CRC. They further appear inconsistent with international standards governing the deprivation of liberty of children, in particular articles 3 and 37 of the CRC, which require that detention be used only as a measure of last resort, for the shortest appropriate period of time, and in the best interests of the child. The restrictions on his access to education during house arrest also raise concerns under article 28 of the CRC.

In addition, I am concerned that the authorities failed to assess and investigate the potentially hate-motivated nature of the incident of 30 September 2023, notwithstanding allegations of racial slurs and explicit threats of violence, including with a knife, directed at Roman Murdiev. Given that the investigator in charge of the case at the Main Investigative Committee of Moscow was widely known among colleagues and referred to as the “investigator in charge of *churki* (*чурки*)” – a derogatory term targeting migrants and persons of darker skin - this suggests a systemic pattern in which bias against individuals of certain ethnic origins may influence investigative and prosecutorial decisions. Alleged ethnic profiling, selective prosecution, and the use of discriminatory language raise serious concern that Roman’s Chechen origin may have affected the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication, in violation of the principle of non-discrimination under article 2 of the CRC, article 2 of the ICCPR, and articles 2 and 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), ratified by the Russian Federation on 5 March 1969.

Finally, I wish to express grave concern regarding the most recent threats to Roman Murdiev’s life and physical integrity, received by his parents on 29 March 2026 – following the appeal hearing upholding his conviction, which contained explicit references to the risk of lethal violence during his imminent transfer to the educational colony, including through the use of improvised prison weapons (“заточка”).

I urge the authorities to provide him with immediate protective measures, both during the transfer and afterwards, continuing until his release, to ensure his safety. These threats follow a documented and persistent pattern of harassment and intimidation dating back to 2024, when Roman’s father repeatedly submitted complaints to the police, the Investigative Committee, and the Prosecutor’s Office, none of which were replied, and requested protective measures at court, which were denied. Given the long-standing nature of these threats, their specificity, including the timing and place – the imminent transfer to the colony – and the public hostility towards him amplified through nationalistic media channels, they constitute real and substantive risks to Roman’s life and safety. In light of the State’s heightened duty of care toward

children deprived of liberty, any failure to prevent foreseeable threats to life may engage the responsibility of the Russian Federation under article 6 of the ICCPR.

I call on the authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation into the complaints submitted by Roman's father and to open a criminal investigation into the threats against Roman Murdiev's life and physical integrity, under article 119(2) of the Criminal Code of Russia, which provides for increased penalties where threats are made on the basis of political, racial, national, or religious hatred, or hostility toward a social group, including as part of a discriminatory motive.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, particularly the alleged risk to the life and health of a child in detention, I would appreciate information as soon as possible on the immediate steps taken to safeguard the rights of Roman Murdiev. I would also be grateful for Your Excellency's Government's observations on the following matters:

1. What immediate measures have been taken to ensure that Roman Murdiev receives immediate, comprehensive and specialized medical care, including full diagnostic assessment, continuous cardiological monitoring, access to qualified specialists – in particular cardiologist and neurologist, in conditions compatible with his age, and any other medically recommended specialist consultations and treatment within the detention system?
2. What measures are in place to ensure that the conditions of deprivation of liberty do not aggravate his medical condition, including access to necessary diagnostics, treatment, an appropriate daily regime and physical activity as medically recommended, as well as prompt emergency response procedures?? How are measures such as handcuffing behind the back and physically linking him to another detainee during transfers being reviewed to prevent physical or psychological harm?
3. Please provide the legal and factual basis for the conviction and continued detention of Roman Murdiev under article 213(2) of the Russian Criminal Code, including how responsibility was established for each of the four alleged episodes, and how the conviction is compatible with article 20(2) of the Criminal Code concerning the age of criminal responsibility.
4. How was the use of strict house arrest for over 20 months, followed by custodial detention, justified in light of articles 3, 28, and 37 of the CRC, which require detention of children to be a measure of last resort, for the shortest appropriate period, and in the best interests of the child?
5. Please explain the reasons for the repeated denial of effective access to counsel, the refusal to admit and hear any defence witnesses, the inability to challenge prosecution witnesses, the exclusion or withholding of potentially exculpatory evidence, including CCTV footage and

phonoscopic examinations, and any alleged falsification of procedural documents. How are these practices consistent with the guarantees of a fair trial, including equality of arms, the presumption of innocence, and child-appropriate due process under article 14 of the ICCPR and article 40 of the CRC?

6. Please clarify why certain hearings were reportedly conducted without mandatory child-specific safeguards, including the absence of parents, a psychologist, or child protection representatives, and why proceedings were closed without justification.
7. What steps have been taken to investigate the potentially hate-motivated nature of the 30 September 2023 incident, including the reported knife threat, racial slurs, discriminatory language, and selective prosecution, particularly in light of the systemic bias indicated by the investigators?
8. What immediate and effective measures are being taken to protect Roman Murdiev from the real, imminent, and substantiated threats to his life and physical integrity, including those received by his parents on 29 March 2026, in the context of his imminent transfer to the educational colony, including risks from improvised prison weapons (“заточка”) and public hostility amplified via nationalistic media channels? Given that these threats form part of a persistent pattern of harassment and intimidation targeting him since December 2024, and considering the authorities’ prior failure to respond to complaints and requests for protective measures, how will the Russian Federation ensure his safety during the transfer and thereafter until his release?
9. Has a criminal investigation been opened into the threats to Roman Murdiev’s life under article 119(2) of the Criminal Code, which provides for increased penalties where threats are made on the basis of political, racial, national, or religious hatred, or hostility toward a social group?

We would appreciate receiving a response within 60 days. Past this delay, this communication and any response received from Your Excellency’s Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) and subsequently included in the usual report to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, I urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and, in the event that investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible for the alleged violations.

I may publicly express my concerns in the near future as, in my view, the information upon which a press release would be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. I also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. Any press release will indicate that I have been in contact with Your Excellency’s Government to clarify the issues in question.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mariana Katzarova
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation