

ECHR Holds Russia Responsible for Civilian Killings During Chechen War

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The European Court of Human Rights on Thursday found Russia responsible for 18 deaths incurred during a military strike on a village in Chechnya in February 2000, ordering it to pay more than 1 million euros in damages.

The court ruled in favor of 13 applicants in the case — all of whom are residents of the village in question, Aslanbek-Sheripovo — and relatives of the deceased.

The court said that the villagers had "received assurances from commanders of the Russian army that there would not be any military strikes on the village as long as no armed fighters would be present there," and were therefore caught off guard by the strike on Feb. 17, 2000.

The case marks the first time that Russia has acknowledged that there was a violation of the right to life under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights during the Chechen conflict, although it did cite wartime conditions in its defense.

Russian authorities said they would investigate the incident.

In a separate case on the same day, the human rights court also found Russia guilty of the death of Beslan Arapkhanov, who was killed during a Federal Security Service (FSB) raid on a village in Ingushetia.

On the morning of July 20, 2004 a group of Russian soldiers shot Arapkhanov in his home and severely beat his cousin who lived next door and was woken up by the sound of gunfire.

Although Russia did not dispute that Beslan Arapkhanov was killed by FSB servicemen, it argued that the victim had put up armed resistance.

The court awarded the claimants 68,000 euros in compensation for sustained material and moral damages.

Russia has three months to appeal the rulings, after which they will become final.

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