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CHECHNYA PEACE FORUM

PRESS RELEASE

West must wake up to the danger of Putin

Following the Russian Authorities decision not to extradite Andrei Lugovoi, Scotland Yard's prime suspect in the murder of Alexander Litvinenko, Ivar Amundsen, Director of the Chechnya Peace Forum, said:

"Whilst Moscow's decision may come as no surprise, it remains a disgrace that Russia can ignore the murder of a British citizen killed in London. In refusing to extradite Andrei Lugovoi, Russia's intent to playpower politics with the West has escalated to new heights."

"This is the first diplomatic test faced by the new Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. I call on him to take decisive action in standing up to Putin and bringing Alexander's killers to justice."

"In the meantime, we, the Chechnya Peace Forum, will continue our campaign to support the extradition of Lugovoi to ensure that justice is seen to be done for both Alexander and his family. We will do everything we can to keep this issue in the public eye."

Notes to Editors: Ivar Amundsen is Director of the Chechnya Peace Forum, a human rights organisation based in London which seeks to promote the cause of democracy and human rights in Chechnya by bringing the humanitarian crisis there to greater international attention. A letter initiated by the Chechnya Peace Forum was published in the Independent on May 7 calling for President Putin to use the last year of his tenure to restore peace and justice to Chechnya. The letter was signed by more than 100 members of Britain's political and cultural elite. Signatories included Sir Tom Stoppard, Lord Giddens, Lord Bragg, Ian McEwan, Ken Loach, Peter Tatchell, André Glucksmann, Noel Malcolm, Alain de Botton, Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell MP, Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP and Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP. A copy of the letter can be seen at

<http://comment.independent.co.uk/letters/article2519068.ece>