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## What Happened to Anna Politkovskaya

*The first details about the events of September, 1-2 in Rostov and the state of health of our observer.*

By Sergey Sokolov and Dmitry Muratov



At time of these tragic days hundreds of our colleagues, state officials and readers expressed their concern about the fate of our observer Anna Politkovskaya. They believed that her presence at Beslan could have proved useful. However, Politkovskaya did not reach Beslan.

In the evening on September 1 Politkovskaya went to Vnukovo Airport in the Novaya Gazeta editor's car. She had contacted a number of Russian politicians and the representative of Maskhadov in London Ahmed Zakaev. Her proposals boiled down to the following: anyone who can contact terrorists should immediately go without calculating the [political] consequences in order to rescue the children. "Let Maskhadov go and negotiate with them ". Zakaev noted that Maskhadov was ready to negotiate without any conditions or guarantees.

Flights to Vladikavkaz as well as to the nearest cities were cancelled from Vnukovo Airport. Three times Politkovskaya was registered and three times could not depart. Editors issued the following order: fly to Rostov and from there get to Beslan by car.

Airline "Carat" takes Anna on board.

Important detail: all day long Politkovskaya had not time to have a meal. She refused (as she is person of experience) a meal on the plane, taking porridge with her. She felt fine and only requested tea from the stewardess. Anna lost consciousness 10 minutes after drinking and had enough time to call the stewardess.

Further she remembers only fragments. Doctors took fantastic efforts at the first aid office at Rostov airport. They tried and managed to bring her out of a coma. This was attributable to the precise work of the doctors in the isolation ward of the first Rostov hospital. In miserable conditions they reanimated Anna improvising in all possible manner – even using plastic bottles with hot water. A dropper, injections, - she regained her consciousness by the morning.

Grigory Yavlinsky, our colleagues from "Izvestiya" (staff reporter Vladimir But) and general Solodovnikov did everything in their power to resolve a problem that doctors termed "almost hopeless". The doctors coped with the task.

In the evening on September 3, with the help of our friends (thanks to our bankers!) we forwarded Anna by private plane to one of the Moscow clinics. Rostov doctors gathered to see her off. The Rostov laboratory analysis is not ready yet. The first analyses taken in the airport were destroyed for some reason. The Moscow doctors directly declared: the actual toxin remains unclear, but entered her organism from the outside, in the plane.

We do not want to make any statements before we learn all the circumstances. However, the situation with the journalist of "Liberty" Babitsky who was removed from a flight to Northern Caucasus on the suspicion of transporting an explosive (naturally, it was not found), and the case with Politkovskaya leads us to assume that an attempt was made to debar a number of journalists who are authoritative in Chechnya from covering the tragedy in Beslan.

Now Politkovskaya is at home under supervision of doctors. In their opinion, she has seriously affected kidneys, livers and endocrine system owing to the unknown toxin. Unfortunately it remains unclear how much time will be required for her rehabilitation...

Why were officials so anxious about Politkovskaya's activity and not focus instead on their own work? And prevent, for example, terrorist acts?