



The Shovlakhov Family

We have been monitoring this family practically from the time that the Friendly Help for Families in Grozny programme was set up, i.e. from 2002. We have been looking after the three girls Makka, Medna and Elina (14, 13 and 10 years old), whose mother Roza died a year ago following a serious illness. Their father Kasum is very ill. They live in a small rented house and the amount they owe in rent is growing.

Roza and Kasum lived together happily until the beginning of the 1990's. They owned their own house in the Staropromyslov region in Grozny and they were not in need of anything. Roza worked as an operator in a factory. During the first war in 1994 their house was burnt down, they lost all their possessions and ended up on the street with little Makka. Without anybody's help they repaired their house. Two more daughters, Medna and Elina, were born. In December 1999 further misfortune struck - there was a direct hit to their house during bombarding and it was completely destroyed. Roza, Kasum and the children were in the cellar at the time and this saved their lives. They were helped by their neighbour who offered them somewhere to live in her house and the family is still living there today.



Kasum became ill with tuberculosis and gradually Roza became infected. On top of that the middle daughter, Medna, was knocked over by a pressure wave, she suffered a broken nose and various other difficulties. The family had a number of problems which were very difficult to solve with the worsening illness. Despite the fact that since 2002 they have been receiving continual help, food, clothing, school aids and medicines from Berkat, the girls' situation has become even worse since their mother died. Kasum is very worried about his girls as they grow up.



A great support to the family is Roza Muzaeva, who is a social worker we have also been working with since 2002. Today Roza Muzaeva is acting as a de-facto mother to the girls, she often visits them and provides them with fresh cheese, milk and cottage cheese, she advises them on their difficulties with neighbours and in school. The doctor Lena is monitoring their state of health. Their father Kasum has said that when he dies he cannot entrust his children to anyone other than her. The family has become a key family in the Family Centre community in Grozny which has been functioning now for three years and is where all the projects that Berkat organises and supports in Grozny come together.

We all care a great deal about these three girls. Despite all the terrible things that have happened to them they have hope in the community around Semja and the support they receive from their firm friends Eva M. and Jiří Z.

Roza was a mechanic, she repaired cars, she liked sewing, painting and working in her garden. Kasum was a well-known artist in Chechnya. The girls have inherited their parents' artistic talents and skilful hands. They all draw and fifteen-year-old Makka sews her own products on a sewing machine which we bought for her with financial gifts from Eva and Jiří. But we really need to solve the problem of where this family can live. The Russian woman who has let them live in the house wants them to pay the rent for it that they owe. At the moment they owe 150,000 roubles. Just recently we have made an agreement with the lady that if they pay 170.000 roubles, she will leave the house for them. Although this is a large sum we hope that in time we will be able to raise it from various sources and gradually pay off the debt. Up to now, we have collected 90.000 roubles.



Jana Hradilková from the Berkat civic association can provide more information about the Shovlakhov family: Tel.: **+420 608 829 535**, e-mail: **kristanka@volny.cz**. You can send funds to support the family to the following account: **e-Banka 911676001/2400, constant symbol: 558, variable symbol: 11112, SWIFT: EBNK CZ PP**