

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 04/04/97

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Further information on EXTRA 24/97 (EUR 04/02/97, 24 February 1997) - Fear of forcible repatriation / Possible prisoner of conscience

**RUSSIA/UZBEKISTAN Albert Kayumovich MUSIN (_____ in Russian),
journalist and human rights defender, aged 43**

Albert Musin was released from the custody of Moscow police on 6 March and is currently at liberty.

It is unclear at this stage whether his release was the result of a formal renunciation by the Uzbekistani authorities that they are seeking his extradition. At a press conference by supporters of Albert Musin in Moscow on 3 March a representative of the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Russia made a statement that the Uzbekistani authorities had no plans to seek Albert Musin's extradition. However, this statement did not result in Albert Musin's immediate release, apparently because a written statement to that effect had not been received from the authorities in Uzbekistan on whose warrant the arrest had been made.

It has become clear that the charge on which Albert Musin was held after being detained on 21 February for a personal documents check was not Article 191 of the present Uzbekistan Criminal Code ("illegal collection, divulging and use of information"), but Article 191, part 4 of the former Uzbekistan Criminal Code ("public insult or defamation of the President of the Republic or the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet or the Vice-President through the use of printed materials or the mass media"). The old code was superseded in April 1995, but Albert Musin's name was still present in records held by the Russian police as being wanted in Uzbekistan on this charge, which had been brought apparently in 1992. The current legal status of the charge is unclear.

Although it is not yet clear that the threat of extradition to Uzbekistan has been lifted fully, no further action is required from the Urgent Action network on behalf of Albert Musin at this time. Thank you to all who sent appeals.