

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of torture

5 April 1993

TADZHIKISTAN: Bozo SOBIROV, poet

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Bozo Sobirov, who was arrested at the airport of Dushanbe, the capital of Tadjikistan, on about 26 March 1993. He is being held at the investigation-isolation prison (in Russian Sledizolator or SIZO) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Dushanbe and Amnesty International fears that he is being tortured in detention.

Bozo Sobirov was a leading member of the opposition Democratic Party of Tadjikistan before he resigned last November. He is one of Tadjikistan's finest poets and his poems are said to have helped inspire the first opposition to the country's former Soviet-style government. Bozo Sobirov was apprehended at the airport where he had gone to send a parcel to his son, who is living in exile in Moscow. He was taken to an unofficial vehicle by unidentified people, who later turned out to be procuracy officials. His wife, who was with him at the time, forced entry into the car but was removed from the vehicle half-way through the journey. Bozo Sobirov was reportedly taken to a police station and interrogated. His family's flat was subsequently searched and his poems, most of which were denouncing the Popular Front, were confiscated.

Bozo Sobirov has reportedly been denied access to his lawyer and his family. No official charges have been brought against him. It is feared that he is being tortured in detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Armed conflict broke out in Dushanbe in May 1992 between supporters and opponents of President Rakhmon Nabyev, a former Communist Party leader. This forced the President to include opposition Democratic Party and Islamic Renaissance Party representatives in a coalition government. Nevertheless, fighting spread to southern districts, and escalated after Nabyev was forced by his opponents to resign in September. In an attempt to stop the civil war the government of acting President Akbarsho Iskandarov resigned in November and a special session of parliament, still communist dominated, was convened in the city of Khodzhent. This dismissed Iskandarov and installed Imamali Rakhmonov as parliamentary speaker and head of state. Forces apparently supporting the Islamic elements in the outgoing government refused to relinquish control of Dushanbe, which was besieged by forces loyal to the new government created by the Khodzhent meeting. After fierce fighting the city fell on 10 December.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English, Russian or in your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Bozo Sobirov who was arrested on about 26 March 1993 and is being held in SIZO of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Dushanbe;
- urging that he is not subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- appealing for him to be granted immediate access to his lawyer and family;
- asking for information about the charges against him.

Page 2 of UA 98/93

APPEALS TO

1) Chairman of the Supreme Council, Imamali Rakhmonov:

Respublika Tadjikistan

g. Dushanbe

Verkhovny sovet Respubliki Tadjikistan

Predsedatelyu Rakhmonovu I.

Telegrams: Tadjikistan, Dushanbe, Predsedatelyu VS Rakhmonovu I.

Faxes: + 3772 22 69 71

Salutation: Dear Chairman

2) Procurator General of Tadjikistan, Mamadnazar Soliyev:

Respublika Tadjikistan

g. Dushanbe

Prokuratura Respubliki Tadjikistan

Generalnomu Prokuroru Soliyevu M.

Telegrams: Tadjikistan, Dushanbe, Gen. Prokuroru Soliyevu M.

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

3) Minister of Internal Affairs, Yakub Salimov:

Respublika Tadjikistan

g. Dushanbe

MVD Respubliki Tadjikistan

Ministru Salimovu Ya.

Telegrams: Tadjikistan, Dushanbe, MVD, Ministru Salimovu Ya.

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister, Abdumalik Abdullodzhanov:

Respublika Tadjikistan

g. Dushanbe

Kabinet Ministrov

Premyer-ministru Abdullodzhanov A.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rashid Olimov:

Respublika Tadjikistan

g. Dushanbe

MID Respubliki Tadjikistan

Ministru Olimovu R.

Representative of the Republic of Tadzhikistan in Moscow, Dzhamshed Karimov:

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya

121069 Moskva

Skatertnyy per., 19

Postoyannomu predstavitel'yu Respubliki Tadzhikistan v Moskve

Karimovu D.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 May 1993.