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TADZHIKISTAN: JOURNALISTS ARRESTED IN CLAMPDOWN AGAINST OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER

Amnesty International is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of two journalists arrested last week in the capital Dushanbe.

Maksud Khusaynov, an award-winning Tadjikistani journalist and fellow journalist Mukhammadrakhim Saydar were arrested on 9 and 11 August after state security agents searched their homes and discovered copies of the opposition newspaper Charoqi Ruz ("Light of the Day") which is published in Moscow and circulated clandestinely inside Tadjikistan.

Unofficial sources report that there have been other arrests in recent days in what appears to be a clampdown against possession of the newspaper.

These arrests have come at a time when Tadjikistan's parliament is preparing to debate an amnesty law which would benefit political prisoners charged with offenses connected with the 1992 civil war.

An amnesty is one of the conditions required from the government by the opposition in Tadjikistan for a successful outcome to ongoing peace talks aimed at national reconciliation and an end to the continuing opposition insurgency from Afghanistan.

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