

URGENT ACTION

RUSSIAN TORTURED IN TAJIKISTAN

Ilkhom Ismanov, a Russian citizen, has reportedly been tortured by police in the northern Soghd region of Tajikistan and continues to be at risk. His lawyer has been denied access to him.

According to the NGO Centre for Human Rights of Soghd region, on 3 November, Ilkhom Ismanov disappeared and his family was not told his whereabouts. On 4 November two men came to his family's house and made an inventory of his possessions without presenting any official documents. They told Ilkhom Ismanov's wife that he was being held at the Department for the Fight against Organized Crime (6th Department) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the city of Khudzhand in the Soghd region.

On 4 November Ilkhom Ismanov's wife hired a lawyer, but despite several attempts she has reportedly only seen her client in court on 12 November, when the judge authorized his further detention. On 5 November a representative of the Centre for Human Rights of Soghd region tried to meet with him, but was also denied access.

On 5 November, when Ilkhom Ismanov's wife and brother went to the detention facility in Khudzhand to provide him with food and clothing, a policeman reportedly asked them to bring some ointment for injuries and pain killers. Ilkhom Ismanov's relatives have been denied access to him many times, but they were able to see him twice. They said that he was unable to walk, had several cuts on his neck, his hands were bruised, his whole body was wet and there was water on the floor. His wife reported that when she asked to look at his feet police stopped the visit and escorted them out. When she asked the police what they had done to her husband they reportedly made fun of her and said: "You should say thank you to us that we showed you your husband. Now, go. We also need time to rest."

According to a source present at the court hearing on 12 November, Ilkhom Ismanov told the judge that he was tortured including by giving him electric shocks and pouring boiling water over his body. The judge reportedly turned down Ilkhom Ismanov's offer to show him evidence of torture on his body. The judge did not address the torture allegations and said that the lawyer should take it up with the police investigator. The judge ruled on 13 November that allegations that he had been detained since 3 November rather than 9 November, as the police had stated, should be investigated. According to the Tajikistani Criminal-Procedural Code, detainees have to be brought before a judge to rule on their continued detention no later than 72 hours after their arrest. The court announced that Ilkhom Ismanov was charged with "organizing a criminal group" (Article 187 of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan).

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Russian, Tajik or your own language:

- Expressing concern at allegations that Ilkhom Ismanov was tortured or ill-treated by police from the Department for the Fight against Organized Crime (6th Department) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the city of Khudzhand and urging the authorities to promptly conduct a medical examination and open an investigation into the allegations;
- Expressing concern that Ilkhom Ismanov was detained for six days longer than the lawful period before being brought before a judge;
- Expressing concern that his lawyer has been denied access to Ilkhom Ismanov and urging the authorities to ensure that his lawyer is promptly granted access;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 DECEMBER TO:

The President

Emomali Rakhmon
Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki
Tajikistan,
or. Rudaki 80,
734023 g. Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Email: mail@president.tj

Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Zarifi Khamrokhon
pr. Rudaki, 42,
734051 Dushanbe
Tajikistan

Fax: (992 37) 221-02-59

Email: info@mfa.tj

Salutation: Dear Minister,

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 11 November Ilkhom Ismanov was reportedly transferred to the Temporary Detention Facility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the town of Chkalovsk.

Ilkhom Ismanov's relatives and his lawyer have sent several complaints to the authorities including the Regional Department for the Fight with Organized Crime and the Procurator's Office of Sogd. On 11 November they sent a telegram to the regional procuracy urging them to give Ilkhom Ismanov a medical examination. No replies have been received.

Tajikistan is a landlocked country bordering China (East), Afghanistan (South) and Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (North) and has an estimated population of 7.2 million. Tajikistan gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The economic decline of the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union was compounded by a devastating civil war, lasting from 1992- 1997. President Emomali Rakhmon has been in power since 1994. Emomali Rakhmon has been successful in consolidating Tajikistan after its devastating civil war. He views himself as the indispensable guarantor of stability and peace in the face of possible new unrest, including in the context of the unstable economic situation in the country and the politically unstable situation in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Amnesty International has criticized human rights violations in the country such as torture and ill-treatment of detainees, and other persons, by law enforcement officers, impunity for torturers, denial of the right to fair trial, inhuman prison conditions, restrictions of freedom of speech; and violence against women. Torture and other ill-treatment are believed to be widespread in Tajikistan.

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