

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER AT RISK AFTER ATTACK IN COURT

Lawyer Tahir Asanov was attacked in court after calling for an investigation into police brutality against his client and nine other men during their trial in Osh, southern Kyrgyzstan. The accused and Tahir Asanov are at imminent risk of further violence as the trial continues.

Tahir Asanov's client is accused with nine other men of charges ranging from involvement in the death of the Kara Suu District Police Chief to taking part in riots, both of which took place during the June 2010 violence in Kyrgyzstan. Reportedly, during a trial hearing on 29 September, the accused men were being held in a steel cage inside the courtroom when, during a break in the trial, several uniformed officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) entered the cage and beat them for about twenty minutes. The courtroom guards unlocked the cage for the officers and stood by while the assault took place. The only other witnesses at this time were relatives of the dead police chief. The officers left the cage threatening to kill the men if they told anyone about the beatings.

During the next hearing on 30 September, Tahir Asanov requested an investigation into the beatings and for the men to receive medical examinations. Relatives of the murdered police chief present in the courtroom then shouted insults at Tahir Asanov and attacked him, punching him several times. Courtroom officials were slow to intervene and the judge did not attempt to restore order or expel the perpetrators, who continued to shout insults. After the hearing ended relatives followed Tahir Asanov outside the courtroom and attacked him, beating him for about ten minutes. Police were present while he was being beaten but did not intervene.

Amnesty International is concerned that officers from the MIA may carry out their threat to kill the accused men following Tahir Asanov's request for an investigation. Amnesty International is also concerned that Tahir Asanov is at risk of further attacks as the court hearings continue.

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

- Urging the authorities to take immediate action to provide protection for the accused men and Tahir Asanov;
- Urging the authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations that defendants were beaten in detention; and ensure the men receive an independent medical examination,
- Urging the authorities to take immediate action to ensure that trials relating to the June violence are conducted in an orderly, fair and transparent manner.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 NOVEMBER 2010 TO:

Osh Oblast Prosecutor's Office
Prosecutor Marat Alymbekov
162a, K.Datki Street
Osh 714018, KYRGYZSTAN
Fax +996 3222 2 50 81

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

Minister of Internal Affairs
Zarylbek Rysaliev
Frunze Street, 469
Bishkek 720040, KYRGYZSTAN
Fax: +996 312 68 20 44

Email: pressa@mail.mvd.kg

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

General Prosecutor
Kubatbek Baibolov
72, Orozbekova Street
Bishkek 723500, KYRGYZSTAN
Fax: +996 312 66 54 11

Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The June 2010 violence which devastated large parts of the south of Kyrgyzstan started on 10 June and rapidly escalated into large-scale arson, looting and violent attacks, including killings and sexual violence, on mainly Uzbek-populated districts in Osh, Jalal-Abad and surrounding towns and villages. While most of the victims appear to be Uzbek there are also reports of armed Uzbek gangs attacking Kyrgyz people. During the violence and in the following days, an estimated 400,000 Uzbek and Kyrgyz people were forced to flee their homes.

Since the interim government claimed to have regained control of the situation in the southern regions of Osh and Jalal-Abad, allegations have been mounting that Kyrgyzstani security forces, which are predominantly ethnic Kyrgyz, may have failed to intervene to prevent violence or colluded in human rights abuses. Reports that during the violence armoured personnel carriers and men in military uniforms forcibly entered barricaded Uzbek villages and neighbourhoods and of security forces failing to stop the escalating violence appear to be substantiated by video material and consistent eyewitness accounts.

Amnesty International has also received credible reports that in the aftermath of the violence in June human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society actors who have documented or are trying to document the events are being targeted by the authorities in an attempt to confiscate their material and obstruct their work.

In the days following the violence and since then, the Kyrgyzstani authorities detained hundreds of people on allegations of having organized or participated in the June violence. Amnesty International is concerned that in this respect the authorities appear to be disproportionately targeting the ethnic Uzbek community, particularly in Osh, where many have reportedly been arbitrarily detained. Moreover, there are widespread reports that detainees are being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in order to extract confessions, that they are denied medical care and access to their lawyers, and that families are being intimidated and, in some cases, made to pay large sums of money to ensure their relatives' release. There have also been reports of deaths in custody. During some of the subsequent trials of detainees, members of the public have also attacked the defence lawyers in the presence of police and court officials, who do little or nothing to stop the attacks.

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