

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 62/005/2004

UA 138/04 Fear for safety/incommunicado detention/ fear of torture

02 April 2004

**UZBEKISTAN Babir MAKHMUDOV (m)**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Babir Makhmudov, the son of writer and possible prisoner of conscience Mamadali Makhmudov, who was reportedly detained on 30 March 2004. He is being held in incommunicado detention at an unknown location.

Babir Makhmudov was reportedly detained at his home by nine police officers in plain clothes on the night of 30 March. His relatives and supporters have been unable to locate him and the authorities have refused to disclose his whereabouts. When asked about Babir Makhmudov's right to access to a lawyer a representative of the international non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch in Tashkent was reportedly told by a law enforcement officer that he did not need a lawyer.

Amnesty International is concerned that Babir Makhmudov, who supporters insist has no opposition political or religious affiliation, was detained without charge because he is the son of writer and possible prisoner of conscience Mamadali Makhmudov. Mamadali Makhmudov was sentenced to 14 years in prison in August 1999 after a trial which fell far short of international standards for his alleged participation in a series of explosions in Tashkent in February 1999 which the authorities described as an assassination attempt on President Karimov. In a written statement he described how he had been systematically tortured in order to force a confession while held incommunicado in pre-trial detention. Mamadali Makhmudov has described in detail how he and other political prisoners have continued to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment over the last five years. (See UA 34/99, EUR 62/02/99, 25 February 1999 and follow-ups).

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Babir Makhmudov was detained following a series of explosions, as well as attacks on police checkpoints, in the capital, Tashkent, and the city of Bukhara on 28, 29 and 30 March 2004. Uzbek authorities were swift to blame the violence, which left at least 40 people dead, on "Islamic extremists" including the banned armed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Islamic opposition party *Hizb-ut-Tahrir*, as well as *Wahhabis* generally, whom they accused of intending to destabilize the country. At least 50 people were reported to have been detained by law enforcement officers during sweep-up operations immediately following the first violent incidents. Among those detained were 11 men and women said by Human Rights Watch to be former religious prisoners and their relatives.

The authorities have also linked the attacks to Uzbekistan's participation in the "war on terrorism". A special commission headed by President Karimov himself is overseeing the investigation into the violence which he linked to the February 1999 explosions in a television address on 29 March 2004. The latter sparked a wave of arbitrary arrests of suspected Islamic and secular opposition supporters or sympathizers and their families as well as members of independent Islamic congregations. Thousands of devout Muslims, convicted after unfair trials of anti-state activities are currently serving long prison sentences.

Amnesty International fear that Uzbekistan may use this week's violence as an opportunity to further restrict fundamental freedoms and human rights and continue its crackdown on opposition Islamic groups with greater impunity.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Uzbek or your own language:**

- expressing concern at the detention of Babir Makhmudov who was reportedly detained on 30 March 2004;

- expressing concern at reports that he was detained solely for being related to possible prisoner of conscience Mamadali Makhmudov;
- calling on the authorities to make public the whereabouts of Babir Makhmudov and grant him immediate access to relatives, lawyers and any medical attention he might require;
- calling for him not to be ill-treated or tortured whilst in detention and for him to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence or released immediately.

**APPEALS TO: (Please note that it can be difficult getting through to fax numbers in Uzbekistan. If a voice answers, repeat 'fax' until you hear the signal; otherwise it is advisable to leave your fax machine on auto-redial if possible. Fax machines may be switched off outside office hours – 5 hours ahead of GMT);**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
Respublika Uzbekistan; 700163 g. Tashkent; ul. Uzbekistanskaya, 43; Rezidentsia prezidenta; Prezidentu KARIMOVU I.A.

**Telegrams: Prezidentu Karimovu, 700163 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**  
**Faxes: +998 71 139 15 17 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Please write for the attention of President Karimov at the top of your fax)**  
**Salutation: Dear President Karimov**

General Procurator of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
Respublika Uzbekistan; 700047 g. Tashkent; ul. Gulyamova, 66; Prokuratura Respubliki Uzbekistan; Generalnomu prokuroru KODIROVU R. Kh.

**Telegrams: Generalnomu prokuroru, 700047 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**  
**Faxes: + 998 711 33 39 17/ 33 73 68**  
**Emails: prokuratura@lawyer.com**  
**Salutation: Dear Procurator**

Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
Respublika Uzbekistan; 700029 g. Tashkent; ul. Novruz, 1; Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Respubliki Uzbekistan; Ministru ALMATOVU Z.A.

**Telegrams: Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, 700029 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**  
**Faxes: +998 71 133 89 34**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
Respublika Uzbekistan; 700029 g. Tashkent; ul. Uzbekistanskaya 9; Ministerstvo inostrannykh del; Respubliki Uzbekistan; Ministru SAFAEVU S.S.

**Telegrams: Ministerstvo inostrannykh del, 700029 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**  
**Faxes: +998 71 139 15 17/ 139 41 58/ 139 37 54**  
**Emails: uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz**  
**Telex: (64) 116343 MID SU**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights  
Respublika Uzbekistan; 700035 g. Tashkent; Oliy Majlis Respubliki Uzbekistan; Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis RASHIDOVOY S.

**Telegrams: Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis; 700035 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**  
**Faxes: +998 71 139 85 55**  
**E-mail: office@ombudsman.gov.uz**  
**Telex: (64) 116343 MID SU**  
**Salutation: Dear Commissioner**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 May 2004.