

URGENT ACTION

OPPOSITION ACTIVIST AT RISK IN TAJIKISTAN

Sharofiddin Gadoev is believed to be held by the Tajik authorities following his arbitrary arrest in Moscow on 14 February and forcible return to Tajikistan. He is a member of Tajikistan's opposition National Alliance coalition and Group 24, an opposition political movement banned in Tajikistan. Sharofiddin Gadoev is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Rahmon Yusuf Ahmazod, Prosecutor General

Through the on-line form:

<http://prokuratura.tj/ru/contacts.html> (Russian)

<http://prokuratura.tj/en/internet-reception/send-a-message.html> (English)

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Tajikistan

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to you to express my deep concern over the arbitrary arrest in Moscow of opposition activist **Sharofiddin Gadoev** and his forcible return to Tajikistan.

Sharofiddin Gadoev, who resides legally in the Netherlands, has publicly stated on numerous occasions he had no intention of returning to Tajikistan, where he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment and unfair prosecution. On 14 February, he was arbitrarily detained by the authorities in Moscow, and reappeared the next day in Dushanbe. After spending one day under house arrest in his family home in Farkhor, Sharofiddin Gadoev was transferred to an undisclosed place on 20 February by officers from the Interior Ministry and special forces.

On 24 February, the Netherlands' Foreign Ministry stated that the Tajik authorities confirmed Sharofiddin Gadoev's arrest, and claimed that he is accused of "criminal activities."

Sharofiddin Gadoev is a member of the National Alliance and the opposition political movement Group 24. In view of the current crackdown on Tajikistan's opposition parties, the indiscriminate targeting of human rights lawyers and political activists, and numerous documented cases of torture and ill-treatment of opposition figures, Sharofiddin Gadoev is at serious risk. I therefore urge you to:

- Ensure Sharofiddin Gadoev is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and has unimpeded access to a lawyer of his choice, to his family and any medical attention he might require;
- If he is in the custody of Tajik law enforcement bodies, release him immediately unless there is sufficient credible evidence to charge him with a recognisable criminal offence in accordance with international law and standards.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A legal representative of Sharofiddin Gadoev, Viktoria Nadezhdina, explained that the activist was detained by the authorities in Moscow, the capital of Russia, on 14 February, where he had meetings with the representatives of the Russian Security Council who gave him assurances regarding his security. However, Sharofiddin Gadoev reappeared the next day in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe. After spending one day under house arrest in his family's home in the southern town of Farkhor, Sharofiddin Gadoev was transferred to an undisclosed place on 20 February by officers from the Interior Ministry and special forces.

On 24 February, the Netherlands' Foreign Ministry – the country in which Sharofiddin Gadoev legally resides – declared that the Tajik authorities confirmed that Sharofiddin Gadoev was arrested, and that he is accused of "criminal activities."

Sharofiddin Gadoev is a member of National Alliance (a coalition of opposition parties) and the leader of the opposition political movement Group 24, many of whose supporters are in exile. He has been critical of the policies of President Emomali Rahmon. The previous head of Group 24, Umarali Kuratov, was killed in Turkey in March 2015. Tajikistani opposition figures have in the recent past been arrested, subjected to torture and sentenced in flagrant violation of the right to a fair trial. In 2015, the arrest and criminal prosecution of 14 leaders of the opposition Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) saw numerous violations of the right to a fair trial, and there were credible allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and strong suspicion that the charges against them were politically motivated.

Amnesty International has recorded numerous cases of torture in Tajikistan amidst a crackdown on dissenting voices.

Amnesty International has also documented numerous forcible returns from Russia to Central Asia. In the report [Fast Track to Torture](#) Amnesty International showed that short of resorting to complicity in the abduction of individuals, the Russian authorities have sought other ways to circumvent their international obligations and have used administrative means, such as deportations for administrative offences, to return individuals to Central Asian states where they face a real risk of torture.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Tajik, Russian or English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 11 April 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Sharofiddin Gadoev (he/him)