

URGENT ACTION

DEFENDER RELEASED UNDER HEAVY RESTRICTIONS

Human rights defender Uktam Pardaev was given a three year conditional sentence on 11 January which heavily restricts his movements and activities. He spent eight weeks in pre-trial detention in degrading conditions and is now under constant surveillance.

Human rights defender **Uktam Pardaev**, was convicted of fraud, bribery and defamation on 11 January by the Dustlik district court in Dzhizakh, north-eastern Uzbekistan, and received a three year conditional sentence. He is the chairman of the Independent Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan of Dzhizakh region and one of a handful of human rights defenders who remain and work in Uzbekistan. Amnesty International considers his conviction to be politically motivated and part of an ongoing campaign by the authorities against human rights defenders.

According to information received in February, the conditions of his release make it impossible for Uktam Pardaev to continue his human rights work without further repercussions. He must register at the local police station monthly and the police made him sign a document imposing a 22:00 curfew and removing his right to leave Dzhizakh without permission. Uktam Pardaev will appeal his conviction.

Uktam Pardaev was arrested on 16 November 2015 and spent eight weeks in pre-trial detention. In mid-February he talked to human rights defenders and described the conditions of his detention. In Dustlik Pre-Trial Detention Centre he was kept in a damp, cold cell with only a dirty mat to sleep on and was subjected to daily pressure from officials to admit his guilt. He was fed half a portion of soup and half a bread roll just once a day and witnessed how other detainees were tortured and ill-treated in order to obtain confessions. After being transferred to the Khavast detention facility on 26 December, police officers beat Uktam Pardaev on the head, abdomen and chest with batons for failing to undress quickly enough. However, when prison officials found out that he was a human rights defender with international support, his conditions of detention markedly improved and he was no longer ill-treated.

Since his release in January Uktam Pardaev has been subject to constant surveillance by security services. Uktam Pardaev's relatives and friends have also been watched, questioned and put under pressure to incriminate him and his brothers.

Please write immediately in Uzbek, Russian, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to quash the conviction against Uktam Pardaev, who has been targeted solely for his legitimate human rights work;
- Urging them to order a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into allegations of beatings by prison officials and cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions of detention and bring those responsible to justice;
- Reminding the Uzbekistani authorities of their responsibility to protect human rights defenders and ensure they can carry out their legitimate activities free of harassment and without fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 APRIL 2016 TO:

Prosecutor General

Ihtior Abdullaev
Prosecutor General's Office
Ul. Gulyamova 66
Tashkent 100047 Uzbekistan
Fax: +998 71 133 39 17
Email: info@prokuratura.uz
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Minister of Internal Affairs

Adham Ahmedbaev
Ministry of Internal Affairs
ul. Junus Rajabiy 1
Tashkent 100029 Uzbekistan
Fax: +998 71 233 89 34
Email: info@mvd.uz
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Human Rights Commissioner
Ullugbek Mukhammadiev
Uzbekistan Avenue 16a
Tashkent 100027 Uzbekistan
Fax: +998 71 239 81 36
Email: info@ombudsman.uz

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 264/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur62/2916/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Uktam Pardaev was detained in the early morning of 16 November 2015 at his home in Dzhizakh. Eleven police officers searched his home and confiscated a camera, a computer, USB memory sticks and CDs. Police officers then took Uktam Pardaev to a temporary detention facility at Dustlik district police station in Dzhizakh region

Amnesty International believes that Uktam Pardaev's conviction and harassment are part of a pattern of ongoing and longstanding persecution of civil society activists and human rights defenders by the Uzbekistani authorities. Amnesty International believes his conditional sentence is politically motivated and intended to obstruct his legitimate work as a human rights defender. Uktam Pardaev investigates and writes articles for the international media covering human rights issues and has actively worked with human rights defenders inside and outside Uzbekistan.

The authorities in Uzbekistan are responsible for grave, systemic and widespread human rights violations, including severe restrictions on the rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression, and torture and other ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners by the security forces is endemic. Prominent human rights defenders, government critics and independent journalists have been forced to leave Uzbekistan to escape persecution or sustained harassment and intimidation by the security forces and local authorities, and many continue to face harassment abroad by the Uzbekistani authorities.

Torture and other ill-treatment are defining features of the Uzbekistani criminal justice system. It is central to how the Uzbekistani authorities deal with dissent, combat actual or perceived security threats and repress political opposition.

Name: Uktam Pardaev

Gender m/f: M

Further information on UA: 264/15 Index: EUR 62/3502/2016 Issue Date: 23 February 2016