

# URGENT ACTION

## OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS ARRESTED, RISK TORTURE

**Thirteen members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) whom the authorities accuse of links to armed violence are at risk of torture and unfair trial, following their arrests on 16-17 September. Their arrests follow years of harassment of IRPT members and the Ministry of Justice's order to disband it in August.**

The Tajikistani law enforcement officers arrested 13 high-ranking members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) on 16-17 September and removed passports from a further 50 members, allegedly to prevent them from travelling abroad. The names of the 13 IRPT members arrested are: **Umarali Khisainov** (aka Saidumur Khusaini), **Rajab Jobir Rakhmatulloi**, **Abduqahor Davlatov** (aka Abduqahori Davlat), **Sattor Karimov**, **Zubajdulloh Roziqov** (aka Zubaidullohi Roziq), **Fajzmukhammad Mukhammadalii**, **Hikhmatullo Saifullozoda**, **Makhmadali Khaitov** (aka Mukhammadalii Hait), **Qiyomiddin Avazov**, **Zarafo Khujaeva** (Zarafo Rakhmoni), **Makhmadsharif Nabiyeu**, **Abdusamad Ghairatov** and **Vokhidkhon Qosidinov**. In an official statement, the Office of the Prosecutor General accused them of involvement in "criminal groups" responsible for organizing attacks on government buildings in the capital Dushanbe and the districts of Vakhdat and Rudaki on 4 September. The authorities alleged that the attacks were led by the then Deputy Minister of Defence Abdukhalim Nazarzoda, who was later killed in a security operation. They further alleged that he had acted under the orders of Mukhiddin Kabiri, the exiled IRPT leader. Mukhiddin Kabiri denied any links to the violent events on 4 September, and accused the authorities of fabricating evidence against himself and IRPT members.

Members of the IRPT and other opposition groups in Tajikistan and in exile have been subjected to an increasing level of harassment by the Tajikistani authorities in recent years. Following the 1 March election, from which opposition groups were effectively excluded, the party lost its two remaining seats in the country's parliament. On 28 August, the IRPT received an order from the Ministry of Justice to cease its activities by 7 September on the basis that it lacked sufficient popular support to qualify as a registered party. The criminal prosecution of the 13 members of the IRPT appears to be in connection with their political activism. They are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment, which are often used by law enforcement officials in Tajikistan to secure "confessions" and other incriminating evidence, and of unfair trial.

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

- Expressing concern that the allegations against the 13 members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan arrested on 16-17 September may be politically motivated and linked to their political activism;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that the criminal proceedings against them fully comply with international fair trial standards, including that they are given immediate access to lawyers of their choice;
- Expressing concern about the ongoing persecution of members of opposition groups and the arbitrary closure of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, in violation of the right to freedom of association and expression.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 OCTOBER 2015 TO:

President of Tajikistan  
Mr Emomali Rakhmon  
80 Rudaki Street  
Dushanbe 734023, Tajikistan  
Fax: +992 372 21 68 00  
Email: mail@president.tj

Salutation: Dear President Rakhmon

Prosecutor General  
Yusuf Rahmon  
126 A. Sino Avenue  
Dushanbe 734043, Tajikistan  
(Mark faxes and emails, "Please forward to Prosecutor General")  
Fax: +992 372 21 02 59  
Email: sekretariat@prokuratura.tj

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

**And copies to:**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Sirodjidin Aslov  
33 Sheroz  
Dushanbe 734001, Tajikistan  
Fax: +992 372 21 02 59  
Email: info@mfa.tj

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.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Government reported violent unrest in Dushanbe and the districts of Vakhdat and Rudaki on 4 September involving an attack by armed men against a police station. Little independent information is available about these events while the government in Tajikistan exercises effective control over the media. At least 26 people were reported as killed, including nine police officers and 17 of the armed attackers. The Tajikistani authorities blamed the violence on Abdukhalim Nazarzoda, a former Deputy Minister of Defence, and previously a member of the United Tajik Opposition during the 1992-1997 civil war.

Abdukhalim Nazarzoda escaped the scene of the attacks and was later killed in a special operation by security forces in the Romit Gorge area, east of Dushanbe, on 16 September.

#### **Torture and other ill-treatment**

Torture and other ill-treatment continue to be used routinely in Tajikistan despite the adoption of an Action Plan to implement recommendations made by the UN Committee against Torture in 2013. Criminal prosecutions against law enforcement officials suspected of torture are rare, and frequently terminated or suspended before completion.

Lawyers are repeatedly denied access to their clients in detention, often for several days at a time, particularly in facilities run by the State Committee for National Security. Individuals perceived to be threats to national security, including members of religious movements and Islamist groups or parties, are at particular risk of incommunicado detention, torture and other ill-treatment.

#### **Freedom of expression and association**

Allegations of harassment and threats against political opponents, including members of the IRPT, have multiplied in the last few years, particularly in the run-up to the parliamentary elections held in March 2015, with little room left for political or other dissent. The Tajikistani authorities have sought extradition of a number of individuals in exile suspected of being members of opposition groups.

Prominent opposition activist Umarali Kuvvatov was assassinated in Istanbul on 5 March 2015. He and his family had previously told Amnesty International that he had received threats that there were "orders" to harm him, allegedly coming from the highest levels of Tajikistan's authorities. His killers have not been identified.

Names: Umarali Khisainov (aka Saidumur Khusaini), Rajab Jobir Rakhmatulloi, Abduqahor Davlatov (aka Abduqahori Davlat), Sattor Karimov, Zubajdullokh Roziqov (aka Zubaidullokhi Roziq), Fajzmukhammad Mukhammadalii, Hikhmatullo Saifullozoda, Makhmadali Khaitov (aka Mukhammadalii Hait), Qiyomiddin Avazov, Makhmadsharif Nabiyeu, Abdusamad Ghairatov, Vokhidkhon Qosidinov (all male) and Zarafo Khujajeva (Zarafo Rakhmoni) (f).

Gender m/f: 12 males and 1 female.