

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 46/16/95

EXTRA 119/95 Fear of forcible repatriation / Fear for safety 16 October 1995

RUSSIA Shirali NURMURADOV, writer from Turkmenistan
(_____ in cyrillic)

Shirali Nurmuradov, a writer and prominent opponent of the Government of Turkmenistan, is apparently facing imminent and forcible repatriation to Turkmenistan after being arrested in Russia on a criminal charge. If returned to Turkmenistan, Amnesty International fears that Shirali Nurmuradov would be at risk of grave violation of his human rights.

Shirali Nurmuradov lives in political exile in Russia, albeit without any formal legal status there. On 21 September 1995 he was arrested at his Moscow home and charged with illegal possession of narcotics. His supporters claim that the evidence against him has been fabricated. He is currently free on bail.

Amnesty International has learned from unofficial sources that authorities in Turkmenistan have requested Shirali Nurmuradov's extradition, claiming that he was involved in drug dealing within Turkmenistan. These sources allege that this claim is also a fabrication. The sources report that the extradition request was considered at a meeting on 16 October at the office of the Procurator of Moscow Region; at the time of writing the outcome of the meeting is unknown.

Treaties on cooperation in law enforcement between Turkmenistan and Russia apparently allow for criminal suspects to be extradited without facing a formal hearing at which objections to extradition by the person concerned or their legal representative can be considered.

Amnesty International is calling on authorities in Russia not to permit the extradition of Shirali Nurmuradov to Turkmenistan, on the grounds that as a known government opponent he would be at risk of serious violation of his fundamental human rights, specifically the bringing of fabricated criminal charges to punish him for his opposition political activities, and torture.

Shirali Nurmuradov has lived outside Turkmenistan since he was released in 1992 at the end of an 18-month prison sentence for "swindling". At the time of his imprisonment Amnesty International took him up as a probable prisoner of conscience on the grounds of credible allegations that the charge had been fabricated.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkmenistan is led by President Saparmurad Niyazov, who uses the formal title "Turkmenbashi" - "Leader of the Turkmens". A cult of personality is being openly developed around him, and a state ideology known as "leaderism" has been announced. In 1994 a popular referendum approved extending his presidential term from five to 10 years, cancelling the next presidential elections. The President is also head of the ruling Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, successor to the Communist Party. Opposition parties and movements are prevented from acquiring legal status and operating openly by a combination of bureaucratic obstruction and overt official pressure, and most leading opposition activists have gone into exile.

During 1995 two associates of the political opposition have received long prison sentences following conviction of a charge of plotting to assassinate the President, a charge which their supporters claim is fabricated. There are

fears that these men were tortured in detention. Following an anti-government demonstration in July there were mass arrests in the capital, Ashgabat.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Russian, English or your own language:

- urging the authorities not to extradite Shirali Nurmuradov to Turkmenistan, on the grounds that the human rights record of the Government of Turkmenistan raises fears that he will suffer serious human rights violations there.
- noting that agreements between countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States permit Russia to refuse extradition if there are fears that a person whose extradition is requested will face human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

1. The Acting Procurator General of the Russian Federation, Aleksey Ilyushenko
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
103760 g. Moskva K-31
Kuznetsky most, 13
Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii
I.O. Generalnogo Prokurora
ILYUSHENKO A.N.

Telegrams: Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103760 Moskva, Prokuratura RF, Gen. Prokuroru Ilyushenko A.N.

Faxes: + 7 095 925 18 79 or + 7 095 292 88 48

Salutation: Dear Acting Procurator General

2. The Procurator of Moscow Region, Vladimir Kuznetsov
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
103866 g. Moskva
Tverskoy bulv., 18
Oblastnaya prokuratura
Prokuroru KUZNETSOVU V.V.

Telegrams: Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103866 Moskva, Oblastnaya prokuratura, Prokuroru Kuznetsovu V.V.

Salutation: Dear Procurator

3. The President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
g. Moskva
Kreml
Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii
YELTSINU B.N.

Telegrams: Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, Moskva, Kreml, Prezidentu Yeltsinu B.N.

Faxes: + 7 095 206 51 73

Salutation: Dear President

COPIES TO:

The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Andrei Kozyrev
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
g. Moskva
Smolenskaya sennaya
MID Rossiyskoy Federatsii
Ministru KOZYREVU A.V.

and to diplomatic representatives of Russia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 November 1995.