

PUBLIC

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**Further Information on UA 225/05 (EUR 46/033/2005, 30 August 2005) Fear for safety/fear of torture or ill-treatment/"disappearance"**

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**Airat Vakhitov (m)  
Rustam Akhmiarov (m)**

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Airat Vakhitov and Rustam Akhmiarov were released on 2 September, at 10am Moscow time. They are now at liberty in the town of Naberezhnie Chelni, Republic of Tatarstan.

They told Amnesty International that they had not been ill-treated while they were in custody. They are convinced that their release is due to the attention of Amnesty International and other media and human rights organizations. Airat Vakhitov told Amnesty International: "I can't express enough thanks to your members, we're simply in shock, thank you for your understanding of our situation." Rustam Akhmiarov told Amnesty International: "A very big thank you, thank you for caring and not being indifferent."

Airat Vakhitov told Amnesty International by telephone that he and Rustam Akhmiarov had been detained on 27 August in Moscow by officers from the Tatarstan Organized Crime Squad (UBOP) together with Moscow law enforcement officers. The two men were taken by aeroplane to Kazan, capital of Tatarstan, where they were held in a temporary detention facility (known by the Russian acronym IVS), before being transferred to an IVS in Naberezhnie Chelni.

The Deputy Chief Procurator of Tatarstan, Farid Zagidullin, had previously confirmed that Airat Vakhitov and Rustam Akhmiarov were being held in an IVS in the town of Naberezhnie Chelni, Tatarstan. However, according to the family the authorities in Naberezhnie Chelni had refused to confirm where exactly the two men were held, and no one had been able to visit them. Under Russian law, only defence lawyers have the right to meet with detainees in IVS, but Airat Vakhitov's family had not been able to hire a lawyer for him, explaining to Amnesty International that it was difficult to find a lawyer locally willing to take the case on. The two men say they were both provided with a government-appointed lawyer; Airat Vakhitov's lawyer only contacted his family on Thursday evening to say that he was soon to be released, and it is thought that Rustam Akhmiarov's lawyer made no contact at all with his relatives.

Airat Vakhitov told Amnesty International that there had been serious procedural violations. In particular, Airat Vakhitov said that a court had ruled on the legality of their detention on 29 August in their absence, in violation of Russian law, which require detainees to be present for such hearings. The fact that they were not brought promptly before a judge also violates the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, to which Russia is a party. Rustam Akhmiarov and Airat Vakhitov were simply handed a copy of the court decision.

According to Farid Zagidullin, they were being held on suspicion of "terrorism"-related offences, under Article 205 of the Russian Criminal Code. However, the court decision from 29 August stated that they were suspected of offences under Article 282 part 2 v, relating to "incitement to hatred or enmity". However, no formal charges were brought against the two men, and Airat Vakhitov says that the criminal investigation had been opened on the basis of no evidence at all.

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**Stop torture and ill-treatment in the "war on terror"**

For more information on AI's campaign see <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/stoptorture-index-eng>

**No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**