

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 60/02/95
Distr: UA/SC

UA 116/95

"Disappearance"

25 May 1995

TADZHIKISTAN

Mirzo SALIMOV, journalist
(_____ in cyrillic)

Mirzo Salimov, an opposition journalist, has "disappeared" in Tadzhikistan. He was arrested on 1 May 1995 at a market in the town of Gissar by people in uniforms who forced him at gunpoint into a car. Eyewitnesses reported that Mirzo Salimov's abductors shouted at him: "You are an enemy of the people! We have been looking for you for a long time!"

On applying to the local police for information about his whereabouts, Mirzo Salimov's family was referred to the Ministry of Security, which referred the family back to the police. On 9 May the family was informed by an official of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is responsible for the police, that there was no information about Mirzo Salimov's case. Since then unofficial sources have continued to allege that Mirzo Salimov is in the custody of officials of the Ministry of Security in the capital, Dushanbe.

From early 1993 Mirzo Salimov lived in exile in Russia, and was a correspondent for the Moscow-based opposition newspaper *Charogi Ruz* (Light of the Day). He returned to Tadzhikistan around six months before he "disappeared".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Civil war in Tadzhikistan in 1992 left at least 20,000 people dead, and appalling human rights abuses are alleged to have been committed by all sides, including numerous enforced "disappearances" which remain unresolved. Opposing forces in the civil war were organized along regional and clan as well as political lines. After the government led by Imamali Rakhmonov took power in late 1992 the opposition fled into exile, and its armed forces thereafter waged an insurgency from bases in Afghanistan. Since 1994 negotiations have been under way to try to find a lasting political settlement to the conflict.

Since 1992 some 27 journalists have been murdered or have "disappeared" in Tadzhikistan. Some of the killings appear to have been the work of pro-government forces and others the work of the armed opposition.

The media in Tadzhikistan is fully under government control. In August 1994 two Tadzhik journalists were briefly detained in Dushanbe for possessing the newspaper *Charogi Ruz*. They were prisoners of conscience.

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

- calling on the authorities to clarify the whereabouts of Mirzo Salimov, and, if he is in detention, to release him immediately if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the physical safety and well-being of Mirzo Salimov, noting that the victims of "disappearance" are especially vulnerable to torture or extrajudicial execution.

APPEALS TO

1. The President of Tadzhikistan, Imamali Rakhmonov
Respublika Tadzhikistan

g. Dushanbe
Apparat Prezidenta
Prezidentu Rakhmonovu
Telegrams: Tadjhikistan, Dushanbe, apparat Prezidenta, Prezidentu Rakhmonovu I.Sh.
Salutation: Dear President Rakhmonov

2. The Minister of Security, Saydamir Zuhurov
Respublika Tadjhikistan
g. Dushanbe
Ministerstvo bezopasnosti
Ministru Zuhurovu S.
Telegrams: Tadjhikistan, Dushanbe, Ministerstvo bezopasnosti, Ministru Zuhurovu S.
Salutation: Dear Minister

3. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Yakub Salimov
Respublika Tadjhikistan
g. Dushanbe
MVD
Ministru Salimovu Ya.
Telegrams: Tadjhikistan, Dushanbe, MVD, Ministru Salimovu Ya.
Salutation: Dear Minister

4. The Procurator General, Mamadnazar Salikhov
Respublika Tadjhikistan
734022 Dushanbe
prospekt S. Sherozi, 4
Prokuratura Respubliki
Generalnomu prokuroru Salikhovu M.
Telegrams: Tadjhikistan, Dushanbe, Generalnomu prokuroru Salikhovu M.
Salutation: Dear Procurator General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tadjhikistan, Talbak Nazarov
Respublika Tadjhikistan
734051 Dushanbe
MID
Ministru Nazarovu T.
Faxes: (+7 3772) 23 29 64 or 21 02 59

and to diplomatic representatives of Tadjhikistan accredited to your country, where these exist.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 July 1995.