

EXTERNAL

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MEDICAL CONCERN

Olim KARIMOV

UZBEKISTAN

Amnesty International is concerned for Olim Karimov, a 67-year-old political prisoner who was arrested on 19 January 1993 and who is recently reported to have suffered a stroke. Following his arrest he was held in the investigation-isolation prison of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, and there were reports that he had been charged with organizing an illegal political party. Amnesty International has now learned that the charge brought against him is "organizational activity directed towards commission of especially dangerous crimes against the state". Amnesty International is seeking further information about the basis for the charge.

Olim Karimov is a member of the presidium of the opposition *Birlik* [Unity] movement and deputy chairman of the unregistered Free Peasants' Party. By profession he is a professor of agricultural sciences.

Background

There is only one registered opposition party in Uzbekistan, *Erk* [Freedom], and this has recently been subject to official harassment; its executive secretary is currently in detention facing a charge of calling for the overthrow of the state. The opposition *Birlik* claims to be the largest opposition grouping in the country and has branches in each of Uzbekistan's 12 regions. It was allowed to register as a political movement in November 1991, but not as a political party, and has also been subject to official harassment. In January 1993 *Birlik* was banned for three months by order of the Supreme Court on the grounds of "intent to organize public demonstrations", which are illegal in Uzbekistan. This is despite a new constitution which was passed in Uzbekistan in December 1992 and which includes commitments to a multi-party democracy and to fundamental human rights. *Birlik* advocates a pluralist, secular democratic system of government and a mixed economy.

In the course of 1992 there were two arrests of *Birlik* officials. In December 1992 a deputy chairman of the movement, Pulat Akhunov, was sentenced to 18 months in a labour camp having been convicted of an assault charge which sources allege was fabricated. Amnesty International considers him a probable prisoner of conscience and is calling for a judicial review of the case. In the same month another *Birlik* member was abducted from a human rights conference in Bishkek, capital of neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, by officers of the Uzbek Security Services, and forcibly returned to Tashkent. There he was charged with "infringement

upon the honour and dignity of the President". In January 1993 he was sentenced by the Supreme Court to three years in a labour camp, but was immediately amnestied by the President and released. Amnesty International considered him to be a prisoner of conscience.

During 1992 prominent members of *Birlik* were also among the victims of a series of physical assaults by unknown assailants. In the most serious such incident, *Birlik* chairman Abdurakhim Pulatov suffered multiple skull fractures when he was beaten by four men wielding metal bars outside a Tashkent police station. It has been alleged that the deputy head of Tashkent police and the deputy procurator of Tashkent stood by while the attack took place. To Amnesty International's knowledge, no arrests have been made in connection with any of these incidents, and Amnesty International has written to the authorities in Uzbekistan expressing concern about allegations that the authorities have not made sufficient effort to identify the perpetrators of these attacks.

The Free Peasant Party, of which Olim Karimov is also a member, was founded in December 1991. It advocates the free distribution of collectivized land to individual farmers, environmental protection and an end to the cotton monoculture introduced under Soviet rule. Early in 1992 the party applied for official registration, but this was refused.

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Since suffering a stroke, Olim Karimov has been moved to a prison hospital, but there are reports that he is not receiving the specialist care he requires. No information on his current state is as yet available. Amnesty International is seeking further information about the charges which have been brought against him and is concerned by reports that he was arrested in connection with the exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. It is also seeking information on Olim Karimov's current state of health and his treatment, and is seeking urgent assurances that he will be provided with whatever specialist care he requires.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Europe
Date: 19 February 1993

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

Olim KARIMOV
UZBEKISTAN

Keywords

Theme: ill-health/ medical care

Summary

Details are given in the attached of the arrest and imprisonment of Olim Karimov, a 67-year-old prisoner who recently suffered a stroke following his arrest in January 1993.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below:

- expressing concern at the stroke recently suffered by Olim Karimov while held in the Ministry of Interior's investigation-isolation prison in Tashkent, and at reports that he does not have access to specialist care in the prison hospital to which he has been transferred
- seeking information on how he has been affected by the stroke, on his present condition and medical needs, and on the medical care he is receiving
- urging that he should receive all the care he requires in order to ensure optimum recovery
- expressing concern at reports that Olim Karimov was arrested in connection with the exercise of his fundamental human rights to freedom of expression and association, and seeking further information about the basis for the charges brought against him

Addresses

Zakirzhan Almatovich ALMATOV
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Republic of Uzbekistan
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700029 Tashkent
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The Procurator
Tashkent City Procuracy
Tashkent
Uzbekistan

Buritosh MUSTAFOYEV
Procurator General
Procuracy of the Republic of Uzbekistan

(Ms) Tursun Alambergenovna ESHIMBETOVA
Chair of the Human Rights Committee
Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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