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UA 55/99 <u>Possible prisoners of conscience/fear for safety/</u>
incommunicado detention 24 March 1999

UZBEKISTANUmarkhon Nazarov, aged 33 Akhmadali Salomov, aged 49 Abdurashid Nasriddinov, aged 29

Amnesty International fears for the safety of the three men named above, detained on 28 February and 17 March 1999, reportedly charged with "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order of Uzbekistan". People tried on these charges in Uzbekistan regularly allege they have been tortured to force them to confess.

These detentions appear to be part of a clampdown on so-called "Islamic extremists" and others, including the banned political opposition, their families and associates, whom President Karimov has blamed for a series of bomb explosions in the capital, Tashkent, on 16 February. All three detainees are related to independent Islamic leader Obidkhon Nazarov, wanted by the Uzbek authorities for allegedly promoting "Wahhabism" (an extreme form of Islam), preaching illegally and trying to set up an Islamic state.

Umarkhon Nazarov is one of Obidkhon Nazarov's younger brothers and a citizen of the neighbouring republic of Kyrgyzstan. On 17 March he was visiting his uncle Akhmadali Salomov in Namangan, Uzbekistan, when 15 armed police burst in, apparently looking for Obidkhon Nazarov. Both men were detained on charges of attempting to overthrow the constitutional order of Uzbekistan. Umarkhon Nazarov is currently detained in the Namangan regional police department. On 22 March his lawyer was granted access, but his family has not been allowed to see him. Akhmadali Salomov is at the Namangan regional department of internal affairs. He has not been allowed to see his lawyer or his family.

Obidkhon Nazarov's youngest brother, Abdumalik, is currently serving nine years in prison on charges of possessing narcotics. Amnesty International believes the charges were fabricated, brought solely because he is Obidkhon Nazarov's brother.

Abdurashid Nasriddinov is the brother of Obidkhon Nazarov's wife, Munira Nasriddinova, herself recently detained for 10 days. He was arrested on 28 February in Namangan and charged with attempting to overthrow the constitutional order of Uzbekistan and organizing mass disturbances. He is in Namangan prison and has been denied access to a lawyer and his family.

The authorities are reportedly planning to transfer Umarkhon Nazarov, Akhmadali Salomov and Abdurashid Nasriddinov to the same prison and to link their criminal cases, charging them additionally with being members of an armed criminal gang.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned that the government is using the investigation into the Tashkent bombings as a pretext to clamp down on perceived sources of opposition to President Karimov. Scores of known or suspected opposition supporters, and suspected members of independent Islamic congregations, have been arbitrarily detained.

During a recent campaign against the perceived spread of "Wahhabism", Amnesty International believes that people may have been imprisoned solely for their alleged affiliation to independent Islamic congregations. Scores of men were

sentenced during 1998 and early 1999 to long terms of imprisonment on charges including terrorism, attempting to overthrow the constitutional order and seeking to establish an Islamist state. Their trials were marked by allegations that defendants were beaten and otherwise ill-treated in detention to force them to confess. The organization is not aware that the Uzbek authorities have investigated these allegations.

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

- expressing concern at the detention of Umarkhon Nazarov, Akhmadali Samonov and Abdurashid Nasriddinov
- expressing grave concern at allegations that they were arrested solely because of their relationship to independent Imam Obidkhon Nazarov;
- urging that they be protected from any form of ill-treatment and be allowed immediate access to their families and legal representatives.

APPEALS TO:

President of Uzbekistan, Islam KARIMOV 700163 g. Tashkent, 43 pr. Uzbekistansky, Rezidentsiya Prezidenta, Prezidentu Karimovu I.A., UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Prezidentu Karimovu, 700163 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Faxes: + 998 71 139 5525 or 139 5510 Salutation:Dear President Karimov

Minister of Internal Affairs, Zakirzhan ALMATOV 700029 g. Tashkent, ul. Novruz, 1, Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, Ministru Almatovu Z.A., UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del, 700029 Tashkent, Uzbekistan Salutation:Dear Minister

Khokim (Governor) of Namangan Region, Tulkin DZHABBOROV Namanganskaya oblast, g. Namangan Khokimiat Namanganskoy oblasti, Khokimu DZHABBOROVU T., UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Khokimu Dzhabborovu, g. Namangan, Uzbekistan

Faxes: + 998 6922 66 343 Salutation:Dear Khokim

COPIES TO:

The Oliy Majlis (Parliamentary) Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Sayora Rashidova

700008 g. Tashkent, pl. Mustakillik, 2, Oliy Majlis Respubliki Uzbekistan Upolnomochenoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis Rashidovoy S., UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Human Rights Ombudsman, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Salutation: Dear Ms Rashidova

Procurator of Namangan Region, Kh. SABIROV Namanganskaya oblast, g. Namangan Prokuratura Namanganskoy oblasti, Prokuroru SABIROVU Kh., UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Oblastnomu Prokuroru Sabirovu, g. Namangan, Uzbekistan Salutation: Dear Procurator

Salutation: Dear Procurator

and to diplomatic representatives of Uzbekistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 May 1999.