

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 62/007/2004

15 April 2004

UA 147/04 Fear of torture/fear for safety/incommunicado detention/health concern

UZBEKISTAN Nilufar Khaidarova (f), aged 26

---

Nilufar Khaidarova was reportedly detained without charge on 5 April 2004, at her home in the capital, Tashkent. She is now being held incommunicado at an unknown location, and Amnesty International is concerned that she is at risk of torture. The authorities have refused to acknowledge that she is in custody. According to her parents she is not yet fully recovered from major surgery and chemotherapy to treat cancer that was diagnosed three years ago.

She and her parents were apparently woken at 5.30am by a group of 20 uniformed police officers, who took them at gunpoint to the Sabir Rakhimov district police station still dressed in their nightclothes. The officers searched the premises, causing serious damage, and claimed to have found Islamic fundamentalist materials in the form of a book, leaflets and a box of videotapes.

At the police station they were interrogated separately and then taken to the Tashkent City Department of Internal Affairs (GUVV) (the police force). Her parents were released without charge the following evening. They were unable to establish whether Nilufar had been kept at the GUVV or taken elsewhere. To date the GUVV has reportedly refused to acknowledge that Nilufar is in their custody or to provide any information on her whereabouts.

Amnesty International is concerned that Nilufar Khaidarova has been detained without charge because her husband and her two brothers, all devout Muslims, are currently serving long prison sentences, convicted of anti-state activities and membership of banned religious organizations.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Nilufar Khaidarova's detention follows a series of explosions, and attacks on police checkpoints, in Tashkent and the city of Bukhara, that took place between 28 March and 1 April 2004. Uzbek authorities blame the violence, which left over 40 people dead, on "Islamic extremists" including the banned armed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Islamic opposition party *Hizb-ut-Tahrir*, whom they accuse of intending to destabilize the country. On 9 April the General Prosecutor announced that over 700 people had been questioned in connection with the violence and that 54 suspects had been arrested, of whom 45 had been charged with terrorism, including 15 women. Human rights organizations continue to report sweeping arbitrary detentions, throughout the country, of men and women said to be either devout Muslims or their relatives.

The authorities have also linked the attacks to Uzbekistan's participation in the US-led "war on terrorism". A special commission headed by President Karimov himself is overseeing the investigation into the recent violence, which he linked to February 1999 explosions in Tashkent (which the authorities described as an assassination attempt on President Karimov) in a television address on 29 March 2004. The February 1999 bombings had sparked a wave of arbitrary arrests of suspected Islamic and secular opposition supporters or sympathizers and their families, as well as members of independent Islamic congregations. Thousands of devout Muslims are serving long prison sentences, convicted after unfair trials for anti-state activities.

Amnesty International fears that Uzbekistan may use the latest violence as an opportunity to further restrict fundamental freedoms and human rights, and continue its crackdown on opposition Islamic groups with greater impunity.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Uzbek or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Nilufar Khaidarova, who was reportedly detained on 5 April 2004;
- calling on the authorities to make her whereabouts public and grant her immediate access to her family, lawyers of her choosing and any medical attention she may require;
- calling for her not to be ill-treated or tortured, and for her to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence or else released immediately.

**APPEALS TO: (Please note that it can be difficult getting through to fax numbers in Uzbekistan. If a voice answers, repeat 'fax' until you hear the signal; otherwise leave your fax machine on auto-redial if possible. Fax machines may be switched off outside office hours – 5 hours ahead of GMT):**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700163 g. Tashkent; ul. Uzbekistanskaya, 43; Rezidentsia prezidenta; Prezidentu KARIMOVU I.A.

**Telegrams: Prezidentu Karimovu, 700163 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

**Faxes: +998 71 139 15 17 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Please write for the attention of President Karimov at the top of your fax)**

**Salutation: Dear President Karimov**

General Procurator of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700047 g. Tashkent; ul. Gulyamova, 66; Prokuratura Respubliki Uzbekistan; Generalnomu prokuroru KODIROVU R. Kh.

**Telegrams: Generalnomu prokuroru, 700047 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

**Faxes: + 998 711 33 39 17/ 33 73 68**

**Emails: prokuratura@lawyer.com**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700029 g. Tashkent; ul. Uzbekistanskaya 9; Ministerstvo inostrannykh del; Respubliki Uzbekistan; Ministru SAFAEVU S.S.

**Telegrams: Ministerstvo inostrannykh del, 700029 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

**Faxes: +998 71 139 15 17/ 139 41 58/ 139 37 54**

**Emails: uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz**

**Telex: (64) 116343 MID SU**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700035 g. Tashkent; Oliy Majlis Respubliki Uzbekistan; Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis RASHIDOVOY S.

**Telegrams: Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis; 700035 Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

**Faxes: +998 71 139 85 55**

**E-mail: office@ombudsman.gov.uz**

**Telex: (64) 116343 MID SU**

**Salutation: Dear Commissioner**

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 27 May 2004.