

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 31/02 (EUR 62/007/2002, 19 April 2002) - Fear of imminent execution/Torture and ill-treatment

UZBEKISTANValery Agabekov (m)
Andrey Annenkov (m)

Four days after the Urgent Action on behalf of Valery Agabekov and his brother-in-law Andrey Annenkov was issued on 19 April, their death sentences were commuted to twelve years' imprisonment.

Their families had not been informed of the 23 April commutation of their death sentences by the Collegium of the Supreme Court. Andrey Annenkov's wife Marina Annenkova told Amnesty International that she had nearly given up hope after having from neighbours at the beginning of May that the two men had been executed. It was only on 10 May, when Valery Agabekov's mother Nadezhda Agabekova saw her son at Tashkent train station - where she had gone following rumours that the men would be transported to another prison that day - that she learnt that their sentences had been commuted. The two men were taken to a prison in the town of Andijan to serve their remaining prison terms.

Tamara Chikunova of the group "Mothers Against the Death Penalty" in Uzbekistan, told Amnesty International on 30 May: "We later found out that the hearing on 23 April was an extraordinary hearing of the Collegium of the Supreme Court. I think it was set up as a result of the mass protests from all over the world. We saved these two men in the very last moment." Apart from "Mothers Against the Death Penalty" and Amnesty International, there were interventions from the United Nations Human Rights Committee and the International Helsinki Federation.

Valery Agabekov's mother, Nadezhda Agabekova learnt of "Mothers Against the Death Penalty" through Larissa Ganiyeva, the mother of Nikolay Ganiyev, whose case "Mothers Against the Death Penalty" and Amnesty International had been working on up to the commutation of his sentence (please refer to EXTRA 41/01: EUR 62/007/2001, 5 July 2001; EUR 62/013/2001, 3 August 2001; EUR 62/014/2001, 11 October 2001; EUR 62/018/2001, 8 November 2001; EUR 62/006/2002, 26 February 2002; AI Index: EUR 62/010/2002; 31 May 2002).

Nadezhda Agabekova told Amnesty International today: "Larissa and I were waiting together in front of the death row prison many times. If she hadn't told me of Tamara Chikunova's group, my son wouldn't be alive anymore."

Valery Agabekov and Andrey Annenkov had been sentenced to death by Tashkent Regional Court in September 2001 for killing and robbing two women. There were allegations that both men had been ill-treated in pre-trial detention.

No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.