

7 November 2001

Further information on UA 77/01 (EUR 62/004/2001, 30 March 2001) - Arbitrary detention/fear for safety/fear of torture**UZBEKISTAN**Rahima AKHMADALIEVA (f), aged 40
Odina MAKHSUDOVA, (f), aged 19, her daughter

Rahima Akhmadalievna was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on 21 September, for "undermining the constitutional order of Uzbekistan". Amnesty International is concerned at reports that charges against Rahima Akhmadalievna were fabricated and that she has been imprisoned solely to punish her for not disclosing the whereabouts of her husband, independent *imam* (religious leader) Ruhiddin Faruddinov, who is wanted on allegedly fabricated charges of "Wahhabism".

The governments of Uzbekistan and other countries of the former Soviet Union use the term "Wahhabi" as a blanket term of abuse for radical opposition Islamic groups perceived as a threat to national security and stability. "Wahhabism" is in fact an orthodox form of Islam practised in Saudi Arabia. Amnesty International is particularly concerned that Uzbekistan may use the "international fight against terrorism" as an opportunity to further clamp down on members and alleged members of the Islamic and secular opposition, with greater impunity than ever before.

Rahima Akhmadalievna was detained by officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) on 17 March 2001, who questioned her about her husband. Her 19-year-old daughter Odina Makhsudova was detained three days later when she came to look for her mother at the MVD. She was reportedly threatened and forced to watch the guards beating a detainee with rubber truncheons. Odina Makhsudova was later released, on condition that she kept silent about what had happened and that she helped to find her father.

Rahima Akhmadalievna was held without charge for two months in a basement cell at the MVD. On 10 May she was transferred to the investigation-isolation wing (SIZO) of Tashkent prison and charged with "possession of and production or distribution of material constituting a threat to public security and public order" and "undermining the constitutional order" of the Uzbek Criminal Code. She denied the charges but admitted possessing religious literature. Thousands of devout Muslims have been convicted after unfair trials of membership of an illegal party, distribution of illegal religious literature and anti-state activities, and are now serving long prison sentences.

While she was held in the basement cell of the MVD, Rahima Akhmadalievna was reportedly denied regular medication, which she needed for the treatment of heart problems. According to her lawyer, she was receiving some medical treatment in the SIZO, but it was not adequate and her heart problems were continuing. She was also reportedly suffering from an ulcer.

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

- expressing concern at reports that Rahima Akhmadalievna has been imprisoned solely to punish her for not disclosing the whereabouts of her husband, and pointing out that, if so, Amnesty International will regard her as a prisoner of conscience, who should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- asking the authorities to inform you of the evidence on which the charges against Rahima Akhmadalievna were based;

- urging the Uzbek authorities not to use the "international fight against terrorism" as an excuse to clamp down on internal opposition or restrict human rights of particularly vulnerable groups, such as members or alleged members of independent Islamic groups;
- urging the authorities to order impartial investigations into allegations that Rahima Akhmadalieva and her daughter Odina Makhsudova were subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Rahima Akhmadalieva receives appropriate medical treatment for her heart problems and ulcer.

APPEALS TO (Please note that it may be difficult to send faxes. If a voice answers during office hours, repeat 'fax' until connected; fax machines may be switched off outside office hours -five hours ahead of GMT):

President, Islam Abduganiyevich KARIMOV

700163 g. Tashkent

ul. Uzbekistanskaya, 43

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Prezidentu Respubliki Uzbekistan

KARIMOVU I.A., UZBEKISTAN

Faxes: + 998 71 - 2 89 00 46 (Write on the top of your fax: "Tel.: 139 53 75; 139 82 60; 139 59 29; Prezidentu Respubliki Uzbekistan; KARIMOVU I.A.")

Telegrams: Prezidentu Karimovu, 700163 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

e-mails: uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz (if your e-mail bounces, please fax it if possible)

Salutation: Dear President Karimov,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdulaziz Khafizovich KOMILOV

700029 g. Tashkent

pl. Mustakillik, 5

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del

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General Procurator, Rashidjon Hamidovich KODIROV

700047 g. Tashkent

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Prokuratura Respubliki Uzbekistan

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Salutation: Dear Procurator General

COPIES TO:

Head of the National Centre for Human Rights, Akhmal SAIDOV

700008 g. Tashkent

5/3, Mustakillik Maidoni

Natsionalny tsentr po

pravam cheloveka

Predsedatelyu SAIDOV, A., UZBEKISTAN

Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, Sayora RASHIDOVA (Ms)

700035 g. Tashkent

ul. Xalqlar Do'stligi, 1

Oliy Majlis Respubliki Uzbekistan

Upolnomochennoy po pravam

cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis

RASHIDOVYOY S., UZBEKISTAN

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 19 December 2001.