

UA 285/01

Fear of tUZBEKISTANYusuf Dzhumaev (_____), poet

Uzbek poet Yusuf Dzhumaev, a member of the banned secular opposition movement *Birlik* ("Unity"), was arrested on 23 October. He has reportedly been tortured, while held in the basement of the National Security Service (SNB) detention facility in the city of Bukhara.

Father of six Yusuf Dzhumaev was arrested by officers of the SNB's Bukhara regional branch at 7.30am. They searched his home and reportedly confiscated his poems, his daughter's poems and books by Uzbek writers. The SNB officers apparently told him he was being arrested in connection with the publication of his poems on a Muslim website that the authorities reportedly considered to be subversive. Based on these allegations, Yusuf Dzhumaev is said to have been charged with "undermining the constitutional order of the Republic of Uzbekistan".

Representatives of several independent human rights organizations in Uzbekistan believe that he was arrested because he had openly criticized a number of officials of the Karakul district of the Bukhara region, where he used to live, and accused some of them of corruption. Local police and procuracy officials had reportedly warned him not to "dig into other people's affairs".

A number of people have died in custody in suspicious circumstances in Uzbekistan over the past few years. Shovruk Ruzimuradov -- who headed *Birlik* in the southern Kashkadarya region in the early 1990s and who was the regional head of the non-governmental Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan -- died in custody earlier this year, reportedly as a result of torture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Uzbek authorities have used a series of bomb explosions in February 1999 in the capital, Tashkent, and other violent incidents, to justify a clampdown on individuals and groups they perceive as a threat to their authority and the country's stability. Those reported to have been arrested, and allegedly ill-treated and tortured, have ranged from members and suspected supporters of the banned secular political opposition parties and movements *Erk* and *Birlik*, to alleged supporters of banned Islamic opposition movements or parties, such as *Hizb-ut-Tahrir*, including members of their families, as well as independent human rights monitors. Thousands of devout Muslims and dozens of members or supporters of *Erk* and *Birlik* -- convicted after unfair trials of membership of an illegal party, distribution of illegal religious literature and anti-state activities -- are currently serving long prison sentences.

Birlik was Uzbekistan's first main opposition movement following independence in 1991. *Birlik* was granted official registration as a movement in 1991; however, it was denied registration as a political party. Following a clampdown against government opponents in 1992, *Birlik* was effectively outlawed.

Amnesty International is particularly concerned that Uzbekistan may use the "international fight against terrorism" as an opportunity to further clamp down on the country's internal opposition, with greater impunity than ever before. Uzbekistan, which borders Afghanistan, is one of the main allies of the US-led coalition in the region. At least 1,000 US ground troops are based at the Khanabad military base in the south of the country.

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

- expressing concern at allegations that Yusuf Dzhumaev has been tortured in the detention facility of the National Security Service in Bukhara following his arrest on 23 October;
- urging the authorities to ensure his safety and to open a prompt and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture, with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern at allegations that Yusuf Dzhumaev was detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, in violation of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Uzbekistan is a party;
- expressing concern at allegations that the criminal charge against Yusuf Dzhumaev has been brought solely to punish him for exercising his fundamental right to freedom of expression, and pointing out that, if so, Amnesty International will regard him as a prisoner of conscience, who should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700163 g. Tashkent; ul. Uzbekistanskaya, 43; Rezidentsia prezidenta;

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 back, please fax it if possible)

Salutation: Dear President Karimov,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdulaziz Khafizovich KOMILOV

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700029 g. Tashkent; pl. Mustakillik, 5; Ministerstvo inostrannykh del

Respubliki Uzbekistan; Ministru KOMILOVU A.Kh., UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Ministru inostrannykh del, 700029 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Salutation: Dear Minister,

Faxes: + 998 71 139 15 17

General Procurator, Rashidjon Hamidovich KODIROV

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

Telegrams: Generalnomu prokuroru, 700047 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Fax: + 998 71 133 99 36

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

COPIES TO:

Chairman of the National Security Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Rustam INOYATOV

Respublika Uzbekistan; g. Tashkent; ul. Novruz, 1; Natsionalnaya sluzhba bezopasnosti Respubliki Uzbekistan; Predsedatelyu INOYATOVU R., UZBEKISTAN

Head of the National Centre for Human Rights, Akhmal SAIDOV

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700008 g. Tashkent; 5/3, Mustakillik Maidoni;
Natsionalny tseñtr po pravam cheloveka; Predsedatelyu SAIDOV, A., UZBEKISTAN

Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, Sayora RASHIDOVA (Ms)
Respublika Uzbekistan; 700035 g. Tashkent; ul. Xalqlar Do'stligi, 1; Oliy Majlis
Respubliki Uzbekistan; Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis;
RASHIDOVY 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.