

# URGENT ACTION

## REFUGEE MUST NOT BE FORCIBLY RETURNED TO UZBEKISTAN

Valentina Chupik, a recognized refugee and migrant rights defender, has been held in the transit lounge at Sheremetevo airport in Moscow since 25 September. She has been told that she has been stripped of her refugee status, banned from Russia for 30 years, and is threatened with imminent forcible return to Uzbekistan. She must be immediately released and allowed to remain in Russia so that she can continue her work.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

**Tatyana Moskalkova**

High Commissioner for Human Rights in Russia

Smolensky Boulevard, 19c2

119121 Moscow

Russian Federation

Email: [a.zlovedov@rightsruf.ru](mailto:a.zlovedov@rightsruf.ru), [press@ombudsmanrf.ru](mailto:press@ombudsmanrf.ru)

Dear Tatyana Moskalkova,

I am writing to you concerning **Valentina Chupik**, a refugee and human rights defender who is currently being detained at Sheremetevo airport. She is threatened with imminent forcible return to Uzbekistan, a country that she fled 16 years ago because of justified fears of arbitrary prosecution in connection with her human rights work, and where she would be at risk of arbitrary arrest, unfair trial, and torture and other ill-treatment.

Valentina Chupik was detained as she was returning to the Russian Federation from Armenia. Border guards informed her that she had been stripped of her refugee status and banned from entry to the Russian Federation until September 2051, because she had purportedly “presented false information and forged documents”. Valentina Chupik was granted refugee status in the Russian Federation over 10 years ago and renewed her documents in March 2021.

Valentina Chupik has been offering free legal assistance to migrants from Central Asia in the Russian Federation and is known for advocating for proper procedures and adherence to legal standards. This action by Border Guards at Sheremetevo airport would appear to be an attempt to discredit and reprimand her for her work.

**We ask you to use your powers as High Commissioner for Human Rights:**

- **To ensure that Russia upholds its obligations under the international human rights law, including the Refugee Convention, and not forcibly return Valentina Chupik to a country where she would be at risk of human rights violations;**
- **To seek the immediate and unconditional release of Valentina Chupik and to ensure that she is able to remain in Russia and continue her human rights work.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Valentina Chupik left Uzbekistan in 2005 after the Andizhan events when the government sent the troops to put down a demonstration against the trial of local businessmen. Hundreds of demonstrators, most of them peaceful, were killed. Valentina Chupik alleged that she had been tortured in connection with these events. She fled to Russia because of justified fears of arbitrary prosecution, arbitrary arrest, unfair trial, and torture and other ill-treatment. She was granted refugee status in 2009.

She is the founder of the organization Tong Zhakhoni, which offers legal assistance to migrants from Central Asia in the Russian Federation.

She has been sending updates from Sheremetevo airport by mobile phone since her detention on 25 September, however, her battery is running low and in her last message sent on 30 September she said: "If you don't hear from me anymore then assume that I have been returned to Uzbekistan".

### **PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Russian**

You can also write in your own language.

### **PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 25 November 2021**

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

### **NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Valentina Chupik (she/her)**