

EXTERNAL

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Fear of forcible repatriation /
Possible prisoner of conscience

24 February 1997

RUSSIA/UZBEKISTAN ~~Albert Kayumovich MUSIN (_____ in Russian),~~
43, journalist and human rights defender

Albert Musin, a journalist and monitor of human rights developments in Central Asia who is living in political exile in Russia, is reported to be at risk of imminent and forcible repatriation to Uzbekistan where he is wanted on an apparently politically motivated charge. Amnesty International fears that if deported to Uzbekistan Albert Musin may become a prisoner of conscience.

Albert Musin was detained for a personal documents check by Moscow police on the evening of 21 February 1997 at a market in a Moscow suburb. On discovery that he was living in Moscow without proper registration he was taken to a police station in the Tyoply Stan neighbourhood. There, it was established that Albert Musin was wanted by authorities in Uzbekistan, where a criminal case had been instituted against him in March 1996 for "illegal collection, divulging and use of information" (Article 191 of the Uzbekistan Criminal Code). Media reports of his arrest have quoted statements by the Moscow police that a decision on Albert Musin's extradition will be taken imminently by the Office of the Procurator General of the Russian Federation.

Albert Musin left Uzbekistan in 1992 to avoid harassment for his activities in the political opposition. Although born in Uzbekistan, he currently has Kazakstani citizenship. He registered an application for the status of refugee in the Russian Federation in 1993, but was prevented from obtaining this status in Moscow due to restrictive local legislation. Until recently he worked for the Central Asian Human Rights Society, a Moscow-based non-governmental organization. He has also worked as a freelance reporter for several Moscow media outlets, including the newspapers *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Ekspress Khronika* and the radio station *Ekho Moskv*y. It is currently unclear whether the criminal charge against him relates to his human rights monitoring activities or to his journalism, or both. Nevertheless, Amnesty International is concerned that should Albert Musin be extradited to Uzbekistan and imprisoned on this charge he might be a prisoner of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International continues to have concerns about serious human rights violations in Uzbekistan, despite developments during 1995 leading to the release of a number of possible prisoners of conscience. The organization continues to urge judicial review in the case of a group of four people linked to the opposition and serving long prison sentences after a possibly politically-motivated criminal prosecution. It continues to monitor harassment, including short-term detention and physical violence, against prominent opposition and human rights activists. Amnesty International also has concerns about torture and ill-treatment of detainees, including in political cases.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Russian, English or your own language:

To the Office of the Procurator General:

- urging the Russian authorities not to extradite Albert Musin to Uzbekistan, on the grounds that the criminal charge on which he is sought by Uzbekistani authorities appears to be politically motivated, and if returned to Uzbekistan he may become a prisoner of conscience;
- noting that the Russian Constitution (Article 63) prohibits the extradition from Russia of persons persecuted for political beliefs in the countries to which they might be returned.

To the Federal Migration Service and the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs:

- urging that they intervene immediately to prevent the extradition of Albert Musin and ensure that he is formally recognized as a refugee in the Russian Federation and given all associated legal protection in Moscow.

APPEALS TO:

1. The head of the extradition department at the Office of the Procurator General of the Russian Federation, Leonid Yermolayev

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
103793 g. Moskva K-31
ul. Dimitrovka, d.15a
Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii
Mezhdunarodnoe pravovoe upravlenie, otдел ekstrasitsii
Nachalniku YERMOLAYEVU L.V.

Telegrams: Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103760 Moskva, Prokuratura RF, otдел ekstrasitsii, Yermolayevu L.V.

Faxes: +7 095 292 8562

Salutation: Dear Mr Yermolayev

2. The Head of the Federal Migration Service, Tatyana Regent

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
107078 g. Moskva
1 Basmanniy pereulok, d.3
Federalnaya Sluzhba Migratsii
Predsedatelyu Regentu T.

Telegrams: Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 107078 Moskva, Fed. Sluzhba Migratsii, Regent T.

Faxes: +7 095 261 60 43 or +7 095 925 80 82

Salutation: Dear Chairman

3. The Head of the Moscow City Department of Internal Affairs, Gen. Nikolay Kulikov

Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
103006 g. Moskva
Petrovka, 38
GUVd Moskvyy
Nachalniku Gen. Kulikovu N.

Telegrams: Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103006 Moskva, GUVd Moskvyy, Nachalniku Kulikovu N.

Salutation: Dear General Kulikov

COPIES TO:

The Procurator General of the Russian Federation, Yury Skuratov

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The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yevgeny Primakov

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and to diplomatic representatives of Russia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 March 1997.