



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UZBEKISTAN: APPEAL CASES

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Harassment and intimidation of anti-death penalty activists

Amnesty International is concerned that anti-death penalty activists Tamara Chikunova and Dilobar Khudoberganova and their relatives continued to be harassed by the Uzbek authorities in order to intimidate them because of their human rights activities.

Tamara Chikunova, director of the human rights group Mothers against the Death Penalty and Torture in Uzbekistan, and Dilobar Khudoberganova, a member of the group, have documented violations of fair trial standards in cases involving the death penalty, including torture in pre-trial detention of the suspects as well as in some cases their relatives in order to extract incriminating “confessions”. There have been many attempts by the Uzbek authorities to intimidate the activists and their relatives.

The authorities have also on several occasions made it impossible for Mothers against the Death Penalty and Torture to carry out their human rights work. For example, in December 2003, this human rights group was the driving force behind the organization of an international conference to be held in Tashkent, aimed at initiating a public debate about the death penalty and a dialogue with the authorities. The conference was blocked by the authorities only hours before it was due to begin.

Men, who introduced themselves as “National Security Service officials”, called Tamara Chikunova and Dilobar Khudoberganova and threatened them with death after they addressed the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development at a meeting held in Tashkent in May 2003. They were told, for example, that their group was “*blacklisted*” and that the Security Services were awaiting orders to “*eliminate*” the organization.

In 2003 armed police came to the flat of Tamara Chikunova up to three times a week, to “*check her documents*”. At one point she was accused by police officers of running a brothel, and in August 2003 a senior officer of Khamzinsky regional police came to Tamara Chikunova’s flat and told her she was suspected of sympathizing with Islamist extremists.

Tamara Chikunova’s and Dilobar Khudoberganova’s participation in a lobbying tour on the death penalty, organized by several AI Sections between September and December 2004, apparently triggered new incidents of harassment.

At six o’clock on the morning of 29 September 2004 an investigator from Mirobad district procuracy in Tashkent came to the house of the mother of Tamara Chikunova. The investigator told the 78-year-old woman, who is confined to her bed, that he had an arrest warrant for her daughter on the basis that she had carried out pickets which led to unrest in the Ferghana valley and in Tashkent. There were strong indications that the authorities targeted her mother to put pressure on Tamara Chikunova who was on an AI-sponsored tour in the Netherlands at the time.

On 21 December 2004 Erkin Khudoberganov, the father of Dilobar Khudoberganova, received a phone call by a man who introduced himself as a “National Security Service official”. He said that Dilobar Khudoberganova “talks too much” and warned that he should



Dilobar Khudoberganova (left)
and Tamara Chikunova (right)
visit AI UK. © AI

“think about the consequences her activities could have for his family”. The caller specifically criticized Dilobar Khudoberganova for giving interviews to the *BBC* and *Radio Liberty*, which, he said, the National Security Service had recorded, and for raising human rights issues on an AI-sponsored lobbying tour.

Despite regular threats and harassment from the authorities intent on stopping the work of Mothers against the Death Penalty and Torture, Tamara Chikunova and Dilobar Khudoberganova, as well as the other members of the organization remain committed to their work and have continued their campaigning and lobbying.

Take Action! Please send appeals to the Uzbek authorities to arrive as quickly as possible, in Uzbek, Russian, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Tamara Chikunova and Dilobar Khudoberganova and their families have been intimidated by the authorities on several occasions;
- urging them to ensure that Tamara Chikunova and Dilobar Khudoberganova and all other human rights defenders in the country are not harassed and intimidated by the authorities and that they can engage in human rights work without hindrance.
- urging them to investigate the harassment of Tamara Chikunova and Dilobar Khudoberganova and their families.

Please send your appeals to:

1) President of Uzbekistan

Islam A. KARIMOV

Rezidentsia prezidenta;
ul. Uzbekistanskaia, 43;
Tashkent 700163
UZBEKISTAN

Fax: +998 71 139 55 25
Email: president_office@press-service.uz

Salutation: Dear President Karimov

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs

Eler Ganiev

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del;
pl. Mustakillik, 5;
Tashkent 700029
UZBEKISTAN

Fax: + 998 71 139 15 17

Salutation: Dear Minister Ganiev

PLEASE SEND ANY REPLIES FROM THE AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. (Europe and Central Asia Program; Amnesty International; 1 Easton Street; London WC1X ODW; United Kingdom)