

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 62/07/97

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Further information on UA 257/97 (EUR 62/06/97, 1 August 1997) - Border Closure Impeding Safe Return of Refugees

UZBEKISTAN

The authorities in Uzbekistan have agreed to comply with United Nation's (UN) requests to facilitate the safe repatriation of Tajik refugees in Afghanistan by reopening the Termez border crossing between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

A full opening of the border crossing has yet to happen. The main crossing point, a bridge across the Amu Darya river, remains closed, but the Uzbekistani authorities are reportedly allowing the transportation of Tajik refugees across the river by barge. Humanitarian aid is being delivered to northern Afghanistan by the same means.

The decision by the Uzbekistani authorities was reportedly an outcome of talks on 17 August between President Islam Karimov and the US permanent representative to the UN, Bill Richardson. The decision has apparently not been officially reported in Uzbekistan, but was reported on 26 August by the state radio service in Tajikistan, and has been confirmed to Amnesty International by independent sources in Uzbekistan.

No further appeals are required from the Urgent Action network. Thank you to all who sent appeals.