

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 62/13/00

UA 184/00

Fear of i

UZBEKISTANDmitry Chikunov (_____), aged 28

Dmitry Chikunov, whose appeal against the death sentence has been rejected, could be executed at any time. Amnesty International is also concerned that his confession may have been extracted under torture.

Dmitry Chikunov was convicted of the premeditated, aggravated murder of two men and sentenced to death on 11 November 1999 by Tashkent Regional Court in the former Soviet Union republic of Uzbekistan. The Supreme Court of Uzbekistan turned down his appeal against his death sentence on 24 January 2000. His only hope is a pardon from President Islam Karimov.

Dmitry Chikunov told his mother while in pre-trial detention: "When I came to myself after they had beaten me unconscious, they tied my hands and put a gas-mask over my head. Then the interrogator squeezed tight the hose for breathing and shouted: 'now, confess that you are a murderer'." Reportedly, law enforcement officers in pre-trial detention kept threatening to rape his mother unless he confessed.

Dmitry Chikunov is now on death row in Tashkent prison, where conditions have been described by former prisoners as particularly harsh.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and without reservation, as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Uzbekistan retains the death penalty for eight offences, including premeditated, aggravated murder. In 1998 the *Oliy Majlis* (parliament) removed the death penalty from the criminal code as a punishment for five other offences.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights in Uzbekistan, Sayora Rashidova, informed Amnesty International that this development was part of Uzbekistan's policy to "abolish the death penalty by stages". Since the beginning of 1999 Amnesty International has learned of at least 44 death sentences and 14 executions in Uzbekistan. However, as information on the death penalty is regarded as a state secret, the real number of those sentenced to death and executed may be much higher. The UN Committee against Torture asked the Uzbek government delegation for these figures at its November 1999 session, but did not receive them.

Amnesty International has consistently pressed the Uzbek authorities to reduce the scope of the death penalty as a step towards total abolition. The organization has also asked that Uzbekistan impose a moratorium on death sentences and executions pending a review of this punishment and that they publish comprehensive statistics on the application of the death penalty.

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

- urging the President to use his constitutional authority to commute the death sentence passed on Dmitry Chikunov, as well as all other death sentences that come before him;

- urging the authorities to enter a new stage of their "policy to abolish the death penalty by stages" and impose a moratorium on death sentences and executions pending a comprehensive review of the death penalty, in line with the international trend towards abolition of the death penalty;
- expressing concern at allegations that Dmitry Chikunov's confession was extracted under duress and that he was ill-treated in pre-trial detention;
- asking the authorities to launch an independent and impartial investigation into the allegations of ill-treatment;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of crime and their families, but pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments, and is brutalizing to all those involved in its application.

APPEALS TO (Please note that fax numbers are difficult to obtain. If a voice answers, repeat 'fax' until connected; otherwise it is advisable to leave your fax machine on auto-redial):

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700163 g. Tashkent; ul. Uzbekistanskaya, 43; Rezidentsia prezident; Prezidentu Respubliki Uzbekistan KARIMOVU I.A.; UZBEKISTAN
Telegrams: Prezidentu Karimovu, 700163 Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Faxes: + 998 71 139 53 15 / 139 53 25
e-mails: uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz
Salutation: Dear President Karimov

Head of the Clemency Department at the President's Office

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700000 g. Tashkent; Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki Uzbekistan; Otdel po voprosam pomilovaniya; Zaveduyushchemu otdelom, AKHMANOVU N.; UZBEKISTAN
Telegrams: Akhmanovu N., Otdel pomilovaniya, 700000 Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Salutation: Dear Mr Akhmanov

Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700183 g. Tashkent; ul. Abdulla Kodiri, 1; Verkhovny Sud Respubliki Uzbekistan; Predsedatelyu MINGBAYEVU U., UZBEKISTAN
Telegrams: Mingbayevu U., Verkhovny sud, 700183 Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Salutation: Dear Mr. Mingbayev

COPIES TO:

Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700035 g. Tashkent; Oliy Majlis Respubliki Uzbekistan; Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis, RASHIDOVOY S.; UZBEKISTAN
Faxes: + 998 71 139 85 55
E-mails: mtillaboev@oliymajlis.gov.uz

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700029 g. Tashkent; pl. Mustakillik, 5; Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Respubliki Uzbekistan; Ministru KOMILOVU A.Kh.; UZBEKISTAN
Faxes: + 998 71 139 15 17

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 9 August 2000.