

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 71/007/2001

11 December 2001

Further information on UA 305/01 (EUR 71/004/2001, 29 November 2001) and follow-up (EUR 71/006/2001, 30 November 2001) - fear of forcible deportation/fear of torture

CZECH REPUBLIC/UZBEKISTAN Muhammad Salih (m), aged 52

Exiled Uzbek opposition leader Muhammad Salih was today released from custody by Prague City Court. The court reportedly decided that there was no danger that he would leave the country before Uzbekistan's request for his extradition is heard next week. He is to be questioned at the Prague City State Attorney's Office tomorrow.

At a news conference given at Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe's Prague office after his release, Muhammad Salih said that the Czech Republic, as a Western nation, had a responsibility to show Uzbek leader Islam Karimov that he could not hide behind the slogan of antiterrorism in order to crush dissent.

The Czech news agency CTK reported that President Vaclav Havel had told journalists that he would meet Muhammad Salih on 12 December at Prague Castle. He said that the Presidential Office had been flooded with appeals for Muhammad Salih from all over the world.

The Czech interior minister has been quoted as saying that Muhammad Salih is "certainly not threatened with extradition to Uzbekistan".

Many thanks to all who took action on this case. If possible, please send a final appeal, in Czech, English or your own language:

- welcoming the release of Muhammad Salih and urging that he be returned to Norway;
- pointing out that Muhammad Salih would be in grave danger of torture and cruel and inhuman treatment if he were returned to Uzbekistan;
- reminding the authorities that the Czech Republic is a party to the UN Refugee Convention; the United Nations Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, all of which prohibit the forcible return of anyone to countries where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

President

Václav Havel

President of the Czech Republic

Prazsky Hrad

Praha 1

11908

CZECH REPUBLIC

Telegram: President Havel, Prazsky Hrad, Prague, Czech Republic

email: president@hrad.cz

Salutation: Dear President Havel

Minister of the Interior

Mr Stanislav Gross

Nad štolou 3

170 34 Prague 7

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Fax: + 42 02 614 33560 / 614 33552 / 614 33553
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Government Commissioner for Human Rights
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125 10 Prague 1
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and to diplomatic representatives of the Czech Republic accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 January 2002.