

# URGENT ACTION

## JOURNALIST FINED AND BANNED FROM JOURNALISM

**On 14 October 2011, a court in the northern city of Khujand in the Soghd region, Tajikistan, found journalist, Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov, guilty of the charges brought against him of libel, insult and inciting hatred. He will be appealing against the verdict.**

**Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov**, who wrote for the weekly newspaper *Nuri Zindagi* (Ray of Starlight), based in the capital of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, was arrested on 23 November 2010 in the remote Soghd region of the country, where he had been working to promote circulation of the newspaper.

According to Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov's lawyer, he was charged with "criminal defamation" and "insult through media," but the charges do not relate to any specific article or specific plaintiff. On 29 November 2010 the editor of *Nuri Zindagi* received an official letter from the Asht district prosecutor's office, demanding copies of all published articles written by Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov.

On 14 October 2011 Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov was found guilty of the charges brought against him and fined approximately \$7,000 dollars and banned from journalistic work for three years. He will be appealing against the verdict.

His fellow journalists believe that the charges relate to an article he wrote about the local authorities in Asht. The article criticized local law-enforcement agencies in particular and the lack of justice in the district.

Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov had been held in a detention facility in the city of Khujand, in the north of the country.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor his case.

**Many thanks to all who took action on behalf of Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov. No further action is requested from the UA network at this time.**

This is the first update of UA 261/10. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR60/005/2010/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR60/005/2010/en)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2010 Tajikistani and international human rights groups reported that independent newspapers and broadcasters faced criminal and civil lawsuits for criticizing the government. Pressure on the media increased in 2010, particularly in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in February and in the aftermath of a September ambush in the Rasht district, allegedly carried out by Islamist militants and opposition groups, in which 28 government troops were killed. In September and October the websites of local news agencies and an opposition blog were allegedly blocked by the authorities, and tax inspections allegedly targeted media outlets that had been critical of the authorities in connection with the Rasht events.

Name: Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 261/10 Index: EUR 60/011/2011 Issue Date: 19 October 2011