

URGENT ACTION

REFUGEE ABDUCTED BY POLICE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

Umid Yakubov, a refugee from Uzbekistan, was abducted on the street in Moscow on 29 April. It is feared that he has been taken to Uzbekistan, where he is at real risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Umid Yakubov, an ethnic Uzbek officially recognised by the UN as a refugee, was abducted in the afternoon of 29 April on the street in Moscow. He was on his way to an interview at the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to discuss his resettlement from Russia to a safer country, when a police officer pulled over the car he was in. While the police officer was checking the documents of the car's driver, three men, one wearing a police uniform, approached Umid Yakubov and forcibly put him in a minivan. No one has heard from Umid Yakubov since. He did not arrive for his interview at UNCHR and his partner has not been able to reach him on his mobile phone. Human rights defenders fear that he was abducted with the involvement of Uzbekistani security services, and may now have been forcibly returned to Uzbekistan, as on the evening of 29 April there was a scheduled direct flight from Moscow to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. In February 2010 the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) had ordered the authorities in Russia not to extradite Umid Yakubov to Uzbekistan, while it was examining his application to the ECtHR against the decision to forcibly return him to his country of origin. In November 2011 the ECtHR ruled that if Russia returned Umid Yakubov to Uzbekistan, Russia would be in violation of Article 3 (prohibition of torture) of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Umid Yakubov fled Uzbekistan for Belarus in 2008, and then moved to Russia in May 2009. The UNCHR recognized Umid Yakubov as a refugee in need of international protection in September 2010. Umid Yakubov was first arrested in Tashkent in 1999 after a neighbour reported him to the police, suggesting that he was a member of an Islamist political party, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, banned in Uzbekistan. Umid Yakubov had started to study Islam and to visit the local mosque regularly. From 1999 until he left the country in 2008 he was repeatedly detained by law enforcement forces in Uzbekistan. Every time he was detained he was reportedly subjected to severe beatings, and food and water deprivation. Umid Yakubov has claimed that as a result of this ill-treatment he sustained injuries to his spine, and developed kidney problems and has suffered from recurring pain in his head and back.

Please write immediately in Russian, English or your own language:

- Urging the Russian authorities to investigate promptly, impartially and effectively the abduction of Umid Yakubov, establish his whereabouts and ensure his safety;
- Calling on them to comply with their obligations under international human rights law not to deport, extradite or otherwise return any person to a country where they would be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 JUNE 2014 TO:

Prosecutor General

Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika
Bolshaia Dmitrovka 15 A
125993 Moscow
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 692 17 25

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Chairman of the Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation

Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin
Investigation Committee
Tekhnicheskii pereulok, dom 2
105005 Moscow, Russian Federation
Fax: +7499 265 90 77; +7499 265 97 75

**Salutation: Dear Chairman of the
Investigation Committee**

And copies to:

Deputy Director of FSB, Director of
Border Agency
Vladimir Egorovich Pronichev
Ul. Bolshaia Lubianka, dom 1/3
107031 Moscow, Russian Federation
Fax: +7 495 914 26 32
Email: fsb@fsb.ru

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Umid Yakubov is wanted in Uzbekistan under Articles 223 (“Illegal exit from or entry in Republic of Uzbekistan”) and 244-2 (“Establishment, direction of or participation in religious extremist, separatist, fundamentalist or other banned organizations”) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan in connection with his alleged participation in the activities of Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

Amnesty International has closely monitored the human rights situation in Uzbekistan since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Thousands of devout Muslims have been sentenced in Uzbekistan in unfair trials for alleged membership of banned Islamist organizations. Allegations of torture and other ill-treatment in detention are very frequent. Many prisoners are being held in conditions which amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The organization is concerned that the Uzbekistani authorities actively seek the extradition from neighbouring countries, in the name of national security and the fight against terrorism, of individuals suspected of extremism in connection with their membership of Islamic movements or Islamist parties banned in Uzbekistan, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, or them being devout Muslims. Amnesty International’s research has found that most of those forcibly returned to Uzbekistan are held incommunicado, thereby increasing their risk of being tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

Amnesty International documented a series of recent cases when the Russian authorities appear to have collaborated with Central Asian security services to allow for the abduction and removal of people whose extraditions had been halted by the adoption of interim measures by the European Court of Human Rights. Please see Amnesty International’s report *Return to Torture: Extraditions, forcible returns and removals to Central Asia* (Index EUR 04/001/2013) for more information, accessible at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR04/001/2013/en>.

Amnesty International has continued to receive persistent and credible allegations of routine and pervasive torture and other ill-treatment of persons in custody by security forces during arrest, transfer, in police custody and in pre-trial detention, and by security forces and prison personnel in post-conviction detention facilities. Methods of torture or other ill-treatment in detention described by former prisoners, including released human rights defenders, include beating detainees with batons, iron rods, bottles filled with water while they are handcuffed to radiators or suspended from ceiling hooks, asphyxiation with plastic bags or gasmasks with the air supply turned off, inserting needles under finger or toenails, electric shock, dousing with freezing water, and rape of both men and women. Amnesty International’s research shows that in the vast majority of cases the authorities have failed to conduct effective investigations into allegations of torture or other ill-treatment by detainees.

The use of torture and other ill-treatment in Uzbekistan has been recognised by the European Court of Human Rights. The Court has been faced with determining the risk of torture and other serious human rights violations in Uzbekistan in cases relating to challenges to orders to forcibly transfer individuals from Council of Europe Member States back to Uzbekistan. The European Court of Human Rights has issued at least 20 judgments in the past four years prohibiting the return of criminal suspects to Uzbekistan on the basis of a risk of torture.

Name: Umid Yakubov
Gender m/f: M

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