

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 46/018/2001

11 July 2001

Further information on EXTRA 42/01 (EUR 46/016/2001, 9 July 2001) - Fear of forcible deportation / torture / unfair trial

RUSSIAN FEDERATION/TAJIKISTANDodojon Atovulloyev

Dodojon Atovulloyev was released this morning, after the Russian Procurator General rejected the Tajik authorities' request to extradite him. He is now on his way back to Germany.

Dodojon Atovulloyev's lawyer told Amnesty International: "Dodojon is free. It is brilliant. He was released because of the great political pressure from the German government, the OSCE, and public pressure from human rights organizations.

"Dodojon knew of the public outcry about his detention because he was allowed to read newspapers in custody. But the release was completely unexpected."

The Russian Interfax news agency quoted the Procurator General's office as saying: "Having painstakingly studied the document put before him, [the Prosecutor General] did not find any grounds for handing over Atovulloyev."

The head of the international legal directorate in the Office of the Procurator General went in person to hand over the order for Dodojon Atovulloyev's release. He was freed at around 2.30pm Moscow time. He told Amnesty International: "When I was released, my friends, my lawyer, and journalists were waiting for me."

The German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, had appealed to the Russian government not to extradite Dodojon Atovulloyev, and to release him. According to Reuters, he said: "The German government is of the opinion that there is no doubt that the Tajik government is seeking to have [Atovulloyev] extradited for purely political reasons and that he would face immediate dangers in Tajikistan."

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.