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Kyrgyzstan: More asylum-seekers at risk of forcible return

Amnesty International is alarmed at reports that the Prosecutor General of Kyrgyzstan has asked for a further 103 asylum-seekers from Uzbekistan to be removed from a camp which houses hundreds of people who are seeking international protection.

The Prosecutor General has reportedly asked that these 103 people be placed in detention, from where they may be in danger of forcible return to Uzbekistan. At present, they are still believed to be in the camp, along with others who fled the city of Andizhan after government troops reportedly fired on thousands of mainly unarmed and peaceful demonstrators on 13 May.

The camp was reportedly surrounded on Thursday by Uzbekistani security officers in civilian clothes. The Kyrgyz authorities are under increasing pressure from Uzbekistan to return people - seeking international protection - who they claim to be "escaped criminals".

At the end of last week, 29 Uzbekistanis seeking international protection in Kyrgyzstan were taken to a detention centre in Osh and remain at risk of imminent forcible return to Uzbekistan, although the Office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has not yet completed the process of assessing whether they are in need of international protection as refugees. Four men have already been returned forcibly to Uzbekistan.

"The Kyrgyz authorities must comply with their obligations under international human rights and refugee law not to return anybody to a country where they risk serious human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment. Uzbekistan's human rights record shows that serious human rights violations, including torture and unfair trial, are widespread and systemic," Amnesty International said.

"The Kyrgyz authorities must facilitate the UNHCR in fulfilling its mandate to protect refugees and must abide by the assurances given to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to refrain from forcible return of people seeking international protection."

Amnesty International calls on the international community to ensure as a matter of urgency that all persons recognized as refugees as well as those who would be at risk of serious violations of their human rights are provided with a durable solution to their plight, including resettlement in a third country.

See also: *Kyrgyzstan: Stop deportation of Uzbekistani refugees*
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engeur580052005>

Public Document

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