

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: EUR 62/003/2005**

**21 March 2005**

**Further Information on UA 352/02 (EUR 46/066/2002, 4 December 2002) and follow-up (EUR 46/041/2004, 21 July 2004) - Fear of deportation/fear of torture**

**UZBEKISTAN**

**Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev (m) aged 54**

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Amnesty International has learned that on 20 January 2005 Andizhan Regional Court in eastern Uzbekistan sentenced Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev to 16 years in prison. He had reportedly been held incommunicado at an unknown location in Uzbekistan since being abducted from the Russian Federation in July 2004.

Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev was charged with eight crimes, including "terrorism", "national, racial or religious incitement" and "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order", but it is not known on which charges he was found guilty. His trial reportedly fell far short of international standards for fair trials. It took place behind closed doors, with no relatives or observers permitted to be present. Witnesses reportedly stated in court that they had been threatened by investigators, including by the head of the National Security Service's investigation department, that criminal cases would be filed against them if they did not sign statements incriminating Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev. Throughout the trial Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev allegedly denied the charges and maintained his innocence, even though the trial judge reportedly urged him to confess to the charges. His supporters believe that the charges against him are groundless and that the case was politically motivated. Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev's appeal was turned down by Andizhan Regional Court on 2 March; however, an appeal is still pending with the Supreme Court.

Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev is an Uzbek national who had lived in the Russian Federation since 1995 and had worked as an imam (religious leader) in a mosque in the town of Marx. In July 2004, he was reportedly abducted from his home by masked men, apparently on the instructions of the Uzbek authorities. He had previously been detained by Russian law enforcement personnel in October 2002 following an extradition request from Uzbekistan. However, he was released a year later after the Russian General Procuracy declared the Uzbek request unfounded.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Thousands of people have been detained and imprisoned in Uzbekistan on accusations of "religious extremism". Among them are members and presumed members of independent Islamic congregations, members of banned Islamist and secular opposition parties and movements, and their relatives. Amnesty International has received persistent allegations that police have tortured many of those arrested to extract 'confessions'. Heavy sentences, including death sentences, have been imposed after trials which appear to have been grossly unfair.

**Many thanks to all those who sent appeals on this case. Amnesty International will use longer-term campaigning methods on behalf of Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev. If possible, please send a final round of appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Uzbek or your own language:**

- expressing concern that Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev was reportedly sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment after an unfair trial before Andizhan Regional Court, where witnesses were allegedly intimidated and forced to sign incriminating statements;
- expressing concern that Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev was returned to Uzbekistan after being abducted from his home in the Russian Federation by masked men;
- expressing concern at reports that Mannopzhon Rakhmatullayev was held incommunicado for six months until his trial;
- calling for guarantees that he will not be ill-treated or tortured in prison.

**APPEALS TO: (Please note that it can be difficult getting through to fax numbers in Uzbekistan. If a voice answers, repeat 'fax' until you hear the signal; otherwise leave your fax machine on auto-redial if possible. Fax machines may be switched off outside office hours – 5 hours ahead of GMT):**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700163 g. Tashkent; ul. Uzbekistanskaya, 43; Rezidentsia prezidenta; Prezidentu KARIMOVU I.A.

**Fax: +998 71 139 15 17 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Please write for the attention of President Karimov at the top of your fax)**

**Email: [presidents\\_office@press-service.uz](mailto:presidents_office@press-service.uz)**

**Salutation: Dear President Karimov**

General Procurator of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respublika Uzbekistan; 700047 g. Tashkent; ul. Gulyamova, 66; Prokuratura Respubliki Uzbekistan; Generalnomu prokuroru KODIROVU R. Kh.

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**Email: [prokuratura@lawyer.com](mailto:prokuratura@lawyer.com)**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator General**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Elijor Ghaniev

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and to diplomatic representatives of Uzbekistan accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 May 2005.