

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST WITHOUT ACCESS TO A LAWYER

Independent journalist Sergei Naumov, held incommunicado since 21 September, has been sentenced to 12 days of administrative detention. His lawyer continues to be denied access to him. Human rights defenders and colleagues fear that the authorities are trying to silence Sergei Naumov and that he is at risk of being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

On 24 September the lawyer appointed by trusted colleagues to represent Sergei Naumov visited Urgench City Court in Khorezm region in north-western Uzbekistan, where he was informed that Sergei Naumov was held in the Urgench temporary detention facility. The lawyer also received court documents confirming that Sergei Naumov was sentenced to 12 days of administrative detention under Article 183 of the Administrative Code of Uzbekistan ("Disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace") by the Urgench City Court on 21 September, the very day he was detained.

Sergei Naumov had appeared before the court without the legal representation. According to the court documents the charges against him relate to an incident on 21 September, when he reportedly bumped into a woman on a street in Urgench and proceeded to verbally insult and physically assault her. The woman reported him to the police because he allegedly did not apologise to her. In the court documents Sergei Naumov is recorded as stating that he did accidentally bump into the woman, that he did not harass or assault her and that he categorically denies the charges against him. His lawyer will appeal against the sentence.

Sergei Naumov is serving his 12-day sentence in the Urgench temporary detention facility. His lawyer cannot get access to him. No one has seen him since his detention by local police officers at his home in Urgench on 21 September. He was able to make one short mobile phone call at around 7pm local time from the local police station alerting his colleagues to his detention.

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

- Urging the Uzbekistani authorities to immediately provide access to Sergei Naumov's designated defence lawyer;
- Reminding the authorities of their obligations in relation to individuals in custody under international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 NOVEMBER 2013:

Minister of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan

Bahodir Matlubov
Ministry of Internal Affairs
ul. Junus Rajabiy 1
Tashkent 100029, Uzbekistan
Fax: + 998 71 233 89 34
Email: info@mvd.uz

Salutation: Dear Minister

Prosecutor General of Uzbekistan

Rashidzhon Kodirov
Prosecutor General's Office of
Uzbekistan, ul. Gulyamova 66
Tashkent 700047, Uzbekistan

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And copies to:

Ombudswoman
Sayora Rashidova
Uzbekistan Avenue 16a
Tashkent 100027
Uzbekistan
Fax: + 998 71 239 81 36
E-mail: info@ombudsman.uz

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. This is the first update of UA 262/13. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR62/007/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Sergei Naumov investigates and writes articles for international media organizations covering human rights issues and has actively worked with human rights defenders inside and outside Uzbekistan. Colleagues and friends fear the authorities are detaining Sergei Naumov on fabricated charges in order to prevent him from reporting on the conditions in the cotton fields as this year's cotton harvest gets underway in Khorezm region. Uzbekistan has been much criticized by human rights defenders for the use of forced labour (especially involving children) during cotton harvesting. Sergei Naumov has previously produced critical articles on the conditions in the cotton fields and has come under pressure from the authorities to stop his reporting. The authorities are anxious that no such evidence is discovered and brought to the attention of the international community.

There have been allegations of forced labour and cruel, inhuman and degrading living conditions for people (including school-age children) drafted in for the cotton harvest. The authorities claim that these allegations are factually wrong and disseminated by rival cotton producing countries in order to manipulate the global cotton market. The Uzbekistani authorities have agreed to independent monitors from the International Labour Organization (ILO) carrying out inspections of the 2013 cotton harvest throughout Uzbekistan. However, the ILO monitors will be accompanied by government officials and human rights defenders have reported that the authorities have issued instructions to those participating in the cotton harvest on how to respond to ILO monitors.

There has been a serious deterioration in the human rights situation in Uzbekistan since the events in Andizhan in May 2005, when security forces fired into crowds of thousands of mostly unarmed demonstrators, including women and children, as they were protesting against the government in the centre of town and while they were fleeing.

The space for freedom of expression and association has continued to shrink in Uzbekistan. Prominent human rights defenders, government critics and independent journalists have been forced to leave Uzbekistan to escape arrest or sustained harassment and intimidation by security forces and local authorities, and many continue to face harassment abroad by the Uzbekistani authorities. At least eight human rights defenders, including two independent journalists, continue to serve long prison terms in cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions.

Despite repeated assertions by Uzbekistan that the practice of torture has significantly decreased, Amnesty International has continued to receive reports of widespread torture or other ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners. According to these reports, in most cases the authorities failed to conduct prompt, impartial and effective investigations into the allegations of torture and other ill-treatment.

Uzbekistan's record on torture and other ill-treatment of pre-trial detainees and prisoners has also been documented by UN bodies, including the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, who in 2003 found torture in Uzbekistan to be systematic, and the UN Committee against Torture, which after its periodic review of Uzbekistan in 2007, found that torture in places of detention in Uzbekistan is routine and occurs with impunity.

Name: Sergei Naumov
Gender m/f: M

Further information on UA: 262/13 Index: EUR 62/008/2013 Issue Date: 25 September 2013