

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 62/13/94

Distrib: PG/SC

Date: 20 May 1994

MEDICAL CONCERN

**Otanazar ARIPOV
UZBEKISTAN**

Amnesty International is concerned for Otanazar Aripov, an adopted prisoner of conscience who suffers from asthma and who has recently been sent to serve his sentence in a strict regime corrective labour colony. He is a professor of physics by profession and a secretary of the central committee of the opposition party *Erk* (Freedom), which has been outlawed since October 1993.

Mr Aripov was first arrested in late 1992 in connection with an attempt to organize an alternative parliamentary-style forum in Uzbekistan which was known as *Milli Mejlis* (National Council). He spent two months in pre-trial detention, and it was at this time that he was first recognized by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience. In July 1993 he went on trial with five other defendants. The following month he was convicted of "conspiracy with the aim of seizing power" and given a suspended sentence of five years' imprisonment.

Otanazar Aripov was then re-arrested on 3 March 1994. The available information is incomplete, but according to unofficial sources he was brought to trial at the beginning of April 1994 on charges of "organizational activity directed towards commission of especially dangerous state crimes and participation in an anti-government organization". He was found to have violated the conditions of his suspended sentence by continued active involvement in *Erk* and was ordered to serve the outstanding part of the sentence. As his time in pre-trial detention was deducted, he is thus serving a prison sentence of four years and ten months.

An unofficial source reports that Otanazar Aripov has been sent to a strict regime corrective labour colony at Zarafshan in central Uzbekistan. (There are four categories of labour colony regime in Uzbekistan, which increase in severity: ordinary, reinforced, strict and special). According to unofficial information, prisoners at Zarafshan work in a chemicals factory, although it is not known precisely what is produced there. There is, however, concern that Mr Aripov may come into contact with irritants which could trigger attacks of asthma or that the work may be strenuous. In addition to this, little is known of what access prisoners have to medical attention in the labour colony, how severely Mr Aripov suffers from asthma, or whether he is likely to have uninterrupted access to drug treatment.

Since his latest arrest, Amnesty International has again adopted Otanazar Aripov as a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release on the grounds that he was arrested solely for non-violent political activity. Amnesty International is also seeking information on the work which will be assigned to Mr Aripov and guarantees that he will have ready access to medical treatment and to a doctor.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Europe
Date: 20 May 1994

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Otanazar ARIPOV
UZBEKISTAN**

Keywords

Theme: POC/ill-health/medical care

Profession/association: Professor of physics

Summary

Amnesty International is concerned for Otanazar Aripov, a professor of physics who is serving a five-year sentence of imprisonment for membership and activities within Uzbekistan's outlawed opposition party *Erk*. He is asthmatic and was recently sent to serve his sentence in a strict regime labour colony where prisoners are said to work in a chemicals factory. Please see the information attached.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

- expressing concern at the imprisonment of Otanazar Aripov who has recently been sent to a strict regime labour colony in Zarafshan to serve an earlier suspended sentence
- noting that he was arrested for his active involvement within *Erk*, which until last year was a legally registered party, and urging his prompt and unconditional release on the grounds that he was arrested solely for peaceful political activity
- noting that Mr Aripov suffers from asthma and seeking assurances that while he remains in prison he will have access to all the medical attention and treatment he requires
- seeking information on the nature of the work which prisoners in Zarafshan undertake and urging that care is taken to ensure that the work assigned to Mr Aripov will not be of a nature likely to be detrimental to his health

Addresses

Respublika Uzbekistan
g. Tashkent
pl. Mustakillik
Apparat prezidenta
Prezidentu Respubliki Uzbekistan
KARIMOVU I.A.
(President of Uzbekistan, Islam Abduganievich KARIMOV)
Fax: (7 3712) 39 55 25 or 39 54 00

Respublika Uzbekistan
Navoiiskaya oblast
706801 g. Zarafshan
uchr. U/Ya 64/42
Nachalniku
(Director of the corrective labour colony at Zarafshan [name unknown])

Copies to:

Respublika Uzbekistan
700029 g. Tashkent
ul. G. Lopatina, 1
MVD Respubliki Uzbekistan
Ministru ALMATOVU Z.A.
(Minister of Internal Affairs, Zakirzhan Almatovich ALMATOV)

Respublika Uzbekistan
g. Tashkent
ul. Gogolya, 66
Prokuratura Respubliki Uzbekistan
Generalnomu prokuroru
MUSTAFOYEVU B.
(Procurator General, Buritosh MUSTAFOYEV)