

UZBEKISTAN/RUSSIAN FEDERATION Bakhadir RUZMETOV

Bakhadir Ruzmetov was returned to Uzbekistan from the Russian Federation on the night of 10 July 1999. A report on Russian TV on 11 July, monitored by the BBC, stated that Bakhadir Ruzmetov "faces a death sentence for perpetrating acts of terrorism". He is believed to be suspected of involvement in explosions which took place in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, in February of this year.

The forcible deportation of Bakhadir Ruzmetov is one more example of the Russian Federation's failure, in spite of its obligations under international law, to provide adequate protection for individuals at risk of grave violations of their human rights if returned to their country of origin. Bakhadir Ruzmetov's deportation to Uzbekistan violates Russia's obligations under Article 3 of the Convention against Torture, which prohibits the return of a person to a country or territory where they may face serious human rights violations. It also violates the norms enshrined in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Both were ratified by the Russian parliament in May 1998 as part of Russia's obligations on entering the Council of Europe.

Amnesty International is concerned that Bakhadir Ruzmetov may be at risk of being subjected to torture or ill-treatment in detention in order to force a confession from him, and may face execution after an unfair trial.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and without reservation, on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Uzbekistan continues to hand down death sentences, and is believed to carry them out.

Six death sentences for alleged involvement in the February bombings were handed down on 28 June 1999 at the conclusion of a trial characterised by a Human Rights Watch observer as "biased and shoddy". One of the defendants had been forcibly deported from Turkey, reportedly after the Turkish government had received guarantees from the Uzbek authorities that he would not face a death sentence. This trial and other trials in Uzbekistan have attracted persistent allegations of inadequate guarantees of defence, including incommunicado detention, ill-treatment in custody to force confessions, disregard of the right to presumption of innocence, and a host of other failures to observe fair trial standards.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A number of violent incidents, including a series of explosions in February 1999 in the capital of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, have been followed by a clampdown on individuals and groups perceived as a threat to the stability and authority of the government. Hundreds of supposed conspirators have been detained, including members and presumed members of independent Islamic congregations; members of banned opposition parties and movements; and their relatives. The authorities have blamed the bombings on violent foreign-trained Islamic groups operating in concert with the exiled secular, democratic opposition. Heavy sentences have been handed down after trials whose conduct gives serious cause for concern. Further trials are expected or are already in progress.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Russian, English or in your own language:

To the Uzbek authorities:

- urging the authorities to immediately disclose the whereabouts of Bakhadir Ruzmetov;
- seeking assurances that he will be protected from any form of ill-treatment and be allowed immediate access to family and legal representatives;
- seeking assurances that Bakhadir Ruzmetov will not, in any circumstances, face the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

President of Uzbekistan, Islam KARIMOV
700163 g. Tashkent, 43 pr. Uzbekistansky, Rezidentsiya Prezidenta, Prezidentu Karimovu I.A., UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Prezidentu Karimovu, 700163 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Faxes: +998 71 139 5525 or 139 5510

E-mail: uzinfo@uzinfo.gov.uz

Salutation: Dear President Karimov

Oliy Majlis (parliamentary) Commissioner for Human Rights, Sayora RASHIDOVA
Respublika Uzbekistan, 700008 g. Tashkent, pl. Mustakillik, 2
Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis, RASHIDOVY S.,
UZBEKISTAN

Telegrams: Upolnomochennoy po pravam cheloveka, 700008 Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Faxes: +998 71 139 85 55

E-mail: mtillaboev@oliymajlis.gov.uz

Salutation: Dear Ms Rashidova

To the Russian authorities:

- expressing regret at the Russian authorities' forcible deportation of Bakhadir Ruzmetov despite fears that he will suffer serious human rights violations in Uzbekistan, including facing the death penalty;
- reminding the Russian authorities of their obligations under international law.

APPEALS TO:

Acting Procurator General of the Russian Federation, Yury Chaika.
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103793, g. Moskva K-31, Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d 15a
Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Zam. Generalnogo prokurora CHAIKA Yu.
RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Telegrams: Rossiya, 103793 g. Moskva, zam generalnogo prokurora Chaika

Fax: +7 095 925 18 79 or + 7 095 292 88 48

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Head of the extraditions unit of the international legal affairs department
at the office of the General Procurator, Leonid Ermolaev
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103793 g. Moskva K-31, Ul. B. Dimitrovka, d 15a
Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Otdel ekstraditsii Mezhdunarodno-pravovogo
upravleniya, Nachalniku ERMOLAEVU L., RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Telegrams: Rossiya, 103793 g. Moskva, Prokuratura Rossii, Otdel ekstraditsii

Fax: +7 095 292-8562

Salutation: Dear Director

and to diplomatic representatives of Uzbekistan/Russia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.