

URGENT ACTION

TAJIK JOURNALIST RELEASED ON BAIL

Tajik journalist, Urunboy Usmonov, who works for the BBC, was released on bail on 14 July. He is not allowed to leave the country.

Urunboy Usmonov was released from a detention centre in the northern city of Khujand in the Soghd region, Tajikistan, and is now at home with his family. Following his arrest on 13 June, he was initially charged with participation in a banned extremist organization, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, an Islamic organization which is banned in all five Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan. The initial charges have been changed but still implicate Urunboy Usmonov in criminal activities related to banned religious groups and carry a sentence of between two and five years' imprisonment. Urunboy Usmonov is not allowed to leave the country.

Urunboy Usmonov maintains that his contact with the organization was in order to report on the causes for the organization's increasing popularity. Amnesty International maintains that he is innocent and that he has been targeted for his legitimate work as a journalist, peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

His wife was only able to visit him once during his detention. Allegations that he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in detention remain a concern.

Please write immediately in Tajik, Russian or your own language

- Welcome the release on bail of Urunboy Usmonov
- Express concern that BBC journalist Urunboy Usmonov was arrested as punishment for his journalistic work and for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urge the authorities to promptly drop all charges related to his legitimate work as a journalist;
- Urge the authorities to call for a prompt, impartial and independent investigation into allegations that he was tortured or ill-treated in detention and bring those found responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 SEPTEMBER 2011 TO:

The President
Emomali Rahmon
Apparat Prezidenta Respubliki Tajikistan
Pr. Rudaki, 80
734023 Dushanbe
Tajikistan
Email: mail@president.tj
Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Zarifi Khamrohon
Pr. Rudaki, 42
734051 Dushanbe
Tajikistan
Fax: +992 372 21 02 59
Email: info@mfa.tj
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Prosecutor General
Sherhon Salimzoda
Pr. A. Sino, 126
734043 Dushanbe
Tajikistan
Fax: + 992 372 35 24 41
Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA: 211/11 Index: EUR 60/004/2011.
Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR60/004/2011/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tajikistan is a landlocked country bordering China (East), Afghanistan (South) and Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (North) and has an estimated population of 7.2 million. Tajikistan gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The economic decline of the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union was compounded by a devastating civil war, lasting from 1992-1997. President Emomali Rakhmon has been in power since 1994. Emomali Rakhmon has been successful in consolidating Tajikistan after its devastating civil war. He views himself as the indispensable guarantor of stability and peace in the face of possible new unrest, including in the context of the unstable economic situation in the country and the politically unstable situation in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Amnesty International has criticized human rights violations in the country such as torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officers, impunity for torturers, violence against women; and restrictions of freedom of speech. In recent years independent media outlets and journalists have faced criminal and civil law suits for criticizing the government.

In Tajikistan police have in many cases been accused of torturing or beating detainees. Safeguards against torture enshrined in domestic law are not always adhered to. For example, while the new Criminal Procedure Code stipulates that detainees are entitled to a lawyer from the moment of their arrest, in practice lawyers are at the mercy of investigators who can deny them access for many days. During this period of incommunicado detention, the risk of torture or other ill-treatment is particularly high. Torture practices reported in Tajikistan include the use of electric shocks; attaching plastic bottles filled with water or sand to the detainee's genitals; rape; and burning with cigarettes. Beating with batons, truncheons and sticks, kicking and punching are also believed to be common.

Name: Urunboy Usmonov
Gender m/f: M

Further information on UA: 211/11 Index: EUR 60/007/2011 Issue Date: 29 July 2011