



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UZBEKISTAN: APPEAL CASE

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Ezgulik (Goodness) activists from Andizhan

On 12 January 2006 **Dilmurod Muhiddinov**, a human rights activist from Andizhan and a member of Ezgulik (Goodness) human rights group, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment by the Srednechirchik District Court in Tashkent region. He was detained together with four fellow Ezgulik activists **Musozhon Bobozhonov** (from the Markhamat district branch of Ezgulik), **Nurmukhammad Azizov** (Chairman of the Andizhan regional branch of the independent Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan), **Akbar Oripov** (Chairman of the Andizhan regional branch of the secular opposition party Birlik) and **Muhammadkodir Otakhonov** (from the Andizhan regional branch of the Frankfurt-based International Human Rights Society). They were detained between 28 May and 2 June 2005 for being in possession of a statement on the Andizhan events, published by the secular opposition party Birlik (Unity). The police had seized copies of this statement as well as human rights materials from their homes on 15 May. They were reportedly questioned without a lawyer and were remanded in custody.

In the same trial on 12 January 2006, Musozhon Bobozhonov, Nurmukhammad Azizov and Akbar Oripov received suspended three-year prison terms and were released from the courtroom. Muhammadkodir Otakhonov had been released in October 2005.

According to the human rights organization Ezgulik, the four men were convicted on charges of "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order", "preparing and distributing materials containing a threat to public order and security", and "participating in religious extremist, separatist, fundamentalist and other banned organisations". Ezgulik and other local human rights organizations that had tried to attend the trial reported that no one, not even relatives of the defendants, was allowed into the court building.

Amnesty International considers Dilmurod Muhiddinov to be a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A number of Uzbekistani journalists and human rights defenders have tried, at great personal risk, to document and publicize the events that occurred on 13 May 2005 in Andizhan when government troops reportedly fired on thousands of mainly unarmed and peaceful demonstrators. Their reports provided a stark contrast to the official version of events. Amnesty International is concerned by reports that human rights defenders, independent journalists and members of the political opposition have been targeted, intimidated and detained in an effort to prevent their reports from reaching the outside world.

In the aftermath of the Andizhan events, Amnesty International received reports that the security forces in Andizhan searched the houses of dozens of human rights defenders and members of the secular political opposition, confiscating documents and computers. There have also been reports that human rights defenders and members of the opposition have had

their passports confiscated and have been arbitrarily detained and interrogated about the events in Andizhan. Some have been charged with criminal offences and Amnesty International considers as prisoners of conscience those people who have been detained solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression by reporting human rights violations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Uzbek or your own language:

- expressing concern that Dilmurod Muhiddinov, Musozhon Bobozhonov, Nurmukhammad Azizov and Akbar Oripov were convicted after trials that fell short of international fair trial standards, in contravention of Uzbekistan's international obligations, as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
- expressing concern that Dilmurod Muhiddinov was sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment and stating that AI considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for carrying out his peaceful and legitimate human rights work, and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release;
- expressing concern that Musozhon Bobozhonov and Nurmukhammad Azizov and Akbar Oripov were given suspended sentences, solely for carrying out their peaceful and legitimate human rights work, and calling on the authorities to ensure that they overturn their conviction in fair proceedings;
- urging the authorities to ensure that everyone, including human rights defenders, can peacefully exercise their right to freedom of expression in conformity with Article 19 of the ICCPR.
- reminding the authorities of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

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

Islam A. KARIMOV,
Rezidentsia prezidenta; ul. Uzbekistanskaia, 43; Tashkent 700163; UZBEKISTAN
Fax: + 998 71 139 53 25
Email: presidents_office@press-service.uz
Salutation: Dear President Karimov

Minister of Internal Affairs

Bahodir MATLIUBOV
Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del RU, ul. Novruz, 1; Tashkent 700029; UZBEKISTAN
Fax: + 998 71 133 89 34
Salutation: Dear Minister Matliubov

Minister of Justice

Buritosh MUSTAFAEV
Ministerstvo yustitsii RU, ul. Sayilgokh, 5; Tashkent 700047; UZBEKISTAN
Fax: + 998 71 133 51 76; telex: 02 11 65 94 JUSTICE;
Email: info@minjust.gov.uz
Salutation: Dear Minister Mustafaev

Procurator General

Rashidjon KODIROV,
Prokuratura Respubliki Uzbekistan, ul. Gulyamova, 66; Tashkent; 700047; UZBEKISTAN
Fax: + 998 71 133 39 17/ 133 73 68,
E-mail: prokuratura@lawyer.com
Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Please try to send copies of your letter to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Elior GANIEV, Ministerstvo inostrannykh del RU; pl. Mustakillik, 5; Tashkent 700029;
UZBEKISTAN
Fax: + 998 71 139 15 17
Email: letter@mfa.uz or rnews@mfa.uz
Salutation: Dear Minister Ganiev

Ombudsperson

Sayora RASHIDOVA (Ms)
Upolnomochennoi po pravam cheloveka pri Oliy Majlis; ul. Khalklar Dostligi. 1; Tashkent
700035; UZBEKISTAN
Fax: + 998 71 139 85 55
E-mail: office@ombudsman.gov.uz
Salutation: Dear Ms Rashidova

and to diplomatic representatives of Uzbekistan accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND ANY REPLIES FROM THE UZBEKISTANI AUTHORITIES AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL (Eurasia Research and Campaign Team, Amnesty International, 1
Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom)**