

EXTERNAL

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"DISAPPEARANCE" OF NEUROSURGEON

Dr Ayniddin SADYKOV
TADZHIKISTAN

Dr Ayniddin Sadykov, a neurosurgeon and member of the opposition Democratic Party, "disappeared" after being detained by armed men in Tadjikistan's capital Dushanbe on 21 April 1993. Nothing has been heard of his whereabouts since. He is one of several people to have "disappeared" following detention by paramilitary forces believed to be operating with the approval of the government. "Disappearances" first began to occur in Tadjikistan in late 1992 and over the next few months scores of people became the victim of such "disappearances". These people were apparently targeted for arrest mainly because they came from regions of Tadjikistan seen to be opposition strongholds. After February 1993 far fewer instances were reported, although individual cases such as that of Dr Sadykov did continue to occur.

Opposition parties in Tadjikistan

Presidential elections were held in November 1991 following Tadjikistan's declaration of independence in September of that year. A former Communist Party leader was elected to the office of President. Early the following year, in April and May 1992, rival demonstrations were held in Dushanbe by supporters and opponents of the President and factional violence erupted along regional and political lines. This forced the President to include representatives from opposition parties and movements in a coalition government which came to office in May 1992. Although the situation in Dushanbe began to stabilize, armed conflict immediately began in the south of the country, pitting neighbouring regions against each other. Thousands died during the conflict and hundreds of thousands were displaced. The coalition government was forced to stand down in November 1992 due to the escalating civil war.

Tadjikistan's current government, which is communist-dominated, was installed in November 1992 and maintains that the earlier coalition government is wholly to blame for the civil war. In June 1993 four opposition parties and movements were banned, including the Democratic Party, and charges brought against their leaders.

Ayniddin Sadykov

Ayniddin Sadykov was a neurosurgeon at a Dushanbe hospital and chairman of the Democratic Party branch in Dushanbe's Frunze district. He had taken an active part in opposition demonstrations in April and May 1992, making occasional speeches, and had given medical assistance to demonstrators.

On the morning of 21 April 1993 Dr Sadykov and his wife boarded a trolleybus on their way to separate appointments. Dr Sadykov's wife left the trolleybus first; he "disappeared" before reaching his destination. Dr Sadykov's relatives sought help from the local authorities in locating him and, when this failed, placed a notice in a newspaper appealing for information about his whereabouts. The family was contacted by a person claiming to have witnessed his

arrest and who was able to accurately describe what Dr Sadykov was wearing and carrying at the time. According to this witness, almost immediately after Mrs Sadykov had left the bus, two cars drew up behind it. Five men, two of them armed, then boarded the trolleybus and forcibly removed Ayniddin Sadykov. He was put into one of the waiting cars and driven away.

On the morning of his "disappearance", Ayniddin Sadykov had been carrying a medical report on Bozor Sobir, a well-known poet and Democratic Party member who had been arrested the previous month. Dr Sadykov is reported to have collected the medical report that morning and intended to present it to the authorities in an attempt to secure Bozor Sobir's release from prison on grounds of ill-health. (Bozor Sobir was tried at the end of 1993 and convicted on a number of charges, but he received a conditional prison sentence and was released immediately.)

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The authorities in Tadzhikistan have denied any knowledge of Ayniddin Sadykov's whereabouts. However, Amnesty International is concerned that the circumstances of his arrest, and a pattern of similar incidents, suggest that his "disappearance" may have been the work of forces operating with the endorsement or tacit approval of the government. It is alleged that the Ministry of the Interior was involved in some of the earlier "disappearances", and individuals within the Ministry of Defence are alleged to have been responsible for Dr Sadykov's abduction.

There is very real concern for Dr Sadykov and others who have "disappeared" as allegations have been made recently that some of the "disappeared" have been killed. In early 1994 Amnesty International received reports of the existence of "unofficial" prison camps in at least three locations in central and southern Tadzhikistan. It was said that these camps were run by paramilitary forces acting with the knowledge of the government. There were no reliable estimates of the number of people detained in the camps, but it was said that the detainees were those who had "disappeared".

In early 1994, AI began to receive allegations that the forces operating the camps were clearing them by executing detainees. In at least one instance, the body of a "disappeared" man has later been found. Mirzonazar Imomnazarov "disappeared" in December 1992 following arrest by pro-government paramilitary forces. He was last seen being taken in the direction of Tursunzade, west of the capital, where one of the camps was believed to be located. 13 months later, in January 1994, his recently-executed body was found in Dushanbe.

The Government of Tadzhikistan has strongly denied the existence of unofficial prisons. To date, Amnesty International has been unable to verify the allegations; the findings of investigations which were announced by the government, and in which United Nations observers were reportedly invited to take part, have not been communicated to Amnesty International.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Europe
Date: 12 July 1994

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Dr Ayniddin SADYKOV
TADZHIKISTAN**

Keywords

Theme: Disappearance

Profession/association: Neurosurgeon

Summary

Dr Ayniddin Sadykov is a neurosurgeon and active member of the now-banned opposition *Democratic Party*. He "disappeared" in the capital Dushanbe in April 1993 after being abducted from a bus by armed men. Please see the details attached.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

stating that you are writing to raise the issue of the disappearance in April 1993 of Dr Ayniddin Sadykov, a neurosurgeon from Dushanbe

expressing concern about this and other reported "disappearances" in Tadjikistan after individuals have been detained by paramilitary forces

urging the authorities to provide you with information about what occurred following Dr Sadykov's detention and to clarify his current whereabouts and fate

Addresses

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(Head of State), Imamali Rakhmonov*

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Minister of Internal Affairs, Yakub Salimov

Respublika Tadjikistan
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Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Respubliki
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Ministru Salimovu Ya.
TADZHIKISTAN
*Minister of Defence, Colonel Aleksandr
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Copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rashid Olimov

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