

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST AT RISK IN NOTORIOUS DETENTION CENTRE

On 27 September, Uzbekistani journalist Bobomurod Abdullayev was detained by the National Security Services in Tashkent for allegedly attempting to overthrow the constitutional order of the Republic of Uzbekistan. He has since been held at one of the most notorious detention centres in the country, where torture is commonplace. He is at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Human rights defenders and colleagues believe he is being targeted for his journalistic work and critical political views.

On 27 September, officers of the Uzbekistani National Security Services (SNB) detained journalist **Bobomurod Abdullayev** in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. His whereabouts were unknown to his family for two days. On 29 September, they found out that he was being held at the SNB pre-trial detention centre in Tashkent. On the same day, SNB officers searched Bobomurod Abdullayev's home for over five hours and confiscated books, a computer, memory cards and other media equipment. He has had no access to a lawyer. According to media reports, only his wife was able to visit him briefly in detention on 1 October. He has had no contact with his family since. There are growing fears Bobomurod Abdullayev is being tortured.

On 1 October, in a closed hearing, the Yunusabadskiy District Criminal Court in Tashkent ordered the detention of Bobomurod Abdullayev, for allegedly preparing and distributing online materials in an attempt to overthrow the constitutional order of the state (Article 159 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan). According to an SNB investigator, Bobomurod Abdullayev was working together with the exiled political opposition leader, Muhammad Salih. The Court ordered to remand Bobomurod Abdullayev in the SNB pre-trial detention centre. Amnesty International's research shows that prisoners in the SNB detention centre are tortured, including in interrogation rooms, punishment cells, toilets and shower rooms, and in purpose-built torture rooms with padded rubber walls and sound-proofing.

Bobomurod Abdullayev is an independent journalist and sports commentator. He is also a political analyst, writing under a pseudonym. He has contributed articles for international media organizations.

Please write immediately in Uzbek, Russian, English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to immediately release Bobomurod Abdullayev, as he appears to be detained solely for his journalistic work and criticism of the government, and to drop the charges against him;
- Urging the authorities to ensure Bobomurod Abdullayev is protected from torture and ill-treatment, pending his release, and to ensure that he has full access to all legal safeguards in detention - in accordance with Uzbekistan's obligations under international human rights law - including regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choice;
- Reminding the authorities of their obligations to fully respect the right to freedom of expression, which involves ensuring journalists can carry out their activities free of harassment and without fear of reprisals.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 NOVEMBER 2017 TO:

Chairman of the National Security Service

Rustam Inoyatov
9 Matbuotchilar Street
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Salutation: Dear Chairman

Prosecutor General

Ihtior Abdullaev
Prosecutor General's Office of
Uzbekistan
ul. Gulyamova 66
Tashkent 700047 Uzbekistan
Fax: +998 71 133 3917
Email: prokuratura@lawyer.uz
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And copies to:

Director
Akmal Saidov
The National Human Rights Centre of
the Republic of Uzbekistan
Ul. Mustakillik maidoni 5/3
Tashkent 100029 Uzbekistan
Fax: +998 71 239 13 56
Email: info@nhrc.uz

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ALISHER KURMANOV, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 41 Holland Park W11 3RP, 020 7229 7679, Fax 020 7229 7029, info@uzbekembassy.org, www.uzbekembassy.org
Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are severely restricted in Uzbekistan. Prominent human rights defenders, government critics and independent journalists are subjected to sustained harassment and intimidation, routine monitoring, arrests, beatings and smear campaigns. Many have been forced into exile while others are prevented from leaving the country. Human rights defenders and independent journalists, both those abroad and those in Uzbekistan, continue to find themselves and their families the target of extensive and repeated media campaigns on websites owned or controlled by the government, both on national television and in the official printed media.

Surveillance by the Uzbekistani authorities at home and abroad helps reinforce the already repressive environment for human rights defenders, journalists, political activists and others. Unlawful surveillance is facilitated by technical and legal systems that fail to provide checks against abuse, contrary to international law and standards.

Amnesty International has received persistent and credible allegations of routine and pervasive torture and other ill-treatment by security forces during arrest and transfer, in police custody and pre-trial detention and by security forces and prison personnel in post-conviction detention facilities. Torture is used to coerce suspects, detainees and prisoners, including women and men charged with criminal offences such as theft, fraud or murder, into confessing to crimes or incriminating others. Individuals charged with or convicted of anti-state and terrorism-related offences, including those forcibly returned to Uzbekistan, have been particularly vulnerable to torture both in pre-trial detention and in prison following conviction.

The courts rely heavily on torture-tainted “confessions” to hand down convictions. Because allegations of torture or other ill-treatment are rarely effectively investigated, a climate of impunity persists.

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