

URGENT ACTION

TAJIK REFUGEE DISAPPEARED AFTER DEPORTATION

On 18 January 2023, Germany deported Abdullohi Shamsiddin to Tajikistan, where he has not been seen by his family since. Family members and Radio Ozodi reported that he phoned his wife on 6 March and told her that he was held by the State Committee for National Security (GKNB) of Tajikistan. He is targeted because of his reported membership of the arbitrarily banned Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and his relationship with one of the party's leaders, and is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. According to the family, he suffers from severe asthma, and his life may be at risk.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan
Executive Office of the President
Rudaki Avenue, 80
Dushanbe 734001
Republic of Tajikistan
Please use the online form:
(EN) <http://www.president.tj/en>
(RU) <http://www.president.tj/ru>
Twitter: @EmomaliRahmon

Dear Mr President,

Tajikistani national, Abdullohi Shamsiddin, was expected to arrive in Dushanbe on 19 January 2023, after being deported from Germany where he was seeking asylum. He was never seen leaving Dushanbe International Airport. I am concerned by the reports that upon arrival he was apprehended by members of the State Committee for National Security near the airstrip.

While Abdullohi Shamsiddin's detention has never been officially acknowledged, there is little doubt that he is in Tajikistan and that he, like other individuals before him who were forcibly returned to Tajikistan in recent years, was taken into custody by members of security forces and held in incommunicado detention. Amnesty International believes that Abdullohi Shamsiddin is being targeted for his links to a senior member of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan, which the authorities of Tajikistan arbitrarily banned in 2015.

Unacknowledged, incommunicado detention is a violation of human rights, and must stop immediately. It also poses additional risk of torture and other ill-treatment to the detainees.

I urge you to take all necessary steps to immediately disclose Abdullohi Shamsiddin's fate and whereabouts, and ensure that he is not subjected to incommunicado detention, torture and other ill-treatment. Abdullohi Shamsiddin must be immediately released, unless he is reasonably suspected of a recognizable criminal offence, in which case he whereabouts must be disclosed to his family, and he must be given an immediate access to a lawyer of his choice.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abdullohi Shamsiddin is the son of Shamsiddin Saidov (in some Tajik naming conventions the son of the father takes the father's first name as his last), a leading member of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT). Shamsiddin Saidov has been living in Germany since 2014 and was recognized as a refugee in 2017. Abdullohi Shamsiddin also claims to have been an IRPT activist himself and to be closely acquainted with Muhiddin Kabiri, the party's leader. The IRPT was Tajikistan's most important opposition party, represented in the parliament for many years, until it was arbitrarily banned in 2015 and designated a "terrorist" organization. Following this, the authorities engaged in [arrests and imprisonment of its leadership following unfair trials](#). Individuals associated with the party and its leadership have been targeted by Tajikistani authorities in Tajikistan and abroad, for arrests, extradition and persecution, and even [lawyers who provided legal defence to party have themselves been subjected to brutal reprisals](#) including [long-term imprisonment under trumped-up charges](#).

Abdullohi Shamsiddin was refused international protection by Germany. For fear of reprisals by the Tajikistani authorities who have been targeting associates of the IRPT abroad, Abdullohi Shamsiddin reportedly had initially concealed his real identity and his relationship with his father, Shamsiddin Saidov, when he first applied for refugee status in Germany in 2009. This application was rejected in 2011. A follow-up application was submitted in 2017 and rejected in court in 2021.

An attempt to deport him via Munich Airport failed on 12 December 2022, because Abdullohi Shamsiddin panicked and purposely injured himself to avoid deportation. After this incident, he was held in custody to secure his deportation.

In a newspaper article on 29 December 2022, Abdullohi Shamsiddin was quoted saying: "In Tajikistan I will be arrested directly from the airplane – and disappear in prison for 20 years." International organizations, including the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Human Rights Watch and the German Abschiebungsreporting NRW, warned that Abdullohi Shamsiddin was under risk of detention and torture if deported to Tajikistan. However, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) rejected his second follow-up asylum application in a fast-track proceedings on 21 December 2022.

On 6 January 2023, the Gelsenkirchen Administrative Court ruled against the suspension of deportation stating: "It is not significantly likely that he would be exposed to an exceptional situation within the meaning of Art. 3 European Convention on Human Rights [*torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*] in the event of a return to his country of origin due to his particular individual situation."¹ On 19 January 2023, the same Court refused to stop the ongoing deportation (in transit) and did not accept the authenticity of newly presented evidence, namely a private paternity test which proved the relation between Shamsiddin Saidov and Abdullohi Shamsiddin, and a testimony by a Tajik refugee who testified that he had identified and disclosed the whereabouts of Abdullohi Shamsiddin when he himself been tortured in Tajikistan in 2019.

Abdullohi Shamsiddin was deported from Dusseldorf via Turkey. According to the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, relatives waiting for him to arrive in Tajikistani capital Dushanbe on 19 January 2023 did not see him leaving the Airport. According to information from confidential sources close to Abdullohi Shamsiddin, he was likely detained by Tajik authorities near the airstrip immediately after landing.

Tajikistan's security agencies routinely target dissenters and opposition figures, as well as their relatives and intimates. Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees during interrogation by various security agencies, particularly the State Committee for National Security or the so-called Sixth Department of the Ministry of the Interior, is common in Tajikistan to extract "confession," secure information and incriminate others. Torture methods used by Tajik security agencies allegedly include sticking of needles into the nails, electric shocks, beating, sexual violence, sleep deprivation, suffocation with plastic bags and injection of drugs. Shortly before Abdullohi Shamsiddin's deportation, detainee Abdukakhkhor Rozikov died in police custody in the city of Kulob, on 2 January 2023. His suspicious death was widely attributed to torture and there are photographs and videos of his body, which corroborate this allegation, although the officers claimed that he died of a drug overdose. The case resonated widely among Tajiks inside the country and in exile, leading to offline and online protests.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Tajik, Russian.
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 8 April 2023
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Abdullohi Shamsiddin (he/him)

¹ Relevant court documents from Mr. Shamsiddin's case in possession of Amnesty. Original text in German.

ADDITIONAL TARGET

Mrs Rukhshona Emomali
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tajemblondon@mfa.tj
Salutation: Your Excellency