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Tuesday 17 November 2009

Assault and harassment against Messrs. Bakhtior Khamroev and Mamir Azimov - UZB 008 / 1109 / OBS 167

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the FIDH and the OMCT, requests your urgent intervention in the following situation

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the violent assault by police officers of Messrs. Bakhtior Khamroev, a human rights defender and Mamir Azimov, Coordinator of the Djizak regional branch of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU).

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in Uzbekistan.

According to the information received, on November 11, 2009 in Djizak, several police officers beat up Messrs. **Bakhtior Khamroev** and **Mamir Azimov** after they met Mr. Bahodir Choriyev, the leader of the opposition movement "Birdamlik" (Solidarity).

On November 11, 2009, in the afternoon, Messrs. Bakhtior Khamroev and Mamir Azimov met in the coffee house "Gani" with Mr Choriyev, who had returned from exile in the USA last October and his colleague Ms. Dilorom Ishakova. Ten police officers in plain clothes surrounded the coffee place and took pictures and videos of them. After leaving the coffee place, Mr. Bakhtior Khamroev was sitting in a car with Mr. Choriyev and Ms. Dilorom Ishakova when, ten police officers approached and warned that the car was parked wrongly. A minute later they pulled Mr Khamroev out of the car and started beating him up. Ms. Ishakova tried to stop them in vain, denouncing the unlawfulness of their actions

Mr. Mamir Azimov, who had only greeted Mr. Choriyev and Ms. Ishakova and had left earlier because he did not feel well, was arrested immediately by police officers from Djizak District as he was leaving and taken to the Djizak District police department. During an hour, he was subjected to beatings in the head and all over his body by Mr. Jahongir Ismailov, police officer and a member of the department of counter terrorism and Mr. Nurulla Oussanov, deputy chief of the department and head of the criminal investigation department.

For another hour, Mr. Mamir Azimov was forced to hold a chair on his head and was shouted at by the police officers each time he lowered the chair. After receiving threats of being beaten up again and being warned against meeting people like Mr. Choriyev, he was allowed to go home.

The Observatory is deeply concerned about the physical assault against Messrs. Bakhtior Khamroev and Mamir Azimov, in a context in which human rights defenders are repeatedly targeted and threatened by the Uzbek authorities. To that extent, the Observatory recalls that Mr. Bakhtior Khamroev has been subjected to various acts of harassment over the past weeks. Prior to this incident, on November 9, 2009, M. Khamroev was arrested by the police and the department of counter terrorism. He has also been repeatedly harassed with phone calls and visits to his home. Several police cars were parked in front of his home.

The Observatory recalls that as a participating State of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Uzbekistan recognises "the need for particular attention, support and protection for human rights defenders by the OSCE, its Institutions and field operations, as well as by participating States"[1].

The Observatory further urges the European Commission Delegation as well as European Union (EU) Member-States' embassies in Uzbekistan to call upon the Uzbek authorities to comply with the relevant international norms and standards, in particular the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and take action on the above-mentioned elements, in line with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

Actions required:

Please write to the Uzbek authorities urging them to:

- i. Guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Messrs. Bakhtior Khamroev and Mamir Azimov;
- ii. Order a immediate, thorough, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned attack, the result of which must be made public, in order to identify those responsible, bring them before a competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the sanctions provided by the law;
- iii. Put an end to all acts of harassment against Messrs. Bakhtior Khamroev and Mamir Azimov as well as all human rights defenders in Uzbekistan;
- iv. Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially its Article 1, which states that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels" and its Article 12.2, which states that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration";
- v. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Uzbekistan.

Addresses :

·President of Uzbekistan, Islam Abduganiyevich Karimov, ul. Uzbekistanskaya 43, Rezidentsia prezidenta, 700163 Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, Fax: +998 71 133 1395325, E-mail: presidents_office@press-service.uz

·Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Elyor Majidovich Ganiev, Respublika Uzbekistan; 700029 g. Tashkent; pl. Mustakillik, 5; Ministerstvo inostrannykh del RU, S.S., Uzbekistan, Fax: + 998 71 139 15 17, E-mail: news@mfa.uz

·Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights, Sayora Rashidova, ul. Xalqlar Dostligi 1, 700035 Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, Fax: +998 71 139 85 55, E-mail: office@ombudsman.gov.uz

·Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Ubaydulla Mingbaev, Respublika Uzbekistan; 700183 g. Tashkent; ul. Abdulla Kodiri, 1; Verkhovny Sud Respubliki Uzbekistan, Fax: + 998 71 144-62-93

·General Prosecutor of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Rashidjon Hamidovich Kodirov, ul. Gulyamova 66, 700047 Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, Fax: +998 71 133 39 17, E-mail: prokuratura@lawyer.com

· National Centre for Human Rights, Senator Akmal Saidov Natsionalny tsentr po pravam cheloveka, 5/3, Mustakillik Maidoni, g. Tashkent, Respublika Uzbekistan. 700029, Fax: + 998 71 139 13 56 / 45 16, E-mail: office@nchr.uz

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· Mr. Azizov Aboudsalom, Chief of the Djizak Oblast District Department, 130100, ul. Narimanova 30, Djizak. Djizak Oblast. Uzbekistan; Fax: +99872 226-03-02

· Senior adviser of Justice Babadjanov Poulat Razzakovitch, Public Prosecutor's Office of Jizak Oblast, 130100, ul. Narimanova 65, Jizak. Jizak Oblast. Uzbekistan, Fax: +99872226-00-90/+99872226-25-68

· Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations in Geneva, PO Box 1853, 1215 Geneva 15, Switzerland, Fax: +4122 799 43 02, E-mail: uzbekistan@bluewin.ch

Please also write to the diplomatic representations of Uzbekistan in your respective countries.

Paris - Geneva, November 17, 2009

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

The Observatory was the winner of the 1998 Human Rights Prize of the French Republic.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

Email : Appeals@fidh-omct.org

Tel et fax FIDH : + 33 1 43 55 55 05 / 33 1 43 55 18 80

Tel et fax OMCT : +41 22 809 49 39 / 41 22 809 49 29

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[1] See OP 6 & OP 8 of the Resolution on Strengthening OSCE Engagement with Human Rights Defenders and National Human Rights Institutions, adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on July 10, 2007.