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“One Can’t Keep Silent” The Persecution of Human Rights Defenders in Uzbekistan in the Aftermath of Andijan

**International Helsinki Federation
for Human Rights (IHF)**

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Preface

The persecution of human rights defenders, independent human rights organizations, independent journalists and members of opposition political movements in Uzbekistan is a matter of longstanding concern, presenting one of the most serious human rights challenges in the OSCE region and, for that matter, in the entire world.

Following the events on 13 and 14 May 2005, when hundreds of innocent civilian demonstrators were gunned down by Uzbek security forces in Andijan these problems became significantly more acute.¹ In consultation with the IHF Executive Committee and the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, the IHF Secretariat organized a fact-finding mission to investigate and document the plight of human rights defenders in the context of the Uzbek authorities' increasing efforts to repress civil society.

The mission visited Uzbekistan on 13-17 June 2005. The mission team included Eliza Moussaeva of the IHF Secretariat, Eldar Zeynalov of the Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan and Dzmitry Markusheuski of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee. The mission also worked in close cooperation with colleagues from the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan and Human Rights Watch.

The mission met numerous activists from local human rights groups in the Tashkent, Andijan, Fergana, Namangan, Djisak, and Samarkand provinces as well as diplomats from the US and Belarusian embassies, officers of the OSCE, and representatives of Freedom House and Human Rights Watch. Unfortunately, the mission's attempts to contact the National Center of Human Rights, Ombudsman's and various Prosecutor's Offices were unsuccessful.²

¹ See annex 4.

² At the same time that the mission was meeting with various representatives, the Uzbek First Vice-Prosecutor General was meeting with foreign diplomats from the international working group on monitoring of the investigation of the Andijan events.

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1. The general situation for human rights defenders after Andijan

Uzbek authorities including President Karimov have stated openly that a “colorful revolution” will be prevented at all costs in Uzbekistan.³ The violence against civilians in Andijan has been generally interpreted as a warning to the population against demonstrations and as a manifestation of the extreme measures the government is willing to deploy, notwithstanding international condemnation.

Many of the interlocutors contacted by the IHF mission hold that the intensified campaign against human rights defenders and human rights activity is best seen as an effort to conceal and contain information and suppress dissent. The often violent clampdown on human rights activity reflects an effort to keep the truth about the events at Andijan from leaking out, for fear that the facts, if known and understood by the people of Uzbekistan, would potentially mobilize public sentiment and dangerously arouse national and international outrage.

Due to the apparent concern that independent civil organizations probing for information regarding the nature and scale of the Andijan tragedy might substantively threaten the repressive order, otherwise termed “stability,” authorities have taken steps to transform general public discontent into disdain for the human rights community. Citizens, particularly those in cities other than Tashkent, have in some cases been forced to take part in actions against human rights groups and member of opposition political movements. This coerced participation creates the illusion that is it not the government, but rather the citizens who disfavor the political opposition and human rights communities.

The mission found that in addition to destroying unofficial photos and videos in order to hinder and almost completely obstruct investigation, documentation and reporting on the Andijan events, authorities are also engaged in an active disinformation campaign that involves creating, disseminating and enforcing acceptance of their own version of the events. The government has, for example, distributed its own videotapes covering the events to embassies and on 16 May, the Ministerial Cabinet sent a letter to all enterprises, regional centers and *kishlsaks*⁴ in Uzbekistan, obligating them to conduct “meetings on the Andijan events.”⁵

The full range of civil society activities aimed at responding to the Andijan events, from gathering information about the number of victims to demonstrating in front of foreign embassies and regional *khokimiyats*⁶ has been inhibited. The activities of human rights defenders have come under virtually total control. Offices of human rights defenders are under close surveillance,⁷ activists’ movements are tracked either covertly or overtly, telephone conversations are monitored (a fact verified by mission members who were confronted by authorities with information they had only divulged in telephone conversations with colleagues) and information from the computers of activists is transmitted in

³*Not in my Country*, Uzbek President Islam Karimov rejects the possibility of an Orange or Rose Revolution in Uzbekistan in an interview with a Russian newspaper (January 2005). <http://enews.ferghana.ru/detail.php?id=362501248637.43.264.2851818>

⁴ Small villages in central Asia.

⁵ According to the human rights activist Bakhtiyar Khamrayev.

⁶ Local administrations.

⁷ On 17 June, during a meeting with members of the "Ozod Dekhonlar Party" ("Free Peasants Party") in Tashkent, the IHF mission remarked that the headquarters of the party were evidently being observed. The opposition activists explained that this was not linked to the missions’ visit, but became commonplace recently.

unknown ways to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Council of National Security. In a number of cases computers files have also been confiscated during office searches.⁸

The human right defenders continue their work despite the repression and threats to which not only they, but also their relatives are subject. Many of those who tried to compile lists of victims and conduct independent investigations on the events at Andijan have been detained.⁹ According to sources, some of the detainees are accused of crimes punishable by lengthy prison sentences or even death.¹⁰

The detainees not only face unfair judicial standards but also lack adequate legal defence. Lawyers are subject to pressure from the security services and the Ministry of the Interior and so are likely to refuse to defend the activists for fear of putting themselves in danger.¹¹

The situation of human rights defenders differs in the various regions of Uzbekistan. In Tashkent, the actions of the authorities against the human rights community are constrained by the presence of foreign diplomats, international organizations and media representatives. This is not the case in Andijan, Djisak-Samarkand, or in remote *kishlaks*.

2. Unlawful detention of 14 NGO “Ezgulik” activists (Tashkent)

On the night of 29-30 May a group of policemen with dogs broke into the home of Khusan Yusunov, a brother of V. Inoyatova, head of the *Ezgulik*. Without showing identification, the policemen began beating and twisting the arms of the *Ezgulik* members who had arrived in Tashkent from various regions to take part in the workshop scheduled for 30 May. Fourteen persons including Inoyatova were taken to the police station where they were held until the next day.

Following these events, some of the detained decided to abandon human rights activity, and some even left the country.

3. House arrest of 40 human rights defenders (Tashkent)

Many of the most active participants of pickets held at embassies, international organizations and Uzbek governmental offices have been held under virtual house arrests. Activists have been subject to continual surveillance by uniformed officials and have been prevented from leaving home even to buy food. At the time of the mission, the following parties were under house arrest: activists from the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, Society for the Protection of the Rights and Liberties of the Citizens of Uzbekistan, Initiative Group of Independent Human Rights Defenders of Uzbekistan, members of the local branch of the International Human Rights Society, members of the parties *Erk*

⁸ Computers were confiscated from A. Azizov, Kh. Suleymanov, M. Isakov and others.

⁹ The mission collected at least six similar cases; see annex 1.

¹⁰ Uzbekistan is one of the two countries in the OSCE region (together with Belarus) where the death penalty is still applied.

¹¹ The lawyer Rovshan Usmanov, hired by Freedom House to provide legal assistance to Mukhatdinov, Bobodzhanov and Otakhanov, who are all being detained in the Asak pre-trial detention facility, refused to take up the cases after pressure was put on him.

and *Ozod Dekhon* as well as independent human rights defenders and unaffiliated participants of pickets dealing with social and political problems. Some were prevented from leaving their homes and others were repeatedly summoned by the police to have “discussions,” as a pretext for preventing them from attending demonstrations and pickets.¹² An estimated 40 persons have been held under house arrest in Tashkent for periods ranging from 3 days to 2 weeks.¹³

4. Beating of the human rights defender Satvaldi Abdullaev and falsification of his medical records (Tashkent)

On 30 May, Satvaldi Abdullaev (born 1937) who had been under house arrest since 17 May, was attacked, injured and rendered unconscious by those who were monitoring his activities. Human rights defenders told the IHF mission that there is an unspoken directive to deny wounded human rights defenders and members of oppositional parties hospital care, but an exception appears to have been made for Abdullaev due to his age. The medical records produced at the time of Abdullaev’s treatment do not, however, truthfully describe the cause of his injuries. The records state, “according to the patient and his son escorting him, Abdullaev fell down and hit his head due to dizziness and high blood pressure. As a result, he lost consciousness for a short time.”

5. Persecution, arrests, surveillance and threats against human rights defender Sobitkhon Ustabaev (Namangan)

Sobitkhon Ustabaev has tried repeatedly to visit the city of Andijan but has consistently been denied access. On 22 May, Ustabaev announced a hunger strike and stood in the Namangan city center with a poster fixed to his chest publicizing the tragedy in Andijan. He was taken to the Namangan police department where he was sentenced and held for 15 days based on falsified charges. During his imprisonment Ustabaev undertook a twelve-day hunger strike. Authorities chose to ignore the hunger strike and failed to provide Ustabaev with needed medical assistance.

On 15 June, the IHF mission, which was in Fergana at that time, telephoned Ustabaev and invited him to a meeting in Fergana. Ustabaev was unable to attend the meeting however, because the taxi he hired to travel to Fergana was followed. Ustabaev had not informed anyone about the meeting with the IHF mission but after his attempt to travel to Fergana for the meeting he received a call on his cellular phone from the chief of the City Department of Internal Affairs of Namangan, Shukrat Umarov, who openly advised Ustabaev not to attend the meeting with the IHF mission. The mission then agreed to meet Ustabaev at the Freedom House Resource Center in the city of Namangan. During this meeting, Umarov called Ustabaev once again, this time in the presence of the mission participants. According to Ustabaev, Umarov told him that he knew of the IHF mission’s arrival and advised Ustabaev not to speak with the IHF team, saying that if he did he would regret it.

¹² See annex 2.

¹³ See annex 1.

6. Detention of human rights defender Nurmuhommad Azizov based on fabricated criminal charges, constant observation of his family (Andijan region)

Since 22 May the home and family of Narmukhommad Azizov have been under surveillance (Andijan region, Shakhrikhan district, Nakhigat village). On 2 June the Azizov home was searched. During the search there was a “coincidental” power failure that lasted for 6-10 minutes after which the police “found” a statement of the *Birlik* party among some personal papers. The authorities then arrested Azizov on the basis of the document.

Since Azizov was taken into custody, the surveillance of his house has continued. Visitors to the Azizov home are stopped in the street and questioned about the purpose of their visit. The IHF mission participants experienced this first hand: upon departing the Azizovs’ house, the mission’s car was blocked by three cars, all without license plates. All of the people in the cars were dressed in civilian clothing except for one who was wearing a police uniform. Without stating any charges and under the pretext of conducting an “investigation,” the IHF mission was taken in a convoy, outside the Andijan district in the direction of Tashkent.¹⁴

7. Persecution of human rights defenders in the Djisak and Samarkand provinces

In protest against the shooting of peaceful citizens in Andijan the human rights defenders of the Djisak province decided to hold a picket on 25 May in front of the *khokimiyat* building. On 21 May the activists prepared and saved on several computers, an appeal to international organizations, which they planned to disseminate on the day of the picket. This appeal happened to fall into the hands of authorities, resulting in a new series of repressive acts against human rights defenders. Some human rights defenders (Khamraev, Azimov, Pardaev, Nazarov) were summoned to the prosecutor’s office, where under the force of threats and intimidation, they signed a letter consenting not to participate in the picket.

Since 24 May human rights defenders have been subjected to open surveillance. Cars wait overtly in front of their homes and follow them everywhere. Since the beginning of June this surveillance has become less prevalent but according to the human rights defenders whenever they arrange meetings over the phone, the surveillance and pursuits are apparent.¹⁵

On 26 May, the government, prompted by the human rights activities of Azimov and Khamraev, organized a public show of “national outrage.” Top officials of the region, along with the leaders of the Makhallinks¹⁶ communities took part in the protest. Some local residents were also forced to join in the protest, demanding the eviction of human rights defenders from the region. These “outraged representatives of the people” rode in two buses both escorted by the Council of National Security. The first bus drove to Azimov’s house, but he was not at home and thus escaped persecution. The following day, the district leader Karim Saatov indicated to Azimov that the events of the prior day had been motivated by his activity surrounding the Andijan massacre. “Why should you care about Andijan? Live your life, raise children,” Saatov said to Azimov.

¹⁴ See Annex 5.

¹⁵ See Annex 1.

¹⁶ Local publicly run community organizations.

The human rights defender replied, “If after the massacre in Andijan we keep silent, tomorrow we will be slaughtered. Then Samarkand will keep silent and the day after tomorrow Samarkand will be shot dead. One can’t keep silent.”

The second bus full of “outraged representatives of the people” burst into the house of Bakhtiyar Khamraev around 11:00 a.m. With the words “You are betrayer of the people!” and “Terrorist, slave of the Americans and West!” they attacked Khamraev. The group then, in Khamraev’s apartment, adopted a “resolution” commanding Khamraev to leave the province within 24 hours.

On 28 May the representatives of Human Rights Watch visited Khamroev, and in their presence ten people stormed into his apartment. Upon seeing the representatives of Human Rights Watch the group left the flat but not before demanding that Khamroev accompany them downstairs. The group planned to organize neighbors to help evict Khamroev but their plan failed because the neighbors refused to participate. Similar measures were implemented against Mamaradzhab Nazarov (city Yangi-Buston, Djisak region), against the family of the detained human rights defender Kholoknozhar Ganiev (Samarkand) and against many others.

On 2 June around 10 a.m. the *khokimiyat* of Djisak held a meeting that was broadcasted on television. It was announced that around 20 thousand people were participating in the meeting when in reality, there were not more than 3,500 participants, the majority of whom had been coerced into attending. Farmers were told that their fields would be seized, businessmen were told their shops would be closed and mothers were told they would not receive allowances for their children if they did not participate in the meeting. Students and teachers were also forced to attend. Banners were prepared in advance bearing slogans such as “Do away with opposition and human rights defenders in Uzbekistan,” “No place among us for shaitans,”¹⁷ “We will not give up our motherland to anyone,” and “Human rights defenders are betrayers of the people and slaves to the Americans.” There were also portraits of Karimov and Uzbek flags.

During the meeting, the *khakim* of the province Yamankulov and the chief editor of the regional newspaper “Voice of Djisak” called on the people not to support or join forces with human rights defenders, who they claimed were abnormal. They stated, that Khamraev, Azimov, Pardaev, Nazarov and Yakubov spread inaccurate information via Radio Liberty and the internet regarding the events at Andijan. The human rights defenders were said to have sold themselves to western countries, particularly to America. One speaker at the meeting also commented that Pardaev (the youngest from the group of human rights defenders) is a bachelor and if he marries no one should go to his wedding.

The meeting adopted a resolution stating, “We will not allow the Djisak province to become the second Andijan. Our state is in danger. We condemn human rights defenders who have sold themselves to the West for dollars.”

On 12 June, the wives of Khamraev and Azimov received typed anonymous letters. The letters stated that the women’s husbands had joined forces with the “scoundrel” Talib Yakubov, (the head of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan HRSU), who “conducts anti-state activities.” The letters further

¹⁷ Devils.

declared that the human rights defenders led amoral lives, and urged the women to think of their children and influence their husbands to stop pretending to work in human rights.

8. Detention of human rights defender Norboj Kholzhigitov on fabricated criminal charges, threats against family members (Ishtikhan region of Samarkand province)

On 4 June, Norboj Kholzhigitov, a well-known chair of Ishtikhan regional branch of HRSU, was detained based on falsified information. The teachers Abdusattar Irzaev and Khabibula Akbulatov, activists of the HRSU, were detained with him. On 6 June, Kholzhigitov's fellow-villagers (from the village of former Kolkhoz named after Bobur of Ishtikhan region), outraged by his detention, rented minivans to travel to Samarkand where he was being kept.

When the group attempted to make the trip to Samarkand however, militiamen commanded the convoy to turn around and placed a militiaman in each van to ensure they did not leave the village. Privately owned cars were confiscated from those who were attempting to drive to Samarkand by themselves and were not returned to their owners until 15 June. Militiamen also ordered local taxi drivers and all villagers with cars not to transport any of Kholzhigitov's relatives to Samarkand.

On 10 June, Kholzhigitov's family hired a defender, Assleddin Suvankulov. Suvankulov was visited that same day at 10 p.m. by the Deputy Head of the Department of the Interior of the Pajariksk Region who recommended that he give up the case.

On 9 June, the Norboj's son, Khayatulla Kholzhigitov (born 1977) was assaulted at the market by another man, Tolmaz Tangirov, who provoked a fight with him. This fight served as grounds to bring criminal charges against Khayatulla, initially for "hooliganism" and later for "infliction of bodily injury."

9. Politics and human rights defense

In many of the cases that the IHF mission learned about (but not all), the repressed human right defenders were also members of oppositional parties, such as *Erk*, *Birlik*, or *Ozod Dekhkot*. The human rights organization *Mazlum* is closely connected with the *Erk* party for example, and similarly, the organization *Ezgulik* is affiliated with the party *Birlik*. Very often, human right defenders hold prominent positions in the parties and it is difficult to determine whether they are persecuted for their political or their human rights activities. The massive protests organized by human right defenders are frequently tied to political issues. The politically motivated picket on 30 May, for example, was announced by the organization *Ezgulik* and dealt primarily with the government's refusal to register the party *Birlik*, but was followed by a wave of persecutory acts against human rights defenders.

When human right defenders are also active in politics, they become especially vulnerable targets for persecution. The *Ezgulik* activist Nurmukhammata Azizov who was detained on 2 June is an example of this. Azizov anticipated that he might be arrested and so destroyed all documents that might provide grounds for his arrest. The authorities who came to arrest him however, switched off the light for a few moments in order to plant an incriminating leaflet from the *Birlik* party of which Azizov was a

member in the local Shakhriyansky region. The authorities then arrested Azizov, accusing him of having read the document aloud in public as an official Birlik party statement opposing the events in Andijan.

The human rights defenders with whom the mission spoke, view this situation as quite natural. As one of the activists noted, “If the government openly disrespects its own Constitution, then its guarantees can be executed only by changing the regime.”

Objectively speaking, the human rights defenders have a very limited capacity to act. The law enforcement bodies are corrupt, but complaints about their inactivity are likely to result in persecution. The courts are far from objective, especially when it comes to criminal cases “ordered” by officials or private parties to be brought against particular individuals (judging from the available information, it was a sentence issuing from one such “ordered” case that triggered the May 13 events in Andijan). The intergovernmental organizations are rendered partially paralyzed by the obstructive policies of the Uzbek government. The few international human rights NGOs that are active in Uzbekistan (Human Rights Watch and Freedom House) have recently come under aggressive attack. Government registration is much more difficult for NGOs to acquire than for pro-governmental organizations and the government has implemented stringent laws governing the issuing of grants in an effort to suppress NGO activity.

10. Forced returns to persecution and torture from Kyrgyzstan

Southern Kyrgyzstan is home to over 800,000 ethnic Uzbeks, the second largest ethnic group in the country of five million people. As such, Kyrgyzstan should be a natural safe haven for Andijan refugees. Hundreds of men, women and children who fled immediately from the massacre in Andijan were placed in a tent camp in Kyrgyzstan. After spending two weeks in an exposed location in the Suzak district just across the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border, the refugees were transferred to another camp at Sasyk, near Jalal-Abad. The UNHCR provided fifty tents for about 426 asylum seekers. Although the camp is managed only by the Kyrgyz authorities, security arrangements there remain very fragile.

Uzbekistan claims that many of the asylum seekers are simply “criminals” who should be extradited. Some days before the IHF mission’s visit, on June 10, four asylum seekers that Uzbekistan had selected for extradition were transferred to a detention center in Osh and then handed over to the Uzbek authorities. This prompted immediate protests from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees as it was a flagrant violation of international law (the norm of non-refoulement). To date, no one has been able to confirm the whereabouts of these four men and there are serious concerns regarding their safety.

On 22 June, the acting Prosecutor General of Kyrgyzstan stated that an additional 29 asylum seekers were to be detained in Osh to prepare for their extradition under the Minsk Convention of 1993 of the Commonwealth of Independent States. At the time of writing, UNHCR and the UN Secretary General had received assurances from the Kyrgyz government that such extraditions will not take place until the asylum claims of the 29 have been determined by the Kyrgyz migration service. However, Kyrgyzstan has so far failed to acknowledge its broader obligation (under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment) to refrain from the extradition of any person, regardless of their status or possible criminal involvement, if extradition would place them at a high risk of torture.

The Convention against Torture certainly takes precedence, under international law, over any extradition agreement, and there is no doubt that any forced return to Uzbekistan would constitute a violation of this Convention. In 2003, a UN Special Rapporteur found torture to be used systematically in Uzbekistan, and there is nothing to suggest that the situation has improved today. The lives of these persons, whom the Uzbek government is desperate to silence because they are witnesses to the May 13 events, would certainly be at extreme risk if they are returned to Uzbekistan.

RFE/RL's Kyrgyz service reported that the Kyrgyz Prosecutor-General Azimbek Beknazarov suggested the asylum seekers be sent to a third country as soon as possible because their continued presence in Kyrgyz territory threatens to damage relations between the two countries. The international community agrees more and more that such emergency resettlement of individual refugees to third countries, is the only way to effectively protect the people in question and restore stability.

11. Recommendations

Taking into consideration the information received during the mission as well as reliable information from colleagues at the HRSU and other sources, the IHF recommends to the international organizations and foreign diplomatic missions to Uzbekistan:

- to request that the authorities grant local and international human rights organizations and journalists access to Andijan;
- to support an independent, international investigation into the killings in Andijan. The investigation should involve an investigative team equipped with forensics and crime scene experts;
- to call for the immediate release of Uzbek rights defenders detained on spurious charges;
- to hold an international conference on the problems of civil society in post-Andijan Uzbekistan, with participation of governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental actors, to address the problematic way in which the fight against terrorism and extremism is being used as a pretext to restrict activities of civil society;
- to strengthen support for civil society in rural areas by providing resource centres, trainings, and grants for books and equipment;
- to urge the Government to publish official name-by-name information on the deceased, arrested and wanted of Andijan events;
- to raise public awareness on the means available for making individual complaints to international institutions;
- to establish hot-lines for reporting human rights violations to the UN, OSCE, and embassies;
- to continue pressing the Government to refrain from extraditing any of those who fled Uzbekistan to seek international protection after May 13, as such returns would violate the human rights treaty obligations of Kyrgyzstan;
- to offer all possible assistance towards making the urgent arrangements to remove all the refugees, including those currently in detention at Osh, from Kyrgyzstan to a safer country;
- to urge an immediate country visit by the UN Special Rapporteurs on Torture and the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders.

Annex 1

Incomplete list of human rights defenders, opposition activists, journalists who have been repressed since the events of 13 May 2005 in Andijan.¹⁸

1	Rano Azimova independent human rights defender	Tashkent, under house arrest
2	Shukhat Akhmadzhanov Republican Party	Tashkent, under house arrest
3	Svetlana Borisova SPRLCU ¹⁹	Tashkent, under house arrest
4	Vladimir Vorobyev SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest
5	Sarvar Gareeva SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest
6	Nina Gorlova HRSU ²⁰	Tashkent, under house arrest
7	Feruz Dustonova	Tashkent, under house arrest
8	Tatiana Davletova SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest
9	Vassily Evstigneev brother of the human rights defender E. Urlaeva	Tashkent, under house arrest
10	Bashorat Eshova HRSU	Tashkent, under house arrest
11	Yulia Chudina "Ozod Dekhonlar" ("Free Peasants Party")	Tashkent, under house arrest
12	Natalia Sheulova Kazakh citizen, took actively part in demonstrations	Tashkent, under house arrest
13	Ulzhan Yuldasheva HRSU	Tashkent, under house arrest
14	Abuzhalil Boymatov HRSU	Tashkent, under house arrest
15	Surat Ikramov IGIHRDU ²¹	Tashkent, under house arrest
16	Alibaev Rakhmatula IGIHRDU	Tashkent, under house arrest
17	Elena Urlaeva SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest 30 мая – 4 июня

¹⁸ This list was established using data provided by the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, the Ezgulik movement and the OSCE.

¹⁹ Society for the protection of the rights and liberties of the citizens of Uzbekistan.

²⁰ Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan.

²¹ Initiative Group of Independent Human Rights Defenders of Uzbekistan.

18	Satvaldi Abdullaev HRSU	Tashkent, under house arrest. Was assaulted on 25 May and taken to a hospital where his medical records were falsified to conceal the causes of his injuries
19	Yuri Konoplev SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest
20	Anatoly Volkov SPRLCU	Tashkent. On 27 May he came together with Tatiana Dovletova to the hospital in order to visit Shoira Sodiqbekova. Around 17:00 both were detained by the police and brought to the police station, where they were compelled to sign confessions stating they were terrorists. Secret service continues to observe the human rights defenders
21	Shoira Sodiqbekova SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest
22	Yuldash Nasirov HRSU	Tashkent, under house arrest
23	Bakhadir Namazov "Ozod Dekhonlar" ("Free Peasants Party")	Tashkent, under house arrest
24	Raisa Fayazova SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest
25	Klara Shadmanova Committee for the defence of personal rights	Tashkent, under house arrest
26	Akhtam Shaymardanov Ecology and Human Rights Organisation "Chirchik-Darya"	Tashkent, under house arrest
27	Dzhakhangir Shosalimov member of the "Erk" democratic party	Tashkent, under house arrest
28	Lydia Volkobrun SPRLCU	Tashkent, under house arrest
29	Gavkhar Aripova "The Free Woman"	Tashkent, under house arrest
30	Agdam Turgunov "Mazlum"	Tashkent, under house arrest
31	Khaytbay Yakubov	Tashkent, under house arrest
32	Shukrat Makhmadiyev	Tashkent, under house arrest
33	Yuldash Rasulov	Tashkent, under house arrest
34	Madina Gafarova	Tashkent, under house arrest
35	Zarifa Abdurakhmanova	Tashkent, under house arrest
36	Dildora Abdurakhmanova	Tashkent, under house arrest
37	Iskander Khudayberganov.	Tashkent. The human rights defender's house is under observation
38	Aimatov Abujamil „Ozod Dekhkonlar“ party	Tashkent, under house arrest and observation.

39	Vasila Inoyatova	Tashkent. On the night of 30 May, the human rights defender, her husband and 12 members of the "Ezgulik" movement were unlawfully detained and brought to the police station. They were not released until the following day
40	Shukhrat Akhmadzhanov chairman of the NGO "Democrats' Circle"	Tashkent. Several unlawful detentions after the Andijan events. During an unlawful search, the police confiscated the organisation's documents and floppy disks. The apartment owner evicted the human rights defender, because of constant problems with the police
41	Nabibulla Norbutaev Leader of the Tashkent branch of the "Ezgulik" movement	On 30 May unlawfully detained and brought to the Shaikhantaur police station
42	Rukhitdin Komilov member of "Ezgulik" and of the "Birlik" party	Tashkent, Parkent district. Taken several times to the police station, where he was forced to explain his activities as a human rights defender and an opposition activist. Since 30 May constantly observed by the Secret Service
43	Gulbakkhor Turaeva Andijan branch of „Ozod Dekhkonglar“ party	Andijan. On 27 May she was brought to the state prosecutor's office, where her passport was confiscated. On 28 and 29 May, she was once again brought to the state prosecutor's office, where she was forced to write a dictated statement. The investigators tried to intimidate her. She successfully fled to Tashkent, where she hid for some time, but then later she returned to Andijan for family reasons.
44	Saidzhan Zaynabitdinov chairman of the NGO "Appellation"	Andijan. Detention of a witness of the Andijan events. The family had no information regarding his whereabouts for three days. A criminal case has been initiated against the human rights defender on violation of article 139, part 3 and article 244.
45	Dilmurod Mukhiddinov Chairman of the Markhamat district branch of "Ezgulik"	Andijan Region. Tried to assess the number of victims of the 13 May events. Arrested on 28 May. A criminal case was initiated against him on grounds of violation of art. 159, part 4, art 244, part 1 and art. 244-1, part 1 of the penal code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Is being detained in the pre-trial detention facility in Asak. Pressure has been exerted on his defense lawyer.
46	Mosozhon Bobozhanov deputy chairman of the Markhamat district branch of "Ezgulik"	Andijan region. Tried to assess the number of victims of the 13 May events. Arrested on 28 May. A criminal case initiated against him on grounds of violation of art. 159, part 4, art 244, part 1 and art. 244-1, part 1 of the penal code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Is being detained in the pre-trial detention facility in Asak. Pressure has been exerted on his defense lawyer.

47	Mukhammadkodir Otakhanov chairman of the Andijan branch of the IHRS ²²	Andijan region. Tried to assess the number of victims of the 13 May events. Arrested on 28 May. A criminal case initiated against him on grounds of violation of art. 159, part 4, art 244, part 1 and art. 244-1, part 1 of the penal code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Is being detained in the pre-trial detention facility in Asak. Pressure has been exerted on his defense lawyer.
48	Ulugbek Bakirov "Ezgulik"	Dzhalalkuduk district of the Andijan Region. On 15 May tried to investigate the events of 13 May. Was beaten by police and had his camera confiscated.
49	Fazliddin Gafurov "Ezgulik"	Dzhalalkuduk district of the Andijan Region. On 15 May tried to investigate the events of 13 May. Was beaten by police.
50	Sobitkhon Ustabaev Human Rights organisation "Zashchita" ("Protection")	Namangan. Was detained during a demonstration and unlawfully subjected to an administrative detention for 15 days. Since being released, has been continually intimidated by authorities.
51	Khaitboy Kuzyev chairman of the Pap district branch of „Birlik“ party	On 30 May intended to go to Tashkent to attend a workshop. Together with other human rights defenders, whose names are still unknown, was led out of the bus and detained in the Pap district police station for one day.
52	Muzaffamirzo Iskhakov "Ezgulik"	Andijan. Detained on 3 June, released after 2 days. The organisation's office equipment was searched and confiscated.
53	Akbarali Oripov "Ezgulik"	Shakhrikhan, Andishan region. Detention, Fabricated criminal charges on grounds of violation of art. 159, art 244, part 2 of the penal code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Search and confiscation of office equipment.
54	Talib Yakubov HRSU chairman	Shakhrikhan, Andishan region. В составе миссии МХФ visited the detained human rights defender Azimov at his home. As soon as the IHF delegation left the Azimovs' house, their car was stopped by three cars without official license plates of the Ministry of the Interior. The persons in these cars were not wearing uniforms except for one dressed as a police major. Without presenting any charges the men insisted on carrying out an "investigation" and turned Yakubov and the IHF experts out of the Andijan region and directed them to Tashkent.
55	Nurmohammad Azizov chairman of the Andijan branch of the HRSU	Shakhrikhan, Andishan region. Detention, Falsified criminal proceedings on grounds of violation of art. 159, art 244, part 2 of the penal code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Search and confiscation of office equipment. Constant observation of the human rights defender's family and their visitors.

²² International Human Rights Society, Frankfurt.

56	Khamdam Suleymanov deputy chairman of the "Birlik" party	Kokand. On 9 June, confiscation of office equipment and documents. Was detained, but released the same night after having signed a declaration agreeing not to leave town.
57	Mamaradzhab Nazarov "Ezgulik"	Yangi-Boston, Zarbdor District of Djisak region, 30 May. A mob harassed Nazarov and his family in order to make them leave the town. House arrest from 27 to 30 June. Under observation.
58	Bakhtiyar Khamroev chairman of the Djisak region branch of the HRSU	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender. "Prophylactic conversations" – threatened by authorities not to draw public attention to the Andijan events. On 26 May attacked by a mob hired by authorities, shouting that he should leave the town within 24 hours. Khamraev's wife received a letter, which discredited her husband's human rights activities and urged her to influence him in order to prevent unpleasant things from happening.
59	Momir Azimov chairman of the Djisak district branch of the HRSU	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender. "Prophylactic conversations" – threatened by authorities not to draw public attention to the Andijan events. On 26 May attacked by a mob hired by authorities, came to Azimov's house, but he was not at home. Azimov's wife received a letter, which discredited her husband's human rights activities and urged her to influence him in order to prevent unpleasant things from happening. Furthermore, Azimov's son Aziz received threats.
60	Ukdam Pardaev chairman of the Djisak regional branch of the IHRS	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender. "Prophylactic conversations" – threatened by authorities not to draw public attention to the Andijan events.
61	Olim Yakubov son of the HRSU chairman Talib Yakubov	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender.
62	Ziyadulla Rozakov IHRS	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender.
63	Mukhidin Kurbanov IHRS	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender.
64	Saida Kurbanova HRSU	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender.
65	Nurulla Sunatullaev HRSU	Djisak. Observation of the human rights defender.
66	Zhamshid Karimov independent journalist, HRSU member	Djisak. Pressure exerted on the human rights defender. The region head called upon him and ordered him to leave the region.
67	Norboy Kholdzhigitov Chairman of the Ishtikhan district branch of the HRSU (Samarkand region)	Ishtikhan district, Samarkand region. Detention, fabricated criminal case. Pressure exerted on defense lawyer. Fabricated criminal case against his son, Khayatulla Kholdshigitov.

68	Shaimanov Shakhnazar HRSU, „Ozod Dekhkonlar“ party	Djisak region, under house arrest.
69	Abdusattor Irzaev HRSU	Ishtikhan district, Samarkand region. Detained together with Kholdzhigitov, falsified criminal case.
70	Khabibulla Akpulatov HRSU	Ishtikhan district, Samarkand region. Detained together with Kholdzhigitov, falsified criminal case.
71	Kholiknazar Ganiev Chairman of the Samarkand branch of "Ezgulik"	Samarkand district. Detained on 28 May. Unlawfully detained for 15 days. A mob, hired by authorities assaulted his wife and was urged by authorities to fire the defense lawyer Ruhitdin Kamilov.
72	Daynav Tashanov member of the "Birlik" party	Kashkadarya Region. On 29 May, police broke into his house and beat both him and Z. Mirzakulov, who was there at the time. On 30 May both intended to participate at a demonstration in Tashkent. The police officers tried to persuade them not to go to Tashkent, but in vain. The police drove Tashanov and Mirzakulov to a place some 100 km from Karshi. They left them there, at night, and drove away.
73	Zulfikor Mirzakulov regional chairman of "Ezgulik"	Kashkadarya Region. On 29 May, police broke into Tashanov's house, where he was at the time and beat him and Tashanov. On 30 May both intended to participate at a demonstration in Tashkent. The police officers tried to persuade them not to go to Tashkent, but in vain. The police then drove Tashanov and Mirzakulov to a place some 100 km from Karshi. They left them there, at night, and drove away.
74	Tulkhan Karaev journalist working for the IWPR ²³ , HRSU member	Karshi. The journalist's flat is under constant observation by secret service members since the events of 13 May. On 4 June he was arrested and sentenced to ten days of administrative detention. A lawyer was not provided for the journalist.
75	Edgor Turlibekov member of the "Birlik" party	Kashkadarya region. On 28 May unlawfully detained for several days in order to prevent his going to Tashkent to participate in a demonstration. On 7 June authorities organised a "popular meeting" demanding that Turlibekov leave the town.
76	Nodir Akhadov member of the "Birlik" party	Kashkadarya region. On 28 May the opposition activist was unlawfully detained for several days in order to prevent his going to Tashkent to participate in a demonstration
77	Manzura Razhabova "Ezgulik"	Navoi region. Police threatened M. Razhabova, urging her to stop human rights activities.
78	Saidburkhon Kodirov	Bukhara. Forced to sign a declaration agreeing not to

²³ Institute for War and Peace Reporting, London.

	member of the "Birlik" party	leave the town.
79	Ilkom Ashurov Humanitarian Legal Center	Bukhara. On 30 May I. Ashurov was brought to the police station, where he was detained for three hours and strongly urged not to leave town.
80	Vakhid Karimov Humanitarian Legal Center	Bukhara. On 30 V. Karimov was brought to the police station, where he was detained for three hours and strongly urged not to leave town.
81	Abdulgapur Dadaboev	On 28 May detained by secret service members due to "suspicion of participation in a road accident." He was released the same evening, yet his documents (passport and driving license) were not returned until several days later.
82	Abdubakhor Usmanov lawyer	Andijan. Detained in front of the International Red Cross Delegation. Released the same day after a Red Cross intervention. Were forced to leave the cases of the clients, including the arrested ones.
83	Dildora Nazarkulova lawyer	Detained and brought to the Andijan police station
84	Galima Bukharbaeva journalist working for the IWPR	Andijan. Detained and released the same day. Threatened by the authorities and forced to leave the country.
85	Gafur Yuldashev Radio "Ozodlik" (Radio Liberty)	Andijan, 27 May. A citizen of Andijan showed Yuldashev a mass grave, but was kidnapped the next day by unidentified persons in front of his house. Thereupon, Yuldashev left Andijan.

Annex 2

Detention and house arrest of human rights defenders: Interview with the human rights defender Abduzhalil Baytmatov (born in 1958, physicist, member of the HRSU secretariat)

On 17 June some human rights organisations began to demonstrate in front of the US embassy in Tashkent. The organizers informed the necessary authorities in advance. Despite the fact that I have already been beaten up two times and have been sentenced in court for taking part in such actions, I continue to participate.

On that day I left home around 8:30. On the street I was stopped by some men in plain clothes, who came along in a car. I knew them already, because they are often sent by the security services or the Ministry of the Interior to survey our actions. In most cases they don't wear uniforms. One of them, Ziyadulla Shayakubov, a member of a criminal investigation unit, came to me and, without presenting any documents, told me: *The head of the district police, Ulugbek Tursunov, would like to speak to you.*

So I was brought to the Khamza district police station. I was told to wait until he called on me. I waited for him in the building, in the corridors, in the courtyard, but he did not call me. Then I understood that they only wanted to prevent me from going to the demonstration. Around 13:00 Alim Tulaganov, the head of the criminal investigation unit, called me. He spoke with me until 14:30 and told me that through my co-operation with international organisations, I would discredit the policy of our state and that therefore I was an enemy of the Uzbek people. He furthermore expressed particular interest in my wife and my daughter.

On 19 May we wanted to gather in front of the embassy of the Russian Federation. The mass media circulated the information that the Russian government had supported President Karimov and we wanted to express our dissent. I left my house around 8:00 a.m. The same people stood in the courtyard and in addition the local police officer Rasul Askaraliev was there. All together they were five, two with police uniforms, three without. This time the conversation went like this: - *So, today I'll have to speak to your boss again?* - *No. Where are you going now?* - *To Freedom House.* - *Then we will have to take you to the police. We have to ensure your safety today.*

On that day their two cars – a black Mercedes and a white Wolga – remained parked in front of my house until 5 p.m. so that I was not able to go to the picket.

On 20 May, human rights defenders picketed the OSCE building, protesting against the statement made by the head of mission, who, after having visited Andijan, said that “the authorities had to use force.” This time I managed to join them. I wore a poster saying: “I demand the dismissal of President Karimov.” Police officers immediately came and destroyed our posters.

From 22 May until 3 June I was under continual house arrest. Police officers came into the courtyard around 3 or 4 every morning and waited for me. I live on the seventh floor. When I would come out, they would see me.

On 22 May, I left the house and walked by them. They called to me: - *Where are you going?* - *To Freedom House.* - *No, you won't go there. If you do, we will have to use force and to take you the police station of the Khamza district.*

So I stayed at home. On 27 May, Elena Urlaeva came to visit me. On that day at 2 p.m. a human rights defenders' meeting was scheduled at Freedom House, where we wanted to discuss how to picket the Chinese embassy. She came to pick me up so we could go there together. She is also a well known human rights defender. She once picketed the Khamza police station and we stood in court together. They stopped us. - *Where are you going? - To Freedom House*

They grabbed us and tried to drag us into a car. We ran back into the house. There we called the embassies of the USA, the UK, Germany and France, the Human Rights Watch office, Freedom House and Surat Ikramov (chairman of the Initiative Group of Independent Human Rights Defenders of Uzbekistan). We informed them all that we were unable to leave the house and therefore would not be able to attend the meeting.

Half an hour after our telephone calls, our telephone line was cut.

At 12:30 Surat Ikramov, with his staff members Rahmatulla Albekov, and Maksuda Mansurova from Freedom House and a staff member of Human Rights Watch came to me. We decided that they should go to the courtyard while Elena and I tried to escape. We went out. They grabbed us by the hands, blocked our way out and prevented us from going to the car, where other human rights defenders waited for us. They immediately began to call for reinforcement via radio and declared that Elena Urlaeva had insulted them and that they would file a complaint against her. In that moment I decided to stay and told them: - *Well, then I won't go to Freedom House.*

My colleagues wrote down the licence plates of the police cars and drove away. The officers stayed, as usual, until 17:00.

So it went until 3 June. At the very end I did not even try to leave the house. Then they feared that they may have missed me and came to my flat, called for me. Yet I refused to go out and so they spoke with my family members. Finally, on 3 June one of them asked me to come out and so I did.

He told me: - *You're at home all the time. Let's go and watch a football match. (On that day Uzbekistan played against the South Korean team).* I answered: - *First you violate my rights and then you want me to go and watch a football match with you? - We were ordered to do it. We don't have anything against you.*

After 3 June they did not return.

Annex 3

How authorities incite the mob against human rights defenders:

Interview with Vasila Inoyatova (NGO "Ezgulik" and "Birlik" opposition party)

On 30 May, Mamradzhab Nazarov, chairman of the Zarbdor district branch of *Ezgulik*, located in Bustnon, called me around 9 p.m. and told me that the authorities had tried to expel him from the town and asked me to come. I promised to come the next day at noon. At the agreed upon time I arrived at his home. I left my car in the courtyard and went up to his apartment. Then his brother came to me and asked me: - *Why did you come here? There are people waiting for you downstairs. - People or a mob? I won't speak to a mob. - You have no choice. They're already waiting for you.*

Then I realized that Mamaradzhab had already been taken to the police that morning. There was indeed a mob waiting for me. But I did not know how they knew that I would be there. They must have tapped my conversation with Mamaradzhab.

I went downstairs. There was a mob, armed with sticks all round my car; more than 100 people. I saw that the situation was dangerous and tried to begin a conversation. But they said immediately: - *Why did you come here? - I wanted to see what's going on.*

The head of the local administration declared: - *Mamaradzhab spreads rumours about victims in Andijan. He says people here live in poverty, that's not true. We do not need such people in the district. We decided to expel him.*

I objected: - *That's against the constitution. - Which constitution? Who needs the constitution?*

Then Nazarov's brother said: - *I know him very well. He does it because of the grants he receives. He will receive a grant for what he says and won't have to work. - But gathering information is already work. - He's mentally ill! - And you are you OK? You're his brother! Perhaps you should be checked as well. - I work for the administration. - So you have to blacken your brother?*

The mob began to urge me to decide on the spot to dissolve the Zarbdor district branch of *Ezgulik*. Nazarov is the chairman. I said that the statutes forbid doing so. Then they wanted me to fire Nazarov and to reinstall Abay Baybulatov, who was dismissed by the Conference for violation of the statutes. The mob began to shout: - *Abay Baybulatov!*

There it became evident that the whole action was planned from the very beginning. There were people in the crowd who voted for Nazarov at the conference a year ago. They were uncomfortable. They stood there with their heads bowed down and silent. I asked them: - *You elected him yourself a year ago. Why are you here now, among those people? - He changed after Andijan.*

This really was a dangerous situation.

On 28 May, Kholoknazar Ganiev, the chairman of the Samarkand regional branch of *Ezgulik* was arrested. His whereabouts remained unknown for several days. On 5 June, in the evening I called his wife and we decided to meet the next day, at 11 a.m. at the Dzhamboy junction. We had just seen each other, when we were suddenly surrounded by a crowd of women. As in the Nazarov case, the initiators of this action must have tapped my telephone line in order to know about our scheduled meeting. I just

managed to get Ganiev's wife into my car. The women began to knock on my car and to shout: - *Give us this woman! - What do you want? - That's Ganiev's wife. We want to kill her!*

I got out of the car: - *What problem do you have with her? - We're against Ganiev. You should order that this man becomes the new chairman of the Samarkand Ezgulik and pointed at a man, who stood beside them whom I had never seen before.*

I looked at the women. They looked very poor and had holes in their shoes. It was clear that they lived in poverty. I asked them a question, which they did not expect me to ask: - *How does it come that you agreed to participate in this whole action?*

They realized that I was concerned by their situation. They stopped shouting and started to complain: - *Just look how we live. We don't have any electricity or water in summer. For the last three years we were not paid for the cotton. We don't receive any family allowances. Please speak with the authorities!*

I promised to raise this issue. They became hopeful and did not want to let me go: - *But when will you come? You will surely come? Don't leave us alone. We can't even celebrate Islamic rituals when a child is born. But we are human beings!*

That's how the situation is some 3 hours away from Tashkent. How does it then look in remote regions?

In Tashkent, there is another way of organizing assaults. Here's what we learned on 30 May, when we planned a picket in front of the Ministry of Justice.

One of our members came a bit earlier and waited. He did not have any posters with him. He therefore did not look like someone, who would participate in the picket. Some gypsy women sat down at his side. It was very hot and so they sighed: - *When will those demonstrators finally come? - Why are you waiting for them? - my colleague asked. - The police asked us to attack them. - And why do you obey what the police say, after all? - We're from Charsu (a market in Tashkent). The policemen confiscated the cigarettes we sell and told us that we would not get them back until we attacked those people. They also promised that we would not have to pay them for two days, as we usually do.*

Annex 4

On the Violence Against Civilians in Uzbekistan - Joint Statement by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (19 May 2005)²⁴

Vienna and Tashkent, 19 May 2005. Uzbek police and security forces may have killed as many as 1000 unarmed civilians in Andijan and Pakhta using machine guns, other automatic weapons, and helicopters, according to independent journalists and local human rights organizations including the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan. Another 2000 people have been injured. The attacks on demonstrators have been followed in some cases by summary executions of the wounded, and by arbitrary arrests and detentions. The region has been blockaded, excluding news media and investigators including those from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Our organizations categorically reject Uzbek government claims that these actions are to be justified, legally or otherwise, on the basis of security threats posed by armed groups or by the threat of terrorism. No one can accept the claim that the crowd on Babur Square in Andijan on 13 May 2005 posed a threat that would justify a massive armed assault on a crowd consisting mainly of women, who had gathered to protest repressive government policies. The assault is in violation of principles promulgated by the United Nations regarding the use of force by law enforcement officials (1).

Several governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and human rights organizations have called for an independent, international investigation. Our organizations further request the engagement of UN Special Rapporteurs and mechanisms to help establish responsibility for the tragic loss of life.

The attack can be interpreted as an act of brutal repression aimed at further intimidating the Uzbek population in the face of democratic changes in Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Georgia. Uzbekistan is among the most repressive countries in the world, whose violations of human rights pose a threat to international peace and security because they provide a context for the generation of terrorism that can and has spread to neighboring states and other regions. The government uses the threat of terrorism as a pretext for policies that keep its population without political and civil rights and sinking deeper into poverty.

Uzbekistan is a participating State in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Moscow Mechanism must be invoked, which will allow the appointment of rapporteurs to establish facts and help Uzbekistan work together with its partners in the OSCE to ensure that tragic loss of innocent life will end. Members of the international community must re-evaluate their relationship to the Uzbek regime, and take actions to help protect the people from further destruction.

(1.) http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/h_comp42.htm

²⁴ http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=6314

Annex 5

IHF Press Release: Obstruction of Human Rights Investigation in Uzbekistan²⁵

Vienna, 16 June 2005. Four human rights defenders from the Helsinki Committees in Azerbaijan, Belarus and Uzbekistan and from the Secretariat of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) and their driver were detained in their car for about four hours near Andijan, Uzbekistan on the night of 15 June 2005. They were forced to leave the region, where they were investigating the arrests of members of the Uzbek human rights community in the aftermath of the mass killings in May.

The five persons include:

- Talib Yakubov, Chairman of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, Uzbek citizen
- Eliza Moussaeva, IHF Secretariat, Russian citizen
- Eldar Zeynalov, Chairman of the Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani citizen
- Dzmitry Markusheusky, Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Belarusian citizen
- Abdurzai Dezhuraev, taxi driver, Uzbek citizen

“We are appealing to the Uzbek authorities to allow this international team to do its work,” stated Aaron Rhodes, Executive Director of the IHF.

“The success of civil society initiatives holding the government accountable holds the key to peace and stability in Uzbekistan. Many human rights defenders are held in violation of Uzbek and international law. Further repression threatens to lead to deterioration in human security,” he said.

The team had visited the family of Nurmukhammad Azizov, a member of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan who was arrested on 2 June, in the village of Hakhigat (Shakhrikhan oblast, Andijan region).

Background

Some minutes before 22:00 the team left Hakhigat. Two unmarked cars were following them. Five minutes later, two police cars blocked the road and stopped them. They were ordered to follow the cars to a police station, where they were told that during the day allegedly a car accident had occurred on a nearby mountain road.

The officials claimed to suspect that their car had caused the accident and took away automobile registration documents and the driver’s license, ordering the driver to follow their car with the plate number 16n3037. Another police car followed. They were told that they were being brought to the place where the accident allegedly happened, a mountain pass between Andijan and Tashkent.

At about 2:00 local time, the delegation reached a check-point where the driver’s papers were returned and copies of the IHF team’s passports were made. The delegation was then released but the police told them that “they would be met” at the next check-point on the way to Tashkent. At the check-point seventy-five kilometers from Tashkent, their passports were copied again. They reached the Uzbek capital at 7:00 local time.

Human Rights Watch Press Release: International Human Rights Group Detained²⁶

(New York, June 16, 2005)— Human Rights Watch is concerned for the safety of a four-person delegation from the International Helsinki Federation visiting Andijan, whom Uzbek police forced to leave the province on June 15. The incident is the latest in a crackdown against the human rights community since the May 13 massacre.

The four were in Andijan province to document the post May 13 crackdown, and had been visiting the home of a human rights defender currently detained on charges related to the Andijan events. After they finished the visit—in a village near Andijan—at about 10:00 p.m., police stopped their car and said they wanted to determine whether the delegation’s driver had been involved in a car accident that had allegedly occurred earlier that day. Police took the driver’s identification papers, brought the group to a local police station, and then ordered the driver to drive to the alleged site of the accident at an unknown location

The driver has said that he was not involved in any accident. When last heard from, at 2 a.m. Tashkent time on June 16, the delegation was on its way back to Tashkent, as police had made it clear that it had no other choice than to return toward the capital

The four human rights defenders, who were on a mission for the Vienna-based International Helsinki Federation, are Tolib Yakubov (an Uzbek citizen), Eliza Murzaeva (a Russian citizen), Eldar Zeynalov (an Azerbaijani citizen), and Dmitri Markushevski (a Belarusian citizen). Yakubov is also the chair of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan. The driver is Abdurzai Dezhuraev

Human Rights Watch said that after May 13 the Uzbek government launched a campaign to punish and intimidate human rights defenders who had spoken out about the Andijan massacre and to close Andijan to independent scrutiny. It has arrested at least ten human rights defenders and opposition activists in Andijan and other cities on trumped up charges. Others have been beaten by unknown assailants, threatened by local authorities, set upon by mobs, and placed under house arrest

Human Rights Watch said that the actions by Uzbek police amounted to taking the delegation into custody

“Taking an international delegation into custody is a clumsy attempt to intimidate all human rights defenders,” said Holly Cartner, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “The diplomatic community in Uzbekistan must send a loud message to the Uzbek government that it will be held accountable for the safety of the IHF delegation and its driver

Human Rights Watch was particularly concerned for the safety of Yakubov and Dezhuraev, who are both Uzbek citizens.

²⁵ http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=6404

²⁶ <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/06/16/uzbeki11140.htm>