

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead protesting the treatment of Uzbek journalists Dzhamshid Karimov and Ulugbek Khaidarov.

3 November 2006

His Excellency Islam Karimov
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Tashkent
Fax: +011 998 71 1395325 (Press Office)
E-mail: presidents_office@press-service.uz

Excellency,

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, International PEN. PEN Canada is writing to condemn the treatment of two journalists in your country.

According to our information, Uzbek authorities forced the psychiatric hospitalization of journalist **Dzhamshid Karimov**, 39 – who is also the Your Excellency's nephew. We have also been made aware of the six-year prison sentence served against journalist **Ulugbek Khaidarov**, 43. Their detention is reportedly linked to their reporting on human rights abuses in Uzbekistan.

Khaidarov was arrested by the police on the morning of 24 September 2006. After only two weeks' detention he was summarily sentenced on 5 October after a trial that lasted only two days. Khaidarov was sentenced on charges of extortion, under Article 165 of the Uzbek Criminal Code, and condemned to six years' imprisonment. Khaidarov had no legal representation at the trial. According to human rights activists, the authorities pressured him to refuse a state-appointed lawyer.

On the day of Khaidarov's arrest, he was said to be waiting at a bus stop, where he was approached by Rakhima Abdullayeva, the owner of a marble factory about whom Khaidarov had recently written articles on unpaid wages for its workers. She is said to have shoved money into his pocket. He claims to have tried to throw the money away, but was immediately arrested by the police when Abdullayeva stated that Khaidarov had attempted to blackmail her. The prosecution against Khaidarov had Ms Abdullayeva as their main witness. However, it has been reported that, at the trial, she testified that Khaidarov was not guilty of extortion. When Khaidarov's wife visited him in prison, before the trial, she reported that he appeared drugged, his eyes glazed and his speech broken, leading to concerns that he has been ill-treated in prison.

Karimov went missing for two weeks in mid-September, just after visiting his mother in the hospital. According to relatives, he was eventually found in a psychiatric hospital in the city of Samarkand, where he remains. It has been reported that the Uzbek authorities confirmed that Karimov is in psychiatric confinement, without specifying the reason, calling it a "private" matter. In August, Karimov's family complained about the high levels of police surveillance at their home and demanded that listening devices be removed. This request was not met. The family's long-distance telephone connections had been cut. At the end of August, the head of the regional administration allegedly visited Karimov and offered him a position on two state newspapers, an offer that was refused.

International PEN is deeply alarmed by the arrest of Ulugbek Khaidarov, his summary trial and the basis for his six-year imprisonment sentence. PEN Canada demands an exhaustive investigation to establish the true motives behind the criminal trial against Khaidarov, to counter claims that it was politically motivated. We also ask for the re-examination of the irregularities of the trial, specifically the lack of legal support and the witness testimony on Khaidarov's innocence. At the

same time, PEN Canada expresses deep concern for the hospitalization of Dzhamsheed Karimov in a psychiatric institution, where his family has not been allowed to visit him. We demand that both journalists, while deprived of their freedom, be granted access to their families, independent legal advice and any necessary medical treatment. Finally, PEN Canada calls on the Uzbek government to do all that it can to respect freedom of expression, as recognized in the Uzbek Constitution, and to guarantee that cases like these not occur again.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

Copies to:

Cabinet of Ministers
5 Mustaqillik Maydoni
House of Government
Tashkent 700078
Fax: +011 998 71 1398463

Buritosh Mustafaev
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
5 Saylgokh Str.
Tashkent
Fax: +011 998 71 1335176
E-mail: info@minjust.gov.uz

Rashidzhon Kodirov
General Prosecutor
Prokuratura Respubliki Uzbekistan
Ul. Gulyamova 66, 700047
Tashkent
Fax: +011 998 71 133 39 17/133 73 68
Email: prokuratura@lawyer.com

Akmal Saidov
Head of the National Centre for Human Rights
Natsionalny tsentr po pravam cheloveka
5/3 Mustakillik Maidoni
Tashkent 700029
Fax: +011 998 71 139 13 56

Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan
1746 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20036 USA
Fax: +1 202 293 6804
E-mail: info@uzbekistan.org

Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the United Nations in New York
Fax: +1 212 486 7998
E-mail: uzbekistan@un.int

Please send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

The Hon. Peter MacKay
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Lester B. Pearson Building, Room A-10
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2
Fax: (613) 996 3443
E-mail: peter.mackay@international.gc.ca

Peter Harder
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: peter.harder@international.gc.ca

Barbara Gibson
Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the OSCE
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: Barbara.gibson@international.gc.ca

Yvan Jobin
Deputy Director, East Europe and Balkans Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: yvan.jobin@international.gc.ca

Fenny Hum
Desk Officer, Uzbekistan
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: fenny.hum@international.gc.ca

Gwyn Kutz
Director, Human Rights Division
Foreign Affairs Canada
E-mail: gwyn.kutz@international.gc.ca