

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Muhammad Bekzhon and Yusif Ruzimuradov.

September 8, 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, prokuratura@lawyer.com

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 call for the release of two of our Honorary Members, **Muhammad Bekzhon** and **Yusif Ruzimuradov**.

According to the latest information at our disposal, Bekzhon, a former contributor to the banned opposition newspaper *Erk* and brother of exiled opposition leader Muhammad Salih, is held in Kagan, a tuberculosis prison in Bukhara. (He reportedly contracted TB while in prison.) Reports from family members who visited Bekzhon and by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture have indicated that he showed visible signs of torture. His 15-year prison sentence, which was later reduced to 12 years, is set to expire in March 2011.

Ruzimuradov, who was *Erk's* editor-in-chief, was sentenced in 1999 along with Bekzhon, but was given an eight-year prison term. While we have been unable to get up-to-date information on his current situation, we do know that Ruzimuradov is detained in Navoi and that reports of torture have led to our concern for his well-being.

PEN Canada believes that both Muhammad Bekzhon and Yusif Ruzimuradov have both been imprisoned in violation of their right to freedom of expression, as guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are very concerned for their health and well-being in jail, and seek assurances that they are being treated humanely and given free access to any medical attention. PEN Canada calls for their immediate and unconditional release.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

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

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