

IHF FOCUS: Freedom of expression and the media; fair trial; torture; ill-treatment and misconduct by law enforcement officials; death penalty; religious intolerance; protection of ethnic minorities; human rights defenders.

Uzbekistan failed to implement much-needed reforms, resulting in a severe economic crisis and an increase in corruption, which left many people impoverished and disillusioned. There were still state-run farms in Uzbekistan where the workers had not received their salaries for years. Most Uzbeks earned just enough money to pay for the absolute minimum of necessities.¹

President Karimov was tough on the political opposition, most of whose representatives had been silenced or driven out of the country. However, in 2000 it seemed that parts of the exiled opposition movement, which have demonstrated willingness to resort to violence, were finding their way back into the country.² This fact prompted the Government to increase the security measures on the border, resulting in shootings and several civilian deaths.³ Uzbekistan was mining undemarcated border areas between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and at least two people were killed and two others injured when they stepped on a landmine on the Uzbek-Tajik border. Tajik officials reported that landmines killed eight civilians and wounded five other in the area in September.⁴

There were two main opposition forces in Uzbekistan: the Party of Liberation (Hizb-ut-Tahrir) which promoted Islam as a religious and social force, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Hizb-ut-Tahrir criticised the Uzbek Government for corruption and repressing Muslims, but had not, according to Western diplomats, promoted violence.⁵ Hizb-ut-Tahrir claimed that 4,000 of its followers had been arrested since the end of 1998. The Europe and Central Asia Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW, IHF member) documented the conviction of several hundred members of the group in 2000.

The Uzbek authorities considered the IMU a terrorist organization, which seemed

to operate mainly from outside Uzbekistan. In early August, battles erupted between armed IMU insurgents and Government troops in southeastern Uzbekistan and neighbouring Kyrgyzstan. The insurgents demanded the release of wrongfully jailed Muslim prisoners, estimated at 100,000.⁶

Deputy head of Tashkent Region's internal affairs directorate, F. Shofaziev said in April that neighbourhood watch groups had been set up to find people with an extremist orientation in order to prevent any terrorist activities or uprisings. In one district residents seized and handed over 16 representatives of a "religious extremist group" to the police. Only in Tashkent, 1,000 local residents were detached as guards. A special task force detachment was set up under the internal affairs directorate at the end of 1999 and the beginning of 2000.⁷

According to the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU), five districts⁸ inhabited mainly by ethnic Tajiks were evacuated around 8 August and thereafter destroyed by air-borne forces. The inhabitants of one of the districts, 364 families, were sent to live in the territory of Zardbor in Sherabadskiy region, 250 kilometres away. The reason for the forced evacuation was that the districts in question had allegedly provided armed groups from Tajikistan with food. On 5 August armed men gathered the inhabitants in the square and forced them into military helicopters which took them to a remote district. They were not allowed to take anything with them. They were given tents to live in, and the camps were surrounded by armed guards. The same day, all adult men were arrested and taken to the regional centres where they were questioned for 7-10 days by the workers of the National Security Service (NSS).

The people in the tent camp were not given any food for the first two weeks, and

there were cases of deaths among children. It was announced on TV that every family had got 750,000 sums (approximately U.S.\$ 1,000) compensation, but no one had actually received this money. By mid-November, the people were sent to the Sherabad region, where houses had been built for them, but without heating and water. On 10 January 2001, a representative of HRSU visited Zardbor, which was surrounded by police from all sides. The inhabitants stated that the Government of Uzbekistan blamed them for cooperating with the IMU insurgents and therefore collectively punished and demolished whole villages.

During the evacuation, the director of the local school, Davron Karimov, told the head of the soldiers that he would complain to President Karimov. He was not seen since. It was alleged that more than 100 men had been taken from their houses in Zardbor and disappeared.⁹ One of them was Kodirov Hazratkul, who in November gave an interview to BBC Radio. He was arrested on 11 December, and two weeks later his dead body was returned to the relatives, bearing clear signs of torture.¹⁰

The presidential elections on 9 January ran against any democratic image of fair and free elections and were dismissed by the OSCE.¹¹

Freedom of Expression and Media

Political Prisoners

Political opponents were arrested arbitrarily, ill-treated and tortured, denied access to lawyers and medical treatment, and their trials were blatantly unfair and based on trumped-up charges with the judges ignoring complaints of torture and coerced testimony.

The President decreed an amnesty in August, which would apply to WW2 veterans, people over 60, Chernobyl victims, minors, disabled and foreign nationals.¹² He further issued a decree on 6 September saying that those extremists and convicted terrorists currently serving jail terms for mi-

nor offences would be pardoned if they repented of their crimes.¹³

An Interior Ministry report published on 24 August put the total number of people in Uzbekistan's 47 prisons at 63,900. Thirty-six percent of those were said to be jailed for theft, and 24 percent for unspecified serious crimes. The report also said that there were no political prisoners in Uzbek jails.¹⁴

Religion emerged as the primary outlet for the expression of political opposition, with the result that the Government labelled anyone associated with unauthorized religious activity as terrorists and extremists.¹⁵ They faced sentences ranging from 15-20 years. Conditions in prisons were harsh with death tolls rising.¹⁶

Apparently, the State Committee on Religion compiled a list of 10,700 suspected religious extremists who may be targeted for arrest.

The authorities continued their practice of planting evidence like drugs, weapons or religious leaflets as basis for arrests. However, many ended up being sentenced for crimes of a political nature. The group Hizb-ut-Tahrir was especially targeted, and those arrested for distributing leaflets calling for the ousting of President Karimov received jail sentences of up to 20 years. Mere association with the group was being viewed as intent to overthrow the constitutional order.¹⁷

◆ Imam Yuldashev, deputy to religious leader Niyazov, was arrested in February 1999 based on planted evidence, severely ill-treated in prison and sentenced to four and a half years. The Uzbek authorities decided to release him shortly before the publication of the 1999 U.S. State Department's religious freedom report, in a calculated move. However, Yuldashev was still required to report to the police every week, and sign a document stating that he was neither a member nor did he approve of any religious sect. He was rearrested on 24 July 2000, charged with "Wahhabism" and spreading of *jihad* (holy war) ideas. His

lawyer, who managed to see him for seven minutes, reported that Yuldashev was covered in bruises. The prison guards continued to beat him in the presence of his lawyer, demanding that he reject legal counsel. He was then confined to *incomunicado* detention in the basement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, refused legal aid or medical treatment.¹⁸

◆ Former Imam Abdurahim Abdurahmanov, who suffered from permanent injuries from torture in custody in 1998, was also re-arrested and sentenced to 17 years on charges of anti-state activities.¹⁹

◆ One of Uzbekistan's most famous writers, Mamadali Makhmudov, was still in the Jaslyk prison camp in the north of the country. He was sentenced to 14 years in February 1999 for his association with the *Erk* party and its leader Mohammed Solih, suspected of being involved in the Tashkent bombings. Copies of an opposition newspaper *Erk* found in his possession served as the basis for his trial. He was severely ill-treated while in detention, and his family was not notified about his whereabouts when he was first imprisoned.²⁰

◆ Nilufar Hokimova (23) and Nafisa Aboskhodajeva (21) were sentenced to six years in prison for "Wahhabism" and alleged anti-state activity when they attempted to leave the country following the arrest, torture and convictions of their husbands.²¹

◆ On 17 July police detained Bahodir Hasanov, and refused to disclose his whereabouts, according to HRW. Hasanov, whose brother and father were political prisoners, had been detained by the police in February, September and November 1999 and subjected to torture.²²

◆ Muhamad Solih, leader of the banned *Erk* opposition party received a 15-year prison sentence on 17 November, and considered this a very lenient sentence: "Fifteen years are given to ordinary people, for example to my brother, he did nothing, he is innocent. Not only one, but all three

of my brother were given 10-15 years, they have nothing to do with politics. And Mamadali Mahmuud, only because he is my friend and because he went to Ukraine to see me, he was sentenced to 15 years."²³

Freedom of the Media

According to the Constitution of Uzbekistan and the law on the mass media, censorship was prohibited. However, self-censorship was prevalent, and the authorities exercised control over the media that was tantamount to censorship. Yearly licensing requirements, the discriminatory renewal of broadcast licences, heavy taxation and a lack of funding all discouraged the establishment of independent media.²⁴

The Government tightly controlled the print media in Uzbekistan. Criticism of the President was strictly forbidden, however, criticism of other government officials and parties was occasionally tolerated.²⁵ All but two newspapers were government owned and required approval from the Committee for the Control of State Secrets for all published news articles. The two private newspapers did not cover news. Increased pressure on privately owned television and radio stations by local and national authorities was reported. Government authorities closed or blacklisted stations that covered religion or politics and prevented them from obtaining licences. The State also attempted to control the Internet.²⁶

The head of the foundation for the democratisation of the mass media said that the Uzbek press was mostly "boring and unreadable" and many publications should be closed down. Most of the 440 papers and magazines had small circulations and were of poor quality. There were also problems with the distribution, as parts of the population had difficult access to printed mass media. He further went on to criticize the fact that 75 percent of the population were unaware of their rights, and that not even half of the laws were being applied.²⁷

Fair Trial

Trials were in general conducted without much regard to international standards, in particular when involving defendants charged with political or religious activity running contrary to the wishes of the authorities. Presumption of innocence and the right to legal counsel were ignored, and ill-treatment and torture were widespread in order to extract confessions.²⁸ Police held detainees *incommunicado* for up to six months, until after they had obtained a confession. Police and court house guards demanded bribes from relatives who wanted to give detainees food and medicine or sought to attend their relatives' trials.²⁹ Judges typically ignored the allegations of the use of torture,

◆ On 14 May one man was sentenced to death and 15 others up to 24 years in prison on charges of using terrorism to create an Islamic State. All defendants testified to having been tortured. Polvonnazar Khodzhayev was sentenced to death, after having admitted to charges of murder and theft, but denied wishing to create an Islamic State. Ismail Khasanov was sentenced to 24 years in prison for being involved in the killings of three high-level Uzbek officials and three forest rangers. Other defendants were accused of planning to blow up a water reservoir and of seizing a country residence of the President. All denied participating in terrorism.³⁰

There was never any information about arrests or trials in local media. It was not possible to find out when cases would be heard, and families were not informed about the whereabouts of the detainees.³¹

The courts conducted trials and handed out sentences, including death sentences, *in absentia*, which was in violation of international standards. The trials were often closed to local activists, relatives of the defendant and the general public. The Government often failed to provide any material evidence of the defendant's guilt. In one case³² only half a day was dedicated

to the defence of 12 men, provided by state-appointed lawyers.

Trials were grossly unfair, as judges systematically punished suspected "fundamentalists" with lengthy terms in prison allowing coerced self-incriminating statements as evidence as the basis for conviction. Family members were detained and arrested, in an attempt to force testimonies from the suspect. Women were often detained and threatened with rape in front of their husbands or sons in order to coerce self-incriminating statements.³³

◆ In 1999 Azim Khodjaev was arrested and jailed on false charges as punishment for his son's beliefs. He was tortured to death. In 2000, two of his sons were arrested; one was sentenced to death and the other awaited trial.

◆ Police officers visited Darmon Sultanova in her home and inquired who in the family studied Koran, and how many times a day they prayed. The officer's arrested Sultanova's sons, Uiguv and Oibek Ruzmetov on charges of "Wahhabism" and detained Sultanova and her husband. Police stripped the elderly woman naked and handcuffed her to a radiator in a basement cell. They brought in her sons, beaten and bloody, and threatened to rape their mother unless they confessed to a range of charges, including membership of a religious organization and several unsolved murders throughout the country. The 65-year old father who had also been severely beaten, was convicted without legal counsel on spurious charges of narcotics possession and was still in prison in September. Darmon Sultanova was released after her sons signed the confession, but was held on house arrest for the next 40 days.³⁴

◆ Bahodir Hasanov (38), was taken into custody on 18 July for the fourth time this year, and the authorities refused to give any information about where he was being held. All of Hasanov's family was being prosecuted for religious practices; his 27-year old brother and 70-year old father

were both religious prisoners. HRW claimed that all three had been severely ill-treated while in prison, and feared that Bahodir Hasanov was at risk of being tortured.³⁵

◆ On 21 June a regional court in eastern Namangan sentenced a group of ten people³⁶ to prison terms of between 7 and 16 years for "an attempt to overthrow the Government and constitutional system." The group, which included four women, and also Nosir Khojiyev, brother of the leader of the IMU, Juma Namangoni, was accused of being involved in religious and extremist movements. Ziyovuddin Karimov received the longest term, 16 years.³⁷

Torture Ill-treatment and Misconduct by Law Enforcement Officials

Uzbekistan failed to live up to its obligations to protect detainees from torture and to uphold international fair trial standards under the ICPPR as well as under the UN Convention against Torture, to both of which Uzbekistan acceded in 1995.

◆ On 6 September 15 men charged with membership in Hizb-ut-Tahrir were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 12-16 years. They were also charged with possession of banned religious literature, including a leaflet entitled "Uzbek Authorities are against Muslim Beliefs." In their letters sent from prison the men described how the police sodomized them with bottles and nightsticks, raped them and beat them in the kidneys, on the soles of their feet, and on their heads with truncheons and metal bars to the point where some lost consciousness. This was done in order to force them to testify against each other and to admit to the supposed crime of membership of an unregistered religious group. The accused recounted their ordeals during the trial, but were ignored.³⁸

◆ On 5 August NSS officers raided the house of Yodgor Sodikov and arrested his uncle Nahmiddin Djuvashev and himself. Djuvashev (of Kyrgyz nationality), was

sentenced to prison in 1999 for involvement with Hizb-ut-Tahrir, but was later released under surveillance. He went into hiding after militia officials had blackmailed him for money. In August 2000, he returned to his home upon which he and his nephew were detained by NSS officers and violently beaten. Sodikov was released after having signed a statement against his uncle. On 6 August Djuvashev was brought to hospital with severe brain concussion. The officers came to the hospital, brought him back to interrogation and threatened to kill him if he returned to the hospital.³⁹

◆ In April Vassily Evstigneev, brother of human rights activist Elena Urlaeva, was sentenced to six years by the Mirza Ulugbek District Court in Tashkent on allegedly fabricated charges, probably as a retaliation for his sister's human rights work. He was kept in the "red zone" UA 64/69 in Karshi town, and was in October transferred to a medical penitential facility in Tashkent in a serious condition. He had continuous haemorrhage, most likely caused by a common torture form in the "red zones," inserting a bottle into the victim's rectum. He had also told relatives that he had been severely beaten and tortured. On 6 November the manager of the medical facility did not allow his relatives to visit him.⁴⁰

◆ Numon Saidaminov (28) was arrested on 29 September and murdered during interrogation by a police officer in a cell in the basement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Tashkent. The body, which bore obvious marks of beatings, was transported to his home on 8 October. The police claimed he died of a heart problem - most likely following the ill-treatment as Numon Saidaminov had never previously had heart problems. He was married and had two children. During the burial ceremony, his house was surrounded by police. He had been charged with being a member of Hizb-ut-Tahrir. He denied it.⁴¹

◆ At least 15 prisoners were murdered in the prisons of Jaslyk and Kizltpa Karshi during 2000.⁴²

◆ On 20 October militia officer Nizom Astanov shot and killed Bobur Nazarov, the father of two children, near the market of micro district 3 in Jizak town. Nazarov was together with an acquaintance when they were halted by Astanov and his partner who demanded that the men produce their passports which they did not carry with them. Astanov pushed Nazarov, and his colleague hit the other man in the face and then shot him through the head. There were several witnesses to the incident, but the prosecutor refused to file charges against the officers, quoting a presidential decree stating that if a militiaman was assaulted, he had the right to use a gun in self-defence.⁴³

◆ Imprisoned Uzbek poet Mamadali Makhmudov (57) was reportedly in a dire physical condition and at possible risk of death, according to a statement by HRW released in June. Makhmudov was imprisoned in 1999 for supporting a banned opposition party. He was sentenced together with five others to 14 years in prison on trumped-up charges of participating in a criminal society and using the mass media to publicly insult the President of Uzbekistan. At his trial Makhmudov stated that he had been subjected to torture. Reports indicated that Makhmudov was in May transferred to the notorious Jaslyk prison camp, where he was said to suffer from pain in his chest, sides and back where he had been beaten, and to have lost consciousness in prison several times. He was reportedly ill-treated, and received inadequate food and medical treatment. Makhmudov was first arrested in 1994, when his house was raided and police planted a firearm as evidence that he was guilty of terrorism, a charge that was later dropped. Next he was charged with fraud and embezzlement and sentenced to four years in prison. He was later let off and released. In February 1999, plain clothes

agents arrested Mukhmudov on the street and held him incommunicado for three months. He reappeared in May to face the charges on which he was in prison as of this writing.⁴⁴

In a radio interview, human rights activist Vasil Inoyatova criticized the brutal treatment of prisoners, in particular of those imprisoned for their religious views. The conditions and the number of inmates in the notorious Jaslyk⁴⁵ prison, where practically all the prisoners were held for their religious views, was kept secret, and the prisoners were afraid to divulge information about their situation because they were afraid the authorities would subject their relatives to duress, which was regular practice. The prisoners were subjected to severe torture, and TB and other diseases were widespread. Apparently there were two prisons in Jaslyk, one holding approximately 250 prisoners, used as an adequate façade, where relatives could come and visit the inmates,⁴⁶ and another one, with 7,300 convicts. No relatives have ever visited this part of the prison camp, and it was surrounded by secrecy. The convicts were not allowed to send letters. Nobody is known to have ever been set free from Jaslyk prison.⁴⁷

Death Penalty

In 1998 the Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights in Uzbekistan, Sayora Rashidova, informed Amnesty International (AI) that Uzbekistan was following "a policy of abolishing the death penalty in stages."⁴⁸ On the contrary, death sentences and executions in Uzbekistan have reached an alarmingly high number with at least 56 death sentences and 20 executions known to AI between the beginning of 1999 and September 2000. The vast majority of these sentences were linked to the February 1999 Tashkent bombings. Since information about the death penalty was regarded as a state secret, the real numbers may have been much higher.⁴⁹

In November 1999 the UN Committee against Torture did not receive the requested statistics on death sentences and executions from the government delegation of Uzbekistan.⁵⁰

◆ On 31 March the Presidium of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan reversed the November 1999 death sentence passed on a young musician named Arsen Arutyunyan, citing mitigating factors and replacing it with a term of imprisonment. Arutyunyan and Danis Sirazhev, musicians in a well-known Uzbek pop group called "Al- Vakil," had been convicted of killing a female Uzbek singer, Laylo Aliyeva. The two men alleged that their confessions had been extracted under duress while they were in pre-trial detention, their lawyers reportedly received threats aimed at forcing them to step down from the case, their families were allegedly harassed, forcing some to leave the country. Observers reported that the first appeal hearing at the Supreme Court was unfair.⁵¹

◆ On 17 November a Tashkent court handed out death sentences *in absentia* to two IMU leaders, Takhir Yuldashev and Juma Namangani. Ten other defendants, including the exiled leader of the Erk opposition party, Muhamed Solih, received 12-20-year prison terms.⁵² Deputy Prosecutor General Erkin Kudratov had asked the Supreme Court to hand down death sentences to 10 out of the 12 defendants.⁵³

◆ 28-year-old Dmitry Chikunov, who had been sentenced to death by the Tashkent Regional Court in November 1999 for the killing of two men in April 1999, was executed in secret on 10 July in Tashkent. His mother was given the news when she came to visit him in prison two days later. The day before, at which time the execution had already taken place, she had been told by the guards that she could not see him and should come back the next day.⁵⁴ His death sentence was based on a confession reportedly extracted under torture.⁵⁵

◆ Uiguv and Oibek Ruymetov testified to having been ill-treated, but the judge did not investigate the allegations. The two men were declared to have taken part in "forbidden activities of a reactionary underground religious organization of Wahhabis" and found guilty on charges of murder, weapons possession and illegal religious activities. They were both sentenced to death. Darmon Sultanova received official documentation that the execution of her two sons by firing squad had been carried out. Another defendant on trial with the Ruzmetov brothers, Shohnazar Yakubov (25) was reported to have died from police torture in prison in October 1999.⁵⁶

Religious Intolerance

Article 29 of the Constitution stated: "Each person has the right to freedom of thought, speech, and belief. Each person has the right to seek, receive, and disseminate any information, with the exception of information directed against the existing constitutional order and other limitations established by law."⁵⁷

A 1998 law on Freedom of Conscience banned all religious activity not registered with the State. The law also outlawed proselytizing and religious dress in public. According to various sources, only in May 2000, thirty-five people were arrested in Tashkent, 10 in Samarkand, 40 in Andijan and 50 in Fergana for religious reasons.⁵⁸

Muslims

The crackdown on unsanctioned Islamic activity seemed to have unleashed a vicious circle, in which repression against Islamic believers, or anyone related to or sympathizing with Islamic believers, fuelled the insurgency of the IMU, leading to increased government harassment of religious activity.⁵⁹

According to official court documents, people were sentenced to lengthy jail sentences for practices including participation in unsanctioned prayer groups; conducting private religious teaching; membership of unregistered Islamic organizations; posses-

sion or distribution of literature of such an organization, or even sympathizing with the views of such an organization. Followers of *imams* who either criticized government policies, or failed to praise the Government during religious services, were arrested and sentenced on fabricated charges.⁶⁰

Very few alleged releases of Muslims were either never confirmed, or the persons in question was rearrested.⁶¹

The actions undertaken by the Government seemed to have a counter-productive impact: opposition to the Government was hardening as arbitrary arrests for suspected religious affiliation left tens of thousands relatives and friends of detainees embittered. Imprisoning suspected government opponents could ironically facilitate the spread of the anti-government activities, as jails could become schools for the movement.⁶²

◆ In the spring of 2000, illiterate farm labourer Jura Sattarov burnt three books of Islam, which were kept in his house in an attempt to avoid being branded as radical by the authorities. He was too late: the next day the police arrested his 20-year old son Muradjon, who eventually confessed to membership of a non-violent anti-government Islamic group. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison.⁶³

◆ Some university officials banned female students from wearing head scarves. This was not approved by the Committee on Religious Affairs, who viewed this as unfortunate for Uzbekistan's international reputation.⁶⁴

Christians

The Uzbek Government changed course in August 1999 and lifted the ban preventing dozens of religious minority communities from gaining registration. Since then the Committee on Religious Affairs pressed reluctant local authorities to register some religious communities that had been denied official status.

◆ However, in June 2000 a local official denied registration to a Baptist Church and

barred its denomination from using a collective farm to hold a summer camp, it was reported. Despite a Baptist presence in the town for over 100 years, a congregation in Gazalkent had its application for registration rejected as "undesirable" by the deputy head of the district of Bostanlyk near Tashkent. On the same day, the official, Khudoybergen Mirzamuratov, also barred the Evangelical Christian/Baptist (ECB) Union from holding a children's summer camp on a collective farm, despite the denomination's agreement with the farm's owner.⁶⁵

◆ Nicholai Rudinsky, a Christian leader in western Uzbekistan's autonomous Karakalpakstan region was jailed on 25 July, accused by local police of illegal drug possession. Rudinski was arrested just a few hours after Nukus police had closed down a church youth camp he helped organize. The officials claimed that the local church had "no right to operate a religious camp." The camp was the second of two youth camps held during July in a camping facility near Nukus and sponsored by the local legally registered Mir Presbyterian Church. Some 50 children had attended the first camp session without incident. Rudinski was reportedly beaten many times, he was very sick and needed medical help.⁶⁶

◆ Pentecostal pastor Rashid Turibayev was reported in September 2000 to have gone into hiding from the authorities.⁶⁷

Protection of Ethnic Minorities

There were allegations of discrimination against Kazakh nationals. The number of non-Uzbeks was difficult to estimate as many were forced to register themselves as ethnic Uzbeks, particularly state employees, who were otherwise threatened with losing their jobs. As a rule, ethnic Uzbeks got the better paid jobs, and it was extremely difficult for a minority member to make a career in the state structures. On the one hand, the President actively denounced nationalists in the press.⁶⁸

However, the Uzbek Government reportedly wrote to the Education Ministries of the other Central Asian States, requesting consignments of textbooks in the respective languages for use in Uzbek schools where these languages were instructed. Uzbekistan offered to provide Uzbek language text books for the Uzbek communities in the neighbouring States.⁶⁹

Human Rights Defenders⁷⁰

The Uzbek Government was waging a fierce campaign against local human rights activists. According to HRW, a dozen of the country's most active and outspoken rights defenders have been attacked.

Law enforcement officers arrested, beat, threatened and otherwise harassed human rights defenders in an effort to punish and silence them for their peaceful human rights activities. Following tactics unseen since the Stalin era, authorities forced several activists to attend public meetings in 1999 in which they were insulted and accused of "anti-state activity" by the speakers. Law enforcement agencies came down hardest on two unregistered human rights groups whose members were actively involved in documenting arbitrary arrests, torture, and unfair trials that have taken place during the extensive police crackdown following the 1999 bombings.

HRW reported the physical mistreatment of defenders by the police and law enforcement agencies' use of psychological harassment, including prolonged soli-

tary confinement, public denunciation, intimidation, intrusive police surveillance, and threats of arrest.

◆ Two of the country's most prominent human rights defenders, Mahbuba Kasyanova and Ismoil Adylov of the Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan, were sentenced to five and six years imprisonment, respectively, on wholly spurious charges. Adylov, who was convicted in August 1999, was missing in detention since prison authorities transferred him to an unknown location on 22 February 2000. He was seriously ill with a chronic kidney ailment and was denied access to medical treatment. The prison authorities also denied him the medicine provided by his family.

◆ On 7 March the Uzbek police confiscated materials from a HRW representative who was monitoring the trial at the Syrdarya District Court of 12 men accused of membership of the banned Muslim Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

◆ In July Kamoletdin Djuraevich Sattarov, a 30-year-old father of three young children, was convicted to nine years' imprisonment after "five leaflets" of a religious nature and "six filled forms and 11 empty forms from the international community of human rights" were found at his residence. The IHF contacts in Uzbekistan confirmed that these were forms emanating from and addressed to the UN Human Rights Committee. The mere possession of these forms was mentioned in several places in the court decision as a crime to be severely punished.⁷¹

Endnotes

- ¹ Abdumannob Polat, Chairman of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, quoted by Talib Yakubov, 8 January 2000.
- ² Bruce Pannier, RFE/RL, 12 January 2000.
- ³ RFE/RL, 21 January 2000.
- ⁴ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2001: Uzbekistan*.
- ⁵ *New York Times*, 29 October 2000.
- ⁶ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2001: Uzbekistan*.
- ⁷ Uzbek Television first channel, 16 April 2000, quoted by Eurasianet.
- ⁸ Hushtut, Havot, Tamahut, Zambik, name of last district is unknown.

- ⁹ Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan has a list of 39 names.
- ¹⁰ Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, 17 January 2001.
- ¹¹ Bruce Pannier, RFE/RL, 12 January 2000.
- ¹² RFE/RL, 29 August 2000.
- ¹³ Itar Tass, 6 September 2000.
- ¹⁴ RFE/RL, 25 August 2000.
- ¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, posted by EurasiaNet, 19 May 2000.
- ¹⁶ Human Rights Watch, 1 September 2000.
- ¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, posted by EurasiaNet, 19 May 2000.
- ¹⁸ Human Rights Watch presentation for the U.S. Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, 7 September 2000.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ International PEN Writers Committee, 29 November 1999; U.S. Rights Commission, 30 June 2000.
- ²¹ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2001*: Uzbekistan.
- ²² RFE/RL, 21 July 2000.
- ²³ Interview with Mohamad Solih, in Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mashhad, 20 November 2000, quoted by Eurasianet.
- ²⁴ OSCE/ODIHR, Uzbekistan: *Elections of Deputies to the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) 5 and 19 December 1999*, 28 March 2000.
- ²⁵ Human Rights Watch, 11 January 2000; Interview with Abbos Alimboyev, Head of the Foundation for the Democratisation of the Mass Media, in *Hurriyat*, Tashkent 10 March 2000, quoted by Eurasianet.
- ²⁶ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2001*: Uzbekistan.
- ²⁷ Interview with Abbos Alimboyev, Head of the Foundation for the Democratisation of the Mass Media, in *Hurriyat*, Tashkent 10 March 2000, quoted by Eurasianet.
- ²⁸ Human Rights Watch, 20 November 2000.
- ²⁹ *Human Rights Watch World Report 2001*: Uzbekistan.
- ³⁰ RFE/RL 15 May 2000; information from Human Rights Watch.
- ³¹ Human Rights Watch, posted by EurasiaNet, 19 May 2000.
- ³² 17 November ruling against, among others, the two leaders of IMU, Yuldashev and Namangani, and Mohamed Solih.
- ³³ Human Rights Watch in the U.S. Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, 7 September 2000.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Human Rights Watch, quoted in RFE/RL, 21 July 2000.
- ³⁶ Ziyovutdin Karimov, Qunduzkhon Ghofurova, Yoqub Abduqahhorov, Khalijon Sodiqov, Nosir Nuriddinov, Fotima Tumanova, Sanobar Tursunova, Dilbar Egamberdiyeva, Mamatqul Tumanov, Nosir Khojiyev.
- ³⁷ Uzbek Television first channel, 26 June 2000, quoted by Eurasianet; Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mashhad, 19 June 2000, quoted by Eurasianet.
- ³⁸ Human Rights Watch, in the U.S. Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, 7 September 2000.
- ³⁹ Djizak Regional Branch of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, 29 August 2000.
- ⁴⁰ Ramazan Dyrlydaev, Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights, 13 November 2000.
- ⁴¹ Letter from Hazratqul Khudojberdi, 27 October 2000.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Ramazan Dyrlydaev, Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights, 8 November 2000.
- ⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, 22 June 2000.

- ⁴⁵ Jaslyk prison camp (often referred to as concentration camp), on the Ust-Yurt plateau in Karakalpakstan in the north of Uzbekistan.
- ⁴⁶ This was allegedly organised prior to the presidential elections 9 January (Talib Yakubov, Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan).
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Vasila Inoyatova, in Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mashhad, 28 January 2000, quoted by Eurasianet.
- ⁴⁸ AI Index: EUR 62/07/00, 19 April 2000.
- ⁴⁹ Amnesty International, "Death Penalty News", September 2000.
- ⁵⁰ AI Index: EUR 62/07/00, 19 April 2000.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Human Rights Watch, 20 November 2000.
- ⁵³ RFE/RL, quoted by Eurasianet, 14 November 2000.
- ⁵⁴ AI Index: EUR 62/017/2000, 12 July 2000.
- ⁵⁵ Amnesty International, Death Penalty News, September 2000.
- ⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch in the U.S. Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, 7 September 2000; Amnesty International, EUR 62/014/2000, 12 July 2000.
- ⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Leaving No Witnesses," March 2000.
- ⁵⁸ Hazratqul Khudojberdi, Birlik, Uzbekistan, 6 July 2000.
- ⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch, 20 November 2000.
- ⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch in the U.S. Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, 7 September 2000.
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Human Rights Watch, posted by EurasiaNet 19 May 2000.
- ⁶³ The Associated Press, via 15 September 2000.
- ⁶⁴ RFE/RL, 19 September 2000.
- ⁶⁵ The Keston News Service, quoted by Human Rights without Frontiers, 2 June 2000.
- ⁶⁶ Human Rights Without Frontiers, *Compass Direct*, "Uzbek police jail another Christian: Arrest Follows Closure of Church Youth Camp in Nukus," 6 September 2000.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Novoye Pokoleniye, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 8 September 2000, quoted by Eurasianet.
- ⁶⁹ RFE/RL, 26 July 2000.
- ⁷⁰ Unless otherwise noted, based on Human Rights Watch/Europe and Central Asia Division, *Leaving No Witnesses: Uzbekistan's Campaign against Rights Defenders*, 28 March 2000.
- ⁷¹ IHF, "Uzbek Citizens Jailed for Possessing Documentation Forms from the UN," press release and open letter to Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 22 August 2000.