

URGENT ACTION

SERGEI NAUMOV RELEASED

Independent journalist Sergei Naumov was released on 3 October on completing his 12-day administrative sentence in Uzbekistan. He had been held incommunicado. He has thanked everyone who took action on his case.

The day after his release **Sergei Naumov**, a 50-year-old independent investigative journalist, gave an interview to the independent news agency Ferghana.ru. He thanked everyone who had appealed for his release. He confirmed that he had been detained in the Urgench temporary detention facility, in the north-west of the country, for 12 days after a summary trial where he had no representation. Sergei Naumov, an ethnic Russian, said that he was physically assaulted in the street near his home by an ethnic Uzbek woman who shouted anti-Russian abuse at him. He believes that his administrative detention may have been linked to his monitoring of the cotton harvest and intended to prevent him from meeting with International Labour Organization (ILO) monitors. Uzbekistan has been much criticized by human rights defenders for the use of forced labour (especially involving children) during cotton harvesting. Sergei Naumov has previously produced critical articles on the conditions in the cotton fields and has come under pressure from the authorities to stop his reporting. The authorities are anxious that no such evidence is discovered and brought to the attention of the international community.

Sergei Naumov had been detained by local police at his home in the city of Urgench, in Khorezm region, on 21 September. He was able to make one short mobile phone call at around 7pm local time from the local police station to tell his colleagues he had been detained. On 24 September a lawyer appointed by trusted colleagues to represent Sergei Naumov visited Urgench City Court, where he received court documents confirming that Sergei Naumov had been sentenced to 12 days of administrative detention under Article 183 of the Administrative Code of Uzbekistan ("Disorderly conduct and disturbing the peace") by the Urgench City Court on 21 September, the very day he was detained. Sergei Naumov had appeared before the court without legal representation. According to the court documents the charges against him relate to an incident on 21 September, when he purportedly bumped into a woman on a street in Urgench and proceeded to verbally insult and physically assault her. The woman reported him to the police on the grounds that he had not apologised to her. In the court documents Sergei Naumov is recorded as stating that he did accidentally bump into the woman, that he did not harass or assault her and that he categorically denies the charges against him. His lawyer is appealing against the sentence.

No one, even his lawyer, was able to get access to him during his detention.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor this case and take further action as necessary.

This is the second update of UA 262/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR62/008/2013/en>

Name: Sergey Naumov

Gender m/f: m

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