

August 10, 2001

**MEMORANDUM TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REGARDING RELIGIOUS
PERSECUTION IN UZBEKISTAN**

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum outlines Human Rights Watch's most pressing concerns about the systematic religious persecution of independent Muslims in today's Uzbekistan, where the government is pursuing a campaign of unlawful arrest, incommunicado detention, torture, unfair trials, and incarceration of non-violent believers.

Human Rights Watch has maintained an office in Tashkent since 1996, from which it has conducted research in eight provinces in Uzbekistan and all thirteen districts of Tashkent, compiling documentation on more than 800 individual cases of religious persecution and interviewing victims and their relatives in more than 200 of those cases. The evidence presented below is only a small portion of the documentation on Uzbek religious persecution gathered by Human Rights Watch during two years of monitoring trials, interviewing officials, lawyers, victims, and their relatives. It draws upon direct examination of evidence that ranges from court documents to the inspection of physical remains of victims evidently tortured to death in custody.

The government of Uzbekistan under President Islam Karimov contends that the affected persons are prosecuted and sentenced to lengthy prison terms because of their intent to overthrow the state or commit acts of terror. But of the thousands who have been detained, harassed, tortured, and imprisoned since the religious persecution intensified in 1999, only very few have been charged with specific violent acts; even more rarely have the authorities produced credible evidence to support charges of the use or advocacy of violence. Human Rights Watch is convinced that the measures against independent Muslims in Uzbekistan constitute religious persecution. This stems primarily from these individuals' adherence to—or in many cases, even their superficial interest in or exposure to the tenets of—certain variations of Islam unacceptable to the governing authorities.

The government's campaign against independent Muslims has far exceeded the bounds of legitimate security measures to enforce the law and to counter terrorism and other violence. In doing so it is in clear violation of international human rights standards, particularly the right to freedom of religion. The government continues to unlawfully arrest and detain people who pray in mosques not run by the government, who belong to Islamic groups not registered with the government, who possess Islamic literature not generated by the government, or who meet privately for prayer or Islamic study, singling them out for nothing more than the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs.

RECOMMENDATIONS: UZBEKISTAN AND THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

Human Rights Watch therefore urges the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to recommend that the Bush administration designate Uzbekistan as a “country of particular concern” for religious freedom, as provided under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA).

We further urge the Bush administration to designate Uzbekistan as a country of particular concern. Under IRFA section 405, such a designation would require the Bush administration to take appropriate action with regard to Uzbekistan including, but not limited to, public condemnation in bilateral and multilateral fora, and the conditioning of state or other visits and of financial or security assistance on Uzbekistan’s progress toward ending abuses outlined in this memorandum.¹

IRFA section 402 (b) requires the executive to designate as countries of particular concern those that “have engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom... during the preceding 12 months...” IRFA section 3 (13) includes in its definition of “violations of religious freedom” the detention, interrogation, and imprisonment of individuals “if committed on account of their religious belief or practice.” Under IRFA section 3 (11), “particularly severe violations of religious freedom” mean that the legal and practical suppression of religious beliefs is combined with systematic torture or “other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty or the security of persons.” As described below, these conditions are amply met in Uzbekistan, where in addition to torture and prolonged incommunicado detention and denial of due process of law the targets of the religious persecution campaign are subjected to public shaming, ostracism, and surveillance.

The U.S. government itself has repeatedly expressed concern about violations of religious freedom of independent Muslims in Uzbekistan. The *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for 2000 notes that in Uzbekistan: “The security forces arbitrarily arrested or detained pious Muslims...on false charges, frequently planting narcotics, weapons and forbidden literature on them.... The Government harassed and arrested hundreds of Islamic leaders and believers on questionable grounds, citing the threat of extremism.”²

¹ Section 402 mandates the executive to take certain actions against governments of countries of particular concern. These are enumerated in section 405 and may include: the withdrawal, limitation or suspension of development assistance in accordance with section 16 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; directing the Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or the Trade and Development Bank not to approve credits or other benefits; the withdrawal, limitation, or suspension of security assistance in accordance with section 502B with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; opposing loans by international financial institutions; denial or limiting of licenses for the export of certain goods; prohibiting any loan of more than U.S. \$10,000,000; and prohibiting the procurement or contracting for the procurement of goods.

² United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000*, February 2001.

The report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom for 2000 uncritically reported the Uzbek government's view on these matters: the Karimov government, it noted, "does not consider repression of these groups to be a matter of religious freedom, but instead to be directed against those who oppose the political order." In 1999 and 2000, the U.S. administration did not designate Uzbekistan a country of particular concern for religious freedom. We are pleased that the commission's report of May 2001 notes that Uzbekistan is a "serious violator" of religious freedom, but this does not bear the same consequences as designation as a country of particular concern. And the legal designation is warranted, because a constant feature of the current crackdown has been that those arrested are explicitly pursued and prosecuted *for* and *because of* their religious activity—whether individual or group prayer, Koranic study, or discussions or publications about their faith.

Below, we divide the abuses into the four main categories set out in IRFA as criteria for countries of particular concern for religious freedom: detention and arrest, extrajudicial executions (cases in which detainees have been tortured to death), torture more generally, and social punishment that recalls the Stalin-era practice of publicly humiliating and ostracizing those believed to espouse views inimical to the state.³

The victims and their relatives describe their activities as essentially studying Islam. Some, though not all, religious detainees support the reestablishment of the Caliphate (Islamic state) in Uzbekistan. Fundamentalist religious movements typically reject separation between the sacred and secular spheres, but this does not explain away the essentially religious nature of these movements. The U.S. government has, commendably, taken a strong stance against the persecution of the small Christian community in Uzbekistan. To overlook or misinterpret the anti-religious content of the government's campaign against independent Muslims cannot but create the impression for the Uzbek government—and others—that the U.S. is concerned only with Christian religious freedom and not with the rights of Muslim believers. It sends the unintended message that the U.S. government is willing to countenance the massive persecution of religious believers so long as that persecution is labeled anti-terrorist.

Human Rights Watch is well aware of the offensive content of some literature generated by independent Muslim organizations in Uzbekistan. Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), an organization whose leadership and members have been especially targeted since 1999, publishes tracts that are anti-Semitic, antithetical to the rights of women, and intolerant of others' beliefs. But the views of the U.S. government on this should not impede it from taking appropriate action on the Uzbek government's violation of religious believers' fundamental rights to physical integrity, due process of law, and freedom of expression—all subsumed under an attack on freedom of religion.

A NOTE ON ISLAM IN UZBEKISTAN

More than 80 percent of the population of Uzbekistan is Muslim; the vast majority adheres to the Hannafi school of Sunnism. During the Soviet era the Muslim

³ IRFA section 3 (11).

Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan controlled Islamic worship and study, regulating the registration of mosques, appointing imams to lead local congregations, and dictating the content of sermons and Islamic practice. The agency survived Uzbekistan's transition to independence in 1991, becoming the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan and retaining its responsibility for the regulation and restriction of the population's religious beliefs and practices. Independence gave rise to a revival of popular interest in Islam, which the government sought to use as a tool in building national identity and solidifying its monopoly on power.⁴ During this revival, some imams began to preach without deference to the Muslim Board, communities founded mosques that were not registered by the board, and a variety of Islamic literature not approved by the board became available. The brief period of relative tolerance came to an end in 1992 when the Karimov administration, having defeated its political rivals, turned its attention to Islam, which it apparently perceived as a similar threat to its hold on power.

BACKGROUND ON THE CAMPAIGN OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

The period 1992 to 1997, when the Uzbek government sought to establish strict state control over religious activity, was punctuated by sporadic arrests and “disappearances” of prominent independent Muslim leaders. The murders of several police officers and government officials in December 1997 in the province of Namangan provided the pretext for the Karimov government to crackdown more heavily on independent Islam, portraying it as a threat to the country’s stability. Authorities closed independent mosques, and began arresting Muslim believers for having attended religious services of imams who had run afoul of the government or for manifesting their faith by wearing beards. Hundreds arrested during this period remain in prison today.

The crackdown developed into a systematic, widescale campaign that intensified following the first significant incident of political violence in Uzbekistan—a series of bombings near government buildings in Tashkent in February 1999 that killed sixteen people and wounded more than one hundred. Police undertook mass sweeps of entire neighborhoods throughout the country, and the government expanded the targets of the repression to include relatives of suspected independent Muslims. Increasing numbers of men were sent to Jaslyk prison in Karakalpakstan, a place infamous for its harsh treatment of prisoners. In 1999 and 2000, Uzbek militants based abroad—known as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan—launched armed incursions into Uzbekistan and neighboring Kyrgyzstan. In 2000, the Karimov government used the fighting as another pretext to justify the continued arrests.

The government enacted laws restricting and forbidding certain peaceful religious practices and activities, in contravention of the International Covenant on Civil and

⁴ During glasnost and after independence, while many Uzbeks adopted Islam in name only, others began openly to observe holidays, rituals, and Friday prayers. Some, particularly younger Muslims, chose a stricter form religious education and adopted religious dress and other obligations prescribed by a conservative interpretation of Islam. Still others regarded Islam as the basis for an alternative social and political system, a religious state.

Political Rights, to which Uzbekistan is a party.⁵ Article 18 of the Covenant provides that:

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.... This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.⁶

A May 1998 Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations, together with amendments to Uzbekistan's criminal and administrative codes, bans all religious activity and organizations not registered with the state, including private religious education⁷ and the distribution of literature deemed "extremist,"⁸ and sets out criminal penalties for leaders who fail to register their groups.⁹ The 1998 law also forbids proselytizing and religious dress in public for non-clerics.¹⁰ In addition, under subsequent amendments to the criminal code, any manifestation of belief or exchange of information deemed by the state to have "religious extremist" content was subject to harsh penalties. Though police frequently plant evidence to facilitate prosecution on drugs or weapons charges—and invoke articles of the criminal code including attempts to overthrow the state¹¹—these clumsy tactics cannot conceal the religious basis of the persecution.

The government's campaign targets those perceived by the authorities to be adherents of "Wahhabism," a term suggesting a radical form of Islamic belief.¹² The government has misapplied this term to refer to religious observance that takes place outside strict state controls. Thus, the label is applied to those who engage in private prayer alone or with others or engage in the private study of religion, i.e. study beyond state oversight. The state also brands as "Wahhabi" any person suspected of following or having been associated with Muslim leaders who have displayed independence from or been critical of the government, specifically those who have favored the establishment of

⁵ Uzbekistan acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1995.

⁶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 18, paragraphs 1 and 2.

⁷ Article 9, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (hereinafter, "religion law").

⁸ Ibid, article 19.

⁹ Ibid, article 11.

¹⁰ Ibid, articles 5 and 14, respectively.

¹¹ Article 159 of the criminal code.

¹² In Central Asia, the term "Wahhabism" refers to "Islamic fundamentalism" and extremism. Discrepancy exists among the definitions of "Wahhabism," however. Historically, "Wahhabism" is a branch of Sunnism practiced in Saudi Arabia and named after its founder, Islamic scholar Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. The eighteenth-century movement known as "Wahhabism" advocated a conservative agenda of purifying the Muslim faith and simultaneously encouraged independent thinking, a potentially liberal stance.

The term is used in Central Asia to suggest radicalism and militancy. It is often used pejoratively. The Central Asian conception of "Wahhabism" retains a linkage to "foreignness" in general, including to Saudi Arabia.

an Islamic state in the territory of Uzbekistan or the incorporation of Shari'a as the law of the land. Those who proselytize for strict observance of Muslim prayer or who learn Arabic to study the Koran in the original are labeled "Wahhabis," as are men who grow beards as a mark of piety and women who wear certain kinds of headscarves.

Aside from "Wahhabism" and its supposed leaders, the government targets specific Islamic organizations, primarily the unregistered group Hizb ut-Tahrir, which it has defined as an "illegal religious organization." The group espouses the creation of a Caliphate, or Islamic state, through peaceful means. Memorial, the Russian human rights group, has estimated that more than half of the 1,042 religiously and politically motivated arrests that had been documented for the period January 1999 through April 2000 involved people accused of Hizb ut-Tahrir membership.¹³ In nearly all of the hundreds of Hizb ut-Tahrir cases reviewed by Human Rights Watch, as in the vast majority of the thousands of cases of people caught up in the crackdown, the state did not accuse Hizb ut-Tahrir members of involvement in any violent act, much less prove that they were involved in violence, and further failed to show that belief in an Islamic form of government was tantamount to action to overthrow the Karimov administration.

UNLAWFUL ARRESTS AND PROSECUTIONS: 1999-2001

In April 1999, stepping up anti-dissident rhetoric in the wake of the February bombings, President Karimov publicly vowed to deal harshly with perceived enemies of the state—and with their entire families if necessary. He said, "The fathers who have brought them up will be brought to account together with their children. If necessary, I will sign a decree on this."¹⁴ The president did not have to sign a decree; the head of the country's law enforcement agency treated his words themselves as law, and almost immediately declared that the state would exact severe punishment on members of "dogmatic and extremist groups" who failed to surrender to police, and on their fathers.¹⁵

Once arrested, independent Muslims faced torture in pre-trial detention, including sustained physical torture and various forms of psychological abuse, including threats against and detention of their nearest relatives. Torture was facilitated by long periods of incommunicado detention, from several weeks to several months, during which lawyers and relatives could neither offer aid nor verify a detainee's physical state. Those arrested were most commonly charged with attempted overthrow of the constitutional order,¹⁶ preparation, possession or distribution of materials containing ideas of religious extremism, separatism, or fundamentalism,¹⁷ and membership in a forbidden religious organization.¹⁸

¹³ Human Rights Center "Memorial" and the Information Center for Human Rights in Central Asia, *List of Individuals Arrested and Convicted on Political and Religious Grounds in Uzbekistan (January 1999-April 2000)*, Moscow, May 2000.

¹⁴ Uzbek television first channel, April 1, 1999, carried by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, April 3, 1999.

¹⁵ Minister of Internal Affairs Zokirjon Almatov, Uzbek television first channel, April 4, 1999, carried by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, April 5, 1999.

¹⁶ Article 159 of the criminal code.

¹⁷ Article 244-1 of the criminal code.

¹⁸ Article 216 of the criminal code.

Unfair trials followed: legal counsel was frequently obstructed or denied; judges routinely accepted coerced confessions, ignored recantations, and refused to hear evidence of the torture used to extract self-incriminating statements. Convictions were handed down, even in the face of risibly inadequate or planted evidence—two bullets, five bullets, or some pamphlets, “discovered” on a third or fourth inspection of a home. Sentences ranged up to twenty years in prison. Prison conditions were inhumane, and prisoners suffered ill treatment and torture.

Group Trials

Arrests and trials of groups of detainees as alleged co-conspirators have been common since 1999, with a rough average of fifteen people prosecuted together. This method of prosecution suggests an urgency to produce convictions and to move large numbers of detainees through the judicial system; it also permits prosecutors to focus on one main defendant, coerce other defendants into accusing him of serious crimes, and then accuse those lesser defendants of association with him and with failing to inform the authorities of his illegal activities. Some examples follow.

- Thirteen men were tried in June and July 1999 for activities that—even according to the prosecution—involved no more than the exchange of ideas about religion; the state did not charge them with violation of any other article of the criminal code. Defendant Danior Hojimetov argued in court, “Each citizen has the right to express his views. We expressed ideas against the constitution, but I think this is freedom of expression.”¹⁹ He was sentenced to twelve years in prison.

- In another group case, involving twelve defendants, Judge Akmadjonov of the Tashkent City Court explained their crimes as follows: “[T]hey said they did not carry out actions against the government...but it is evident that this propaganda itself is against the constitution of Uzbekistan.”²⁰ The propaganda in question was the literature of Hizb ut-Tahrir, which espouses an Islamic state established through peaceful means. The judge did not accept the defendants’ testimony that the literature they had read and exchanged with others did not contain anti-state or anti-government ideas. He found—based on a report by the government’s Committee on Religious Affairs analyzing the literature’s content—that membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir constituted anti-state activity in itself, thus criminalizing nonviolent beliefs and association.

- In an August 23, 1999 judgment of the Andijan Regional Court, twenty-six men were convicted on charges related to their alleged membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir and sentenced to between three and eighteen years of imprisonment.²¹ The court also declared that Hizb ut-Tahrir was a terrorist organization, although the organization’s written materials espouse nonviolence and none of the defendants had been charged with involvement in a violent act.²²

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript, Chilanzar District Court hearing, July 9, 1999.

²⁰ Tashkent City Court hearing, Tashkent, May 14, 1999. Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript.

²¹ Human Rights Center “Memorial” and the Information Center for Human Rights in Uzbekistan, *List of Individuals Arrested and Convicted*.

²² *Kriminalnye Vesti Fergany*, February 8, 2000, as reported in BBC Worldwide Monitoring, February 14, 2000.

Criminal Prosecution for Religious Literature, Ideas, and Practices

Judicial authorities, government leaders, and official Muslim clerics have called on observant Muslims to restrict their study of Islam to that which is offered by state institutions. Where people have participated in Hizb ut-Tahrir study groups, reading traditional texts as well as the group's own literature, the authorities have retaliated. While these accusations feature in most Hizb ut-Tahrir trials, the following cases are illustrative:

- Shokhnoza Musaeva, twenty-nine and a mother of two, was sentenced to seven years in prison in August 1999 for teaching other young women about Islam and belonging to Hizb ut-Tahrir. She was convicted of attempting violently to overthrow the state²³ and of membership in a forbidden religious organization,²⁴ the evidence consisting solely of her membership in the group, the use, possession and sale of Islamic literature, and the alleged proposals to create an Islamic state contained in that literature.²⁵

- Abdusalam Sattarov's supposed crimes consisted primarily of studying Islam and exchanging ideas, for which he was sentenced to nine years in prison, later reduced on appeal to eight years. The original verdict stated: "...[H]e read religious literature and started to come to implement the ideas of Hizb ut-Tahrir. He was offered the post of *mushrif* [a position of responsibility within the organization] and propagandized. He agrees with the path of the party and will remain faithful to it."²⁶

- The study of Islam also figured largely in the state's allegations against Bekzod Juraev, Sattarov's co-defendant. As the judge stated: "[H]e took lessons on party ideas and studied Islam and, in his own house, he later gave some lectures on Islam. He feels that the party ideas are correct and not against the government."²⁷ His sentence of eighteen years was reduced by the Supreme Court to fifteen.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's advocacy of an Islamic state is officially conflated with active attempts to overthrow the current government, as when Judge Rakhmonov of the Chilanzar District Court declared the thirteen defendants guilty of anti-state activity because: "They said the democratic system is not good and Shari'a should be established instead through a Caliphate."²⁸ Even prayer, in itself, draws suspicion and has been cited in court as evidence of subversive intent: in his verdict condemning alleged Hizb ut-Tahrir member Abduvali Guliamov to eighteen years in prison, Judge Mansrur Akhmadjonov declared: "He confessed that in 1996 he started to pray."²⁹

²³ Article 159 part 3 of the criminal code.

²⁴ Article 216 of the criminal code.

²⁵ Verdict of Urta-Chirchik District Court, issued by Judge T. Sh. Zainutdinov, August 12, 1999.

²⁶ Tashkent City Court hearing, Tashkent, May 14, 1999. Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Chilanzar District Court hearing, July 20, 1999. Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript.

²⁹ Tashkent City Court hearing, Tashkent, May 14, 1999. Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript. Other charges against Guliamov included dissemination of Hizb ut-Tahrir literature and illegal possession of narcotics and a grenade. His sentence was reduced to fifteen years by the Supreme Court.

Guilt by Association: the Persecution of Family Members and Followers of “Religious Extremists”

As noted above, President Karimov threatened in 1999 to punish the parents of “religious extremists.” Uzbek authorities have followed through on this threat. A rights activist from Fergana City in the Fergana Valley told Human Rights Watch in February 2001 that police there routinely detain relatives of religious suspects being sought by police, and that the campaign to arrest and detain relatives of suspects had been stepped up dramatically following government leaders’ announcements that parents would answer for their children’s activities.³⁰

This threat has been carried out and extended beyond immediate relatives to, in some cases, people having any connection with a disgraced cleric. Imam Obidhon Nazarov, well known during the mid-1990s as a popular and independent-minded religious leader and—by official appointment—imam of Tokhtaboi mosque in Tashkent, lost official favor when he began to speak openly about the 1995 forced “disappearance” of another imam, Abduvali Mirzoev. Nazarov—whose own current whereabouts are unknown—was removed from his post, and he and his family suffered years of increasing harassment. Two of his brothers were arrested in 1997 and 1999; his wife was detained in February 1999; his wife and mother have been compelled to appear at a series of public denunciations or “hate rallies” (see below, “Social Punishment”). From 1997 to the present, literally hundreds of young men who attended his services in the mid-1990s have been arrested and convicted on charges of narcotics and weapons possession. Local rights activist Mikhail Ardzinov estimates that police have arrested some 400 to 500 active supporters of Imam Nazarov since late 1997;³¹ rights defender Vasila Inoiatova put this estimate at thousands.³²

- Nazarov’s former deputy, Imam Abduvahid Yuldashev, was arrested in 1999, convicted, and released on parole. He was rearrested in July 2000 and held incommunicado for more than five months at Tashkent police headquarters, where he was beaten and charged with “attempted violent overthrow of the government”—in a case largely based on the allegation that the lessons he gave on the Koran and other Islamic texts while serving as a state-appointed imam were actually lessons in “Wahhabism” and calls for jihad. He was sentenced to nineteen years in prison.

- Law enforcement agencies have also targeted religious leaders only loosely associated with Nazarov, such as Abdurahim Abdurahmonov, who had gone to Nazarov for advice and to hear his sermons at Tokhtaboi mosque. Abdurahmonov was detained twice in 1998; he was so badly beaten on the second occasion that, when his wife next saw him (he was brought by police for a search of their home), he could hardly stand. He was amnestied at the end of 1998 but had suffered such severe nerve damage to his spine that he (a thirty-year-old) could no longer sit or stand upright.³³ Compelled to report to

³⁰ Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, February 27, 2001.

³¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Mikhail Ardzinov, chair of the Independent Human Rights Organization of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, March 9, 2001.

³² Human Rights Watch interview with Vasila Inoiatova, Uzbek human rights defender, Tashkent, March 8, 2001.

³³ Human Rights Watch interview with his wife, Muborak Abdurahmonova, Tashkent, May 26, 2000.

police for questioning after his release, he refused to serve as an informant and was detained again in April 2000 and held incommunicado for two months, the entire pre-trial investigation period.³⁴ The family had difficulty hiring a lawyer to defend him, as lawyers expressed fear of taking “religious cases.”³⁵ The state’s indictment charged that Abdurahmonov was part of a criminal group along with Imam Nazarov and that he had directly participated in the February 1999 bombings—although, as one observer at the trial said, at that time he “had internal injuries and could not even walk for months, he coughed and lay in bed for months.” Though the imam had “confessed” during the months of incommunicado detention, he recanted this confession at his trial. The verdict pointed to no specific criminal act.³⁶ But Abdurahmonov was sentenced to seventeen years in a strict prison regime, convicted of inciting ethnic, racial or religious enmity, attempted violent overthrow of the state, and establishment of an armed criminal group, among other charges. A twenty-minute appeal hearing in Tashkent City Court upheld the sentence.

Induced to “Repent”

In April 1999, President Karimov promised leniency and forgiveness to those “religious extremists” who would come forth and turn themselves in voluntarily.³⁷ Hundreds of men who accordingly declared they had renounced their religious feelings or affiliations begged for forgiveness and pledged their loyalty to the state were rewarded with incommunicado detention, torture, and lengthy terms in prison.

- The case of Nakhmiddin Juvashv is a poignant example of what happened to such men. In early 1999 this observant Muslim and member of Hizb ut-Tahrir turned himself in, offering a written statement requesting forgiveness and leniency. He was arrested and his house searched. According to a relative who was present, police inspected the house three times before claiming to find bullets among Juvashv’s possessions; this is a common scenario in cases researched by Human Rights Watch.³⁸ In custody, Juvashv suffered savage torture, which was used to elicit a confession that he had attempted to undermine the constitution, in violation of article 159 of the criminal code.³⁹ Sentenced to nine years of imprisonment on the basis of that self-incriminating

³⁴ Ibid; also Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, August 1, 2000.

³⁵ According to the attorney who accepted the imam’s case, “Lawyers don’t want to take these...cases because their phones are tapped and they are followed.” Human Rights Watch interview with Mukhtabar Hasanova, Tashkent, August 8, 2000.

³⁶ For example, the verdict states that Abdurahmonov “supported” a call to establish an organization called Tizhoratchi (tradesmen) and that this group’s members sent 500 men to military training camps abroad. But Abdurahmonov himself is not named as a member of the group, is not alleged to have sent anyone to a military camp, and his “support” of the group is not given elaboration in the verdict. The verdict asserts that the imam conspired with others to explode a water reservoir in Charvok, but again points to no specific act to uphold this statement. Verdict in Akmal Ikramov District Court, issued by Judge F. B. Shukurov, July 7, 2000.

³⁷ In a press conference given on April 1, 1999, President Karimov said, “As president and leader, I promise that we will forgive those who give themselves up.” Uzbek television first channel, April 1, 1999, reported by BBC Worldwide Monitoring April 3, 1999.

³⁸ Letter to Human Rights Watch from Juvashv’s wife, November 1, 2000.

³⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Juvashv’s second lawyer, name withheld, Jizzakh, July 2 1999; also Human Rights Center “Memorial” and Information Center for Human Rights in Central Asia, *List of Individuals Arrested and Convicted*.

statement, he was released on parole after an appeal to the Supreme Court, in August 1999. Three months later, Jizzakh police compelled him to pay them a large bribe by threatening to detain him; once paid, they detained him anyway, and upon his release, he fled Jizzakh. In August 2000, officers of the National Security Service (SNB) rearrested him, along with a nephew, and tortured them both. (For common torture methods, see below, “Torture.”) His family was prevented from seeing him for more than two months. In January 2001 Juvashev and his brother, Idrisbek Umarkulov, were sentenced to fourteen years and six years in prison, respectively.

Arrests Across State Borders and Requests for Extradition

The Uzbek government has sought the arrest abroad of religious leaders branded “Wahhabis” or leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir. In some cases, they have made extradition requests to compliant states, including Russia. In others, the government has sent its own agents to kidnap and bring the suspects to Uzbekistan.

- Kyrgyz citizen Imam Yuldash Tursunbaev, who served as a spiritual leader in Uzbekistan from 1989 to 1996, was apprehended in Kyrgyzstan by Uzbek state agents in August 1999.⁴⁰ He was held incommunicado in Uzbekistan for more than three months and interrogated without benefit of counsel. He “disappeared” for a period: state agents denied arresting him until late September, despite eyewitness testimony of the apprehension.⁴¹ He was then convicted in a closed trial session inside Tashkent’s remand prison. The state charged him with being a “Wahhabi” and aligned with militants. He admitted affiliation with Tavba, one of the groups named in the indictment, but at the time of his membership the group had been legal and according to him, nonviolent and nonpolitical.⁴² He was also charged, oddly, with not confining himself to secular subjects while serving as religious leader in Namangan.⁴³ Convicted of attempting to commit terrorism, incitement of ethnic, racial or religious enmity, attempted violent overthrow of the state, and several other counts of criminal code violations, he was sentenced to twenty years in prison.⁴⁴

- Accused Hizb ut-Tahrir leader Nodir Aliev, a citizen of Uzbekistan who had resided in Russia, was detained in Moscow by Russian police on May 28, 2001. Russian authorities held him incommunicado for two weeks—ignoring protests launched by his lawyer and rights groups—before agreeing to extradite him to Uzbekistan on June 9, 2001. He was transferred directly to the SNB in Tashkent, where he was charged with distribution of Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflets and attempted overthrow of the state, an allegation

⁴⁰ At the beginning of the 1990s, he had presided over the congregation of the Otallohon mosque in Namangan, a place of worship later labeled “Wahhabi” by the Karimov government.

⁴¹ Written statements of three eyewitnesses, dated January 17, 2000, on file at Human Rights Watch; verdict of the Tashkent Province Court, issued by Judge Mansura Jalilova, February 29, 2000.

⁴² Written report by the Kyrgyz rights group Justice, February 3, 2000. According to Vasila Inoiatova, the Tavba (Repentance) party was established in Baku in 1991 and had as its stated aim the unification of Muslim branches. Human Rights Watch interview with Vasila Inoiatova, Tashkent, March 8, 2001.

⁴³ The prosecution specifically charged that he had “gathered...people of religious-extremist mood in the Otallohon mosque and, instead of teaching secular science, started teaching them views of establishing an Islamic state.” Indictment against Yuldash Tursunbaev, issued by Senior Police Investigator of Special Criminal Affairs R. A. Gafurov, December 28, 1999.

⁴⁴ Verdict of the Tashkent Province Court, issued by Judge Mansura Jalilova, February 29, 2000.

carrying a possible sentence of twenty years in prison. As of this writing, Aliev is in SNB custody.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS

Numerous religious prisoners have died while in custody in Uzbek detention centers and prisons. In some cases witness testimony obtained by Human Rights Watch supports allegations that they died due to torture. Other deaths occurred under unclear circumstances, but the authorities' refusal to allow the family to view the body—even for the Muslim rite of washing the body for burial—give firm grounds for fear of torture or other ill-treatment as the cause of death.⁴⁵

- Accused Hizb ut-Tahrir leader Nu'mon Saidaminov, aged twenty-eight, was evidently tortured to death in custody in October 2000. When his body was washed in preparation for burial, observers reported, he was seen to be covered with open wounds and bruises; his fingernails were blackened; there were puncture wounds in his fingers; his eyes were blacked; the soles of his feet showed marks. He also bore injuries to buttocks and anus consistent with sodomy.⁴⁶

Authorities arrested Saidaminov on September 29, 2000, and on October 6 denied his lawyer access to Saidaminov. On October 8, they informed his parents that he was dead. The official cause of death reported to the parents was a heart attack.⁴⁷

Others who have met this fate include:

- Farkhod Usmonov, son of a well-known imam, detained for alleged possession of a Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflet, June 14, 1999. Held incommunicado, he died in police detention on or before June 24. The official cause of death was heart failure. When authorities returned his body to his family on June 25, it showed large contusions and cuts on the torso and other areas of the body. A Human Rights Watch representative viewed the body.

- Rustam Norbabaev, arrested by police in Kashkadaria on March 13, 2000; died in detention five days later. Police claimed he hanged himself in his cell; a police investigation was said to have confirmed this, and the case was closed, but relatives claimed that when the body was washed for burial it bore marks inconsistent with the police report.⁴⁸ Police had detained his three brothers also—Bahrom, Ergash, and Parda—and all four were allegedly tortured in the Yakkabaga district police department

⁴⁵ The Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, ECOSOC resolution 1989/65, of May 24, 1989, includes in its definition of execution, "situations in which deaths occur in custody." Principle 1.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch interview, name and date withheld, Tashkent.

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch interview, name and date withheld, Tashkent.

⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Tolib Iakubov, head of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, May 1, 2000; and World Organization Against Torture request for urgent intervention, Case UZB 030400, April 3, 2000.

in Kashkadaria province; Norbabaev's brothers were allegedly beaten in order to force them to give testimony against him.⁴⁹

- Azim Khojaev, father of several men sought by police on religious and political grounds, arrested April 4, 1999. He was sentenced to eight years in prison, in a trial that lasted one-half hour, and sent to Jaslyk. On July 13 police returned his body to his family; the official cause of death was "acute failure of the left stomach," and the date of death was given as July 2.⁵⁰ Police transported the body in secrecy and did not permit relatives to see it, washing it themselves.⁵¹

- Nematjon Karimov, who died in Navoi prison on March 22, 1999. Prison officials provided no death certificate, informing the family orally that he died from "organ failure." When his family retrieved the body from the town morgue, workers at first refused to let them perform the rite of washing it for burial but relented after they were given money. At first, his relatives did not recognize the dead man: the body was covered in blood, the top of the head was concave, and there were places where the skull was missing; his face was cut and bruised, and skin was torn off on the right side. To the left of the mouth there was a large scar, while his upper teeth were loose, pointing inwards, and his lower teeth pointed outwards.⁵² They finally identified him from a tattoo on his hand.

As noted in our December 2000 report on torture in Uzbekistan, other religious prisoners who have died in custody, evidently from torture in pre-trial detention include:

- Imam Kobil Murodov (October 1998);
- Ulugbek Rustamovich Anvarov (July 1999);
- Hasan Umarliev (April or May 1999);

Those who died while serving a sentence included:

- Shikhnozov Iakubov (October 1999);
- Usmanali Khamrokulov (May 2000); and
- Ma'raim Alikulov (April 2000).⁵³

Human Rights Watch has documented three more cases of deaths in custody in addition to those published in the 2000 report; all three had been incarcerated in Jaslyk prison. They were:

- Dilmurod Umarov (July 2000), who was convicted in 1999 for membership in a forbidden religious group, distribution of that group's literature and alleged attempt to

⁴⁹ World Organization Against Torture, request for urgent intervention.

⁵⁰ Death certificate on file with Human Rights Watch.

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch interview, name and place withheld, May 9, 2000.

⁵² Human Rights Watch interview with Uzbek rights activist Muzafar Isakhov, member of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, April 11, 2000; Human Rights Watch interview with Sabine Freizer, Human Dimension Expert, Central Asia Liaison Office of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Tashkent, April 14, 2000.

⁵³ See Human Rights Watch, "And It Was Hell All Over Again...": *Torture in Uzbekistan. A Human Rights Watch Report*, vol. 12, no. 12(D), December 2000, Appendix 1.

overthrow the constitutional order. Prison authorities listed the official cause of death as tuberculosis, but relatives claimed his body was covered with bruises.

- Hikmatilla Hudoiberdiev (July 2000), a leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir who was convicted of narcotics possession and sentenced to ten years. He was buried in a closed coffin, under the orders of the authorities; and

- Abduaziz Rasulov (July/August 2000), who was arrested in 1999 as part of the mass sweeps of suspects in the 1999 Tashkent bombings, but was convicted of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir. Officials claimed he hanged himself in his cell.

TORTURE

Religious detainees are savagely and routinely tortured to produce self-incriminating statements, which are routinely used in court and are frequently the most coherent “evidence” against them. Judges also ignore or contradict the attempts of detainees to recant these statements or denounce their torturers. For example:

- Prior to the July and August 2000 trial of seventeen men on charges of “Wahhabism,” the defendants were held by police and tortured over several months. Gafurjon Toirov testified in court that he was tortured for more than two months, that officers had beaten him on the bottoms of his feet and that the white clothes he had been wearing—he had just returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca—were covered with blood.⁵⁴ While beating defendant Azgam Astankulov, police allegedly concentrated their blows on the young man’s already injured kidneys, due to which, according to one source, Astankulov agreed to sign a confession.⁵⁵ Gairat Sabirov was allegedly burned with cigarettes and subsequently raped in custody; investigators also allegedly threatened to rape his wife if he refused to give a self-incriminating statement.⁵⁶ Once transferred from custody of the National Security Service (SNB) to Tashkent police headquarters in January 2000, Sabirov continued to be tortured; a state appointed lawyer allegedly requested medicine for him from his family on January 10, as well as dark trousers to replace his bloodied white ones.⁵⁷ Sabirov was kept incommunicado in the basement of police headquarters in Tashkent for sixty-eight days.⁵⁸ Dismissing his and other defendants’ detailed allegations of torture, Judge Sharipov of the Tashkent City Court declared on the day of the verdict, “No one tortured them. There was no written complaint that they were tortured. When they were asked, they couldn’t name their torturers...[W]e consider their testimony [on torture] as having no grounds.”⁵⁹

Beatings routinely include punches and kicks from the initial moments of arrest to frighten and subdue the detainee, then prolonged beatings to coerce a “confession” or produce names. Truncheons or rods are often used: several victims have reported being hit with wooden poles or bats covered with protruding nails, which produce myriad

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, August 4, 2001.

⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, August 14, 2000.

⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, August 4, 2000; and Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, August 21, 2000.

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, August 14, 2000.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Tashkent City Court hearing, August 21, 2000. Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript.

bleeding wounds all over the body.⁶⁰ Police often concentrate on the kidney area, thus leaving bruises that are less visible than those on face and arms, but inflicting severe pain and potentially causing lasting damage. The soles of the feet are also a favored target. During beatings detainees are commonly handcuffed to radiators or may have one arm cuffed to a high bar or fixture so that they are unable to sit, bend, or otherwise shield themselves from blows or kicks. Police suspend some victims by their wrists, hands cuffed behind their backs, at a height at which their toes may just reach the ground, such that they are unable to support their full weight on their feet.⁶¹

Sometimes the purpose of the beating is to silence a detainee about his mistreatment.

- When Nakhmiddin Juvashv (see above, “Arrests and Prosecutions”) was first detained, he suffered repeated and severe beatings, was denied access to his lawyer, and held incommunicado for almost two months. Transferred to a detention facility and held there from March 16 to April 6, 1999, he was beaten further while handcuffed for three to four days.⁶² When his lawyer finally saw him and the signs of his ill treatment, he wrote a letter to the Jizzakh procurator asking for a medical exam and an investigation. Juvashv received a visit from a deputy procurator; then his abusers retaliated, cuffing and hanging him from a horizontal bar and beating him with truncheons for over three hours, to force him to say he had not been beaten previously. “With the aid of this kind of torture, humiliation and threat [the SNB investigator in charge] forced me to write a dictated letter stating that I supposedly broke my leg and received a massive number of bruises on my body from falling off the second tier bunk, and not from their having beaten me,” Juvashv alleged.⁶³

When he persisted in trying to hold his abusers accountable, they persisted in their punishment. At his trial he described the torture, such that the judge questioned the SNB officer, who denied any malfeasance. The judge concluded that no beating had occurred and sentenced Juvashv to nine years in prison on the basis of his self-incriminating statements.

Paroled by the Supreme Court in August 1999, then rearrested, Juvashv was tortured again; his attorney complained of seeing him with bruised face and right eye and marks all over his body.⁶⁴ Again Juvashv stated in court that he had been beaten—in this case, for two weeks continuously in SNB custody. He was sentenced to fourteen years in prison on January 15, 2001 for anti-state activities. Juvashv, it should be remembered, had fallen into police hands originally because he had voluntarily come forward to seek “forgiveness.”

⁶⁰ Written testimony to the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, August 2000, on file with Human Rights Watch.

⁶¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Uzbek rights defender Hashimbek Irisbaev, Tashkent, May 24, 1999. Irisbaev recounted the testimony of several of the men, sentenced to prison by the Tashkent City Court on May 14, 1999 for anti-state activity, who described being subjected to this treatment.

⁶² Written complaint to Judge Bahriddin Norkhudjaev of the Jizzakh Provincial Court, from Nakhmiddin Juvashv, June 25, 1999.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Letter to Jizzakh Procurator M. Atabaev from Erkin Juraev, Juvashv’s attorney, undated.

Another means of torture, electric shock, is administered through electrodes strapped to the victim's body, or by electric baton or cattle prod. The SNB in particular uses this method.

- The mother of a defendant in a 1999 Tashkent City Court group case told Human Rights Watch that when she first saw her son in custody he seemed paralyzed with fear; at their second meeting he told her he had been tortured with electric shock at the Ministry of Internal Affairs headquarters in Tashkent. "I asked him why he had confessed, then he showed me his neck, and there were about forty scars on it," she said.⁶⁵

- Thirty-year-old Komoliddin Sattarov, from Andijan province in the Fergana Valley, was arrested in February 2000 for alleged possession of Hizb ut-Tahrir leaflets, following his elder brother Murodjon's conviction for membership in the group. Andijan-based rights defender Muzafar Isakhov summarized some of the young man's court testimony of his torture by police: "He stuck it out for the first one or two days, but then they used electric shock.... They put him in a chair and strapped electrodes to his hands, feet, and neck and gave him electric shock. He lost consciousness and then they did it again. He confessed to some of the charges. Then they began to beat him with truncheons, and he agreed to sign everything."⁶⁶

Police investigators and prisoners working with them commit and threaten to commit acts of sexual violence, including rape and severe beatings to the genital area; this is practiced against both male and female detainees and is believed to be used to terrorize and humiliate as well as to inflict physical harm. As reported by Human Rights Watch in our December 2000 report on torture in Uzbekistan, several persons interviewed had witnessed a torture method known as "sitting on a bottle"—the forcible insertion of a glass bottle into the victim's rectum; many of the former detainees interviewed had heard of this method or been threatened with it, and described it with particular anxiety.⁶⁷ Several defendants convicted in September 2000 on charges of religious extremism described being raped: Ma'rufkhoja Umarov stated that "they stripped me naked and raped me several times. Then they sat me on the bottle, as a result of which I received several injuries." Five of his co-defendants also stated in court that they had been raped during interrogation.⁶⁸

The most prevalent forms of torture are psychological – intimidation and threats, including threats against detainees' relatives.

- Feruza Kurbanova, a twenty-five-year-old mother of four, was arrested in late December 2000 and taken to Shakantaur district police station, where officers threatened

⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch interview, name withheld, Tashkent, May 14, 1999.

⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Muzafar Isakhov, member of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, Andijan, May 17, 2000. Isakhov told Human Rights Watch that he was present at the Asaka District Court hearing in Andijan province on May 3, 2001, when Sattarov testified about the torture he had endured.

⁶⁷ See Human Rights Watch, "And It Was Hell All Over Again...", pp. 13-16.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 15.

and taunted her that if she did not confess to membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir, they would take her down to the basement and take turns raping her.⁶⁹

- “They said they would bring in my wife and rape her, and my children, and torture them,” said Husan Maksudov, who has accused of being a “Wahhabi,” recalling police coercion to force him to sign self-incriminating statements during his detention in the basement of Tashkent police headquarters.⁷⁰

These threats are credible because, indeed, police commonly arrest several members of a family (see above, “Arrests and Prosecutions”).

- When accused “Wahhabis” Oibek and Uigun Ruzmetov were arrested on charges of attempting to overthrow the government, on January 1, 1999, their parents were also arrested—their father Sobir Ruzmetov on the same day, their mother on January 5. Their mother, Darmon Sultonova, recounted that she was held for one night in solitary confinement in the Urgench district police station, handcuffed naked and given no water. Then they showed her to Uigun: “They...stripped me naked...Twice they walked him by me. He looked so bad, he had been completely beaten up. I could only cry, I could not talk to him. They told him. ‘Your parents and your wife are also in prison. Your children are in an orphanage. If you don’t sign these documents, we’ll do something very bad to your wife.’ My son at his trial said that he was told they would rape his wife before his eyes if he did not confess.”⁷¹

SOCIAL PUNISHMENT

The authorities bring to bear various forms of public ostracism against religious “extremists” and their families. One such method is the government practice, reminiscent of the Stalin era, of forcing detainees and/or their family members who are not in prison to attend “hate rallies” at which they are publicly denounced by officials and community residents. The “hate rallies” are organized by mahallah committees (neighborhood councils) and city mayors, with the participation of police and procuracy officials as well as members of the official clergy. They are carefully staged spectacles that function as a form of general intimidation and as extrajudicial punishment of targeted individuals or family groups. Typically they begin with broad warnings to shun religious trends deemed harmful to the state. Then officials bring forward the detainees and their relatives as live examples of the dangers of following unsanctioned religious trends. Local authorities and residents then have the opportunity to castigate the targeted individuals.

- On April 5, 2000 in Namangan, Omina Muidinova was ushered into the town hall in handcuffs along with three of her sons, her brother, and her son-in-law. They were stood in front of a crowd while officials stated the accusations against them. Officials

⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Feruza Kurbanova, Tashkent, March 14, 2001.

⁷⁰ Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript, Akmal Ikramov District Court hearing, February 7, 2001.

⁷¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Darmon Sultonova, June 9, 2000. Uigun signed a confession after his mother’s detention. He and his brother were sentenced to death by the Tashkent Province Court on July 29, 1999 and were subsequently executed by firing squad. Their father was given five years in prison for drug and weapons possession.

then called on citizens in attendance to give their opinions of the detainees; several men condemned Muidinova, and some of them called for punishment of her parents as well; some even called for the accused family to be executed. Muidinova was then instructed to address the crowd and explain herself.⁷²

- Even after authorities convicted Shukhrat Abdurahimov in 1999, they continued to persecute his mother, making her the subject of repeated “hate rallies.” On three occasions her neighborhood council organized public meetings to condemn her and the rest of his family as disloyal citizens. Officials at the rallies and after allegedly accused the family of engaging in anti-state activities: Abdurahimov’s mother was required to report to the police and representatives of her mahallah committee, even about her preferred candidate in the presidential elections.⁷³

The official clergy at state-run mosques encourage community members to shun independent Muslims and have even hosted—at state mosques—public denunciations of detainees similar to the “hate rallies” organized by mahallah committees. At these gatherings, detainees are compelled to stand before an assembled crowd and plead for the state’s forgiveness.

- After police allegedly tortured Anvar Mirakhmedov and forced him to confess to falsified charges, he was taken to appear at a series of mosques where he called on young people not to follow the path of “Wahhabism.”⁷⁴ Police also took Faizullo Saipov to give a penitent speech before the congregation at a mosque, to warn of the dangers of religious extremism.⁷⁵ Both men had been promised release if they repented; once released, they were rearrested.⁷⁶

- Human Rights Watch obtained a videotape of a January 21, 2000 sermon at the Kokcha mosque in Tashkent by Imam Rakhmatullo in the presence of a group of detainees brought there by authorities for a public ceremony of self-criticism and “repentance.” After pointing out thirty to thirty-five detainees waiting in the front row to repent, he said, “What was the greatest quality that our Prophet Muhammad possessed? He always generously forgave guilt if a guilty person came to him with a confession and asked forgiveness.... Our respected President also possesses these same qualities. Even though criminals, hating our independence, slander the President and work against his policies, if they come to him and ask for forgiveness, ... the President will say, ‘I forgive them!’ No one will cause them harm.”⁷⁷ The imam then denounced the detainees and they came forward to repent, reciting the state’s formulations of their errors and crimes.

⁷² Written report to Human Rights Watch from Akhmat Abdullaev, Namangan representative of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, undated.

⁷³ Written statement to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright from a relative of Shukhrat Abdurahimov, name withheld, May 9, 2000, on file with Human Rights Watch.

⁷⁴ Human Rights Watch unofficial transcript of Tashkent City Court hearing, presided by Judge Sharipov, August 4, 2000.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Other defendants in the same case included Dilshod Unusov and Tohir Obidov, whose attorneys objected to similar manipulation and rearrests of their clients.

⁷⁷ Unofficial translation from Uzbek by Human Rights Watch.