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Europe/Ex-USSR - Uzbekistan

Andijan Massacre

Uzbekistan: ten years after the Andijan massacre, the human rights situation is worse than ever

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Paris, May 11, 2015. Commemorating ten years since the Andijan massacre, the FIDH, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), ACAT (Action by Christians Against Torture) and Fiery Hearts Club remind the international community of the dangerous oblivion of one of the bloodiest massacre of civilians in Central Asia. Apart from setting a precedent, indifference disregards the hundreds of unarmed men, women and children buried in unmarked mass graves after they were indiscriminately shot by the army. It denies them justice that has never been rendered in a sham trial organized by the Uzbek authorities.

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The biggest tragedy of the Uzbek nation since its independence in 1991, the massacre has led to even poorer human rights conditions in the country that today counts thousands of political prisoners. *"The tragedy of the Andijan massacre continues today since everyone, including the victims, prefers to remain silent fearing harassment, prosecution, prison and torture"*, deplors Mutabar Tadjibaeva, Head of the international human rights organisation Fiery Hearts Club, Uzbek member organisation of FIDH.

On May 13, 2005, the world was appalled by the unprecedented massacre of civilians in the eastern city of Andijan in Uzbekistan. That day, thousands of protesters gathered in the town's main square. Hours later soldiers began shooting at them killing hundreds. The count of the dead could never be independently verified. The Uzbek authorities put the death toll at 187 yet estimations reach 500 and even 1 000 victims.

Ten years after the bloody repression of a peaceful demonstration demanding reforms and more freedom, no independent investigation was allowed by the government and those daring to raise the issue of the massacre by the government languish in prison or were forced into exile.

Today, the human rights organisations count between 10 000 and 12 000 people detained on politically motivated charges in Uzbekistan. The exact number is hard to establish and information about detentions is scarce as the State repression makes it impossible for human rights organisations to carry out efficient monitoring activities.

"Allegations of torture and inhuman treatment in detention cannot be investigated independently, yet [our last report](#) shows that torture remains systematic and impunity still prevails as torturers are never punished", states Christine Laroque, Head of Central Asia & Asia Desk of ACAT.

"The few independent and foreign media left in the country were banned immediately after the massacre. Media offices were closed down, foreign correspondents were kicked out and the main independent information websites have been blocked ever since", recalls Johann Bühr, Head of Eastern Europe & Central Asia Desk of RSF. The regime's fierce grip on society eliminates any critical voices that could expose the country's violations of human rights: forced labour and continued child slavery in cotton fields, forced sterilization of women, absence of independent media and political participation, arbitrary detentions, and torture.

Today, ten years after the massacre, sanctions introduced by the international community have long been lifted yet the human rights situation is more dire than ever. FIDH, ACAT, RSF and Fiery Hearts Club denounce the silence and oblivion that reigns around the issue of the Andijan massacre and urge the states to condition their partnership with Uzbekistan on verifiable improvement of the

human rights situation.

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