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Tajikistan urged to disclose whereabouts of suspect held incommunicado

Amnesty International fears for the safety of Abdulvosi Latipov (also known as Kori Vosit), a former member of the United Tajik Opposition who is believed to have been forcibly returned from Russia to Tajikistan at the end of October 2012. His lawyer in Tajikistan told Amnesty International that he has grounds to believe that Abdulvosi Latipov is being held incommunicado by the Tajikistani law enforcement officers in an apartment in the capital city of Dushanbe, Tajikistan. His lawyer fears that his client is being tortured and otherwise ill-treated in order to extract confessions or force him to incriminate other people.

Abdulvosi Latipov was detained by the Federal Security Service in Russia in November 2010 following an extradition request by the Tajikistani authorities. According to Russian NGO Memorial, he is accused of a series of crimes, including kidnapping, damaging state property and terrorism related offences. In August 2011 the Russian Prosecutor General ordered his extradition. When Abdulvosi Latipov's request for asylum in Russia was refused, his legal representative in Russia filed an application with the European Court of Human Rights. In December 2011 the Court issued interim measures under Rule 39 which require the Russian Federation to refrain from deporting Abdulvosi Latipov until his case has been fully considered by the Court. Reportedly he was released from detention on 15 October 2012 and days later forcibly taken from a flat he had been staying by unidentified armed men wearing masks.

In view of the circumstances surrounding previous cases of disappearance and forcible return of Tajikistani nationals from Russia to Tajikistan where they have been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, Amnesty International is concerned that Abdulvosi Latipov has been transferred to Tajikistan and is currently being held in unidentified location by the Tajikistani security officers.

Amnesty International fears that Abdulvosi Latipov is at high risk of being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in incommunicado detention in Tajikistan and therefore calls on the authorities of Tajikistan to:

- disclose the whereabouts of Abdulvosi Latipov;
- ensure that he is not subjected to any torture and other ill-treatment; and
- ensure that he has access to a lawyer appointed by his family.

Background information:

Amnesty International's research shows that torture and other ill-treatment is widespread in Tajikistan. People accused of crimes against public security are particularly at risk of torture and other human rights violations in the hands of law enforcement officials. Amnesty International documented a number of cases where Tajikistani nationals seeking asylum in Russia have been abducted and forcibly returned from Russia to Tajikistan and subsequently subjected to torture and other ill-treatment and imprisoned following unfair trial.

Savridin Juraev was released from detention in Russia on 20 May 2011 and reportedly abducted on 31 October 2011. On 1 November 2011 he reportedly flew from a Moscow airport to Tajikistan without

possessing a passport, he had only temporary asylum certificate on him. On 19 April 2012 he was sentenced to 26 years prison term but he maintains his innocence. He also reported being tortured and ill-treated while in detention.

Another Tajikistani national, Nizomkhon Juraev, disappeared upon his released from the temporary detention in Russia on 29 March 2012 and re-appeared days later in Dushanbe while his case was pending before the European Court of Human Rights. Anna Stavitskaya, the Russian lawyer who has taken Nizomkhon Juraev's case to the European Court of Human Rights, stated that she doubted that Juraev returned voluntarily since he had been fighting his return to Tajikistan, where he could be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. Moreover, his lawyer stated that she still had his passport. Without his passport or sufficient funds it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Nizomkhon Juraev to travel back to Tajikistan.

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