

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/georgia-tajik-opposition-journalist-20-08-2013,45074.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Tajikistan

Harassment without borders

Tajik journalist allowed to fly back to Germany

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Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that **Dodojon Atovulloyev**, a well-known Tajik journalist and government opponent, has been given permission to leave Tbilisi airport and fly back to Germany, where he has political refugee status.

Atovulloyev had been held at the airport since dawn yesterday. The Georgian interior ministry said he was detained by airport border guards, not the police, at Interpol's request.

Reporters Without Borders is pleased that he has not been extradited to Tajikistan, where he has been the victim of political persecution.

20.08.2013 - Tajik opposition journalist detained on Interpol warrant in Georgia

Reporters Without Borders calls on the Georgian authorities to quickly release **Dodojon Atovulloyev**, a well-known Tajik journalist and government opponent who was detained shortly after landing at Tbilisi airport at 3:40 p.m. today. Atovulloyev says the Georgian police arrested him on an Interpol warrant.

"Under no circumstances should Atovulloyev be handed over to the Tajik authorities," Reporters Without Borders said. "Germany has granted him refugee status. His enforced return to Tajikistan would violate the international convention on refugee rights."

"The Tajik government has for years been using all kinds of means to get its hands on this journalist. The arrest warrant that it apparently sent to Interpol is just its latest scheme."

A leading opponent of President Emomali Rakhmon's government, Atovulloyev is also the founder and editor of the Tajik monthly *Charogi Ruz* (Daylight), independent Tajikistan's first privately-owned newspaper, which is well-known for its fierce criticism of the regime.

Atovulloyev fled Tajikistan in 1993 after receiving death threats and being the repeated target of judicial proceedings.

Persecution of the government's opponents in exile has been growing in the run-up to presidential elections scheduled for November. [Umarali Quvvatov was briefly detained in Dubai last December. Former Prime Minister Abdumalik Abdullajanov was arrested in Kiev in February](#), while Atovulloyev [survived a murder attempt in Moscow in January 2012](#).

Last month, Atovulloyev [was denied entry to Russia](#), where *Charogi Ruz* is now produced. The media recently reported that pressure was being put on his 83-year-old mother in an attempt to force him to return to Tajikistan.

Atovulloyev nowadays hosts a weekly programme on *K+*, an independent Central Asian TV station, which has raised his profile in Tajikistan even more.

"My *K+* programme is really irritating the Rakhmon government," he told Reporters Without Borders by phone. "I am currently at the airport but I am being treated well. I cannot complain about the Georgian police, who are just doing their duty as regards Georgia's membership of Interpol."

