

the Department of Cerro Largo, three people were prosecuted.

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1. Uruguay: Key human rights concerns - Amnesty International
Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, January-February
2014 (AMR 52/001/2013)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR52/001/2013/en

UZBEKISTAN

Republic of Uzbekistan

Head of state: **Islam Karimov**

Head of government: **Shavkat Mirziyoyev**

Torture and other ill-treatment in detention facilities remained routine and pervasive. The authorities continued to reject allegations of torture committed by law enforcement and National Security officers and failed to effectively investigate credible and persistent reports of such human rights violations. Prison sentences of individuals convicted of anti-state and terrorism offences were arbitrarily extended and many were denied necessary medical attention. Those forcibly returned from abroad were at real risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Persistent and credible allegations continued to emerge of pervasive and routine torture and other ill-treatment by law enforcement and National Security (SNB) officers during arrest, transfer, in police custody and in pre-trial detention and by law enforcement and prison personnel in post-conviction detention facilities.¹

The authorities continued to vigorously deny such reports, including during public examinations of Uzbekistan's human rights record at the EU-Uzbekistan Human Rights Dialogue in November. They instead pointed at the implementation of wide-

ranging initiatives in the field of human rights education, such as numerous torture prevention training programmes for law enforcement officers and judicial and medical officials, and increased co-operation on human rights with the international community. However, as in previous years, these developments failed to lead to necessary, genuine and wide-reaching systemic reforms. Serious concerns remained about the authorities' failure to implement existing laws and safeguards and to adopt new effective measures towards the prevention of torture. The authorities also failed to effectively investigate reports of torture and other ill-treatment.

In November, the UN Human Rights Committee requested that Uzbekistan report on measures taken to implement the Committee's numerous previous recommendations to address torture from 1999, 2005 and 2010.

PRISON CONDITIONS

Certain categories of prisoners, such as human rights defenders, government critics and individuals convicted of membership in Islamist parties and groups or Islamic movements banned in Uzbekistan were often subjected to severe punishment regimes in prisons where they were serving their sentences. Some prisoners had their sentences extended for long periods - sometimes repeatedly - even for alleged minor infractions of the prison rules.

Murad Dzhusraev, a former parliamentarian who was sentenced to 12 years in prison on politically motivated charges in 1995, subsequently had his sentence extended four times under Article 221 of the Criminal Code for allegedly breaking prison rules.² One of the "violations" he had committed was failing to change out of slippers when entering the hall where prisoners slept.

Murad Dzhusraev's health seriously deteriorated during his extended time in prison. His wife was allowed to visit him for two days in July, and reported that he was

almost blind and had lost all of his teeth. She alleged that he had not had access to adequate medical care since 1994. The prison authorities had also tried to isolate him from other prisoners by threatening to extend the sentences of every prisoner who dared to speak with him. He spent long periods of time in solitary confinement as a punishment allegedly for breaking prison rules.

At least two prisoners were reported to have died because they had not been provided with necessary medical care. Human rights defender Abdurasul Khudainazarov died of advanced terminal cancer on 26 June, three weeks after a court ordered his early release on humanitarian grounds. His family reported that over a period of eight years prison officials had repeatedly denied him necessary medical treatment for his cancer and other serious medical problems despite numerous requests and clear physical indications that his health was seriously deteriorating.

There were no independent monitoring mechanisms in place to inspect all places of detention and domestic or international NGOs did not carry out any form of regular, unannounced or unsupervised prison monitoring. Diplomats, while granted access to some detention facilities, were as a rule accompanied by prison or law enforcement officials during their visits. In January, the authorities granted a small number of independent human rights activists permission to visit four imprisoned colleagues. The human rights defenders were accompanied by law enforcement and prison officials and their visits were recorded on film. One of the prisoners reported that he had been allowed to have a hot shower before the meeting and was given new clothes ahead of the scheduled visit. In November, the NGO Human Rights Watch sent a delegation to Uzbekistan but all requests to visit prisoners and places of detention were denied by the authorities.

COUNTER-TERROR AND SECURITY

Individuals forcibly returned to Uzbekistan in the name of national security and the “fight against terrorism” were often held incommunicado, increasing their risk of torture or other ill-treatment. The authorities relentlessly pursued the return of individuals they suspected of involvement in bombings in the capital Tashkent in 1999 and 2004, protests in Andizhan in 2005 (during which hundreds of people were killed when the security forces fired on thousands of mostly peaceful protesters), and various other acts of violence. They accused some of being members of banned violent Islamist groups and also sought the extradition of political opponents, government critics, and wealthy individuals who had fallen out of favour with the authorities in Tashkent.

The European Court of Human Rights issued at least 15 judgments in 2013 and 2014 prohibiting the forcible transfer of individuals to Uzbekistan - especially those suspected of membership of an Islamist party or of a group banned in the country - due to the real risk of torture on return. The Court ruled in October, in the case of *Mamazhonov v Russia*, that the transfer of Ikromzhon Mamazhonov from Russia to Uzbekistan would violate Article 3 (prohibition of torture) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court noted “that there had been no improvement in the criminal justice system of Uzbekistan in recent years, in particular concerning prosecution for religiously and politically motivated crimes and that there was certain evidence that persons accused of such crimes were at risk of ill-treatment.”

In November, Mirsobir Khamidkariev, a producer and businessman from Uzbekistan who had sought asylum in Moscow, Russian Federation, was sentenced to eight years in prison by a court in Tashkent.³ He was convicted of membership of a banned Islamist organization, a charge he strongly denied. On 9 June he was reportedly abducted and ill-treated by officers of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) from

a street in central Moscow, and handed over to Uzbekistani law enforcement officers at an airport in Moscow and illegally transferred to Tashkent the following day.

Mirsobir Khamidkariev's lawyer in Moscow did not know his whereabouts until he reappeared in the basement of a detention facility run by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Tashkent two weeks later. According to his Russian lawyer, who was able to get access to him in Tashkent on 31 October, Mirsobir Khamidkariev was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment by law enforcement officers in Tashkent for two months to force him to confess to fabricated charges. He was tied head down to a bar attached to the wall, beaten repeatedly, and had seven of his teeth knocked out and two of his ribs broken.

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1. Cases of torture and other ill-treatment in Uzbekistan (EUR 62/007/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR62/007/2014/en
 2. Uzbekistan: Jailed parliamentarian denied medical help - Murad Dzhuraev (EUR 62/003/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR62/003/2014/en
 3. Uzbekistan: Fear of unfair trial for extradited refugee - Mirsobir Khamidkariev (EUR 62/008/2014)
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR62/008/2014/en

VENEZUELA

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Head of state and government: **Nicolás Maduro Moros**

The security forces used excessive force to disperse protests. Scores of people were arbitrarily detained and denied access to lawyers and doctors. Torture and other ill-treatment of protesters and passers-by were reported. The judiciary continued to be used to silence government critics. Those defending human rights were

intimidated and attacked. Prison conditions remained harsh.

BACKGROUND

President Maduro's first year in office was marked by growing discontent. Between February and July 2014, Venezuela was shaken by mass pro- and anti-government demonstrations in various parts of the country. Anti-government protesters and some opposition party leaders who called for the resignation of the President were accused of attempting to overthrow the government.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

At least 43 people were killed and more than 870 were injured - including protesters, security forces officials and passers-by - during mass pro- and anti-government protests between February and July. There were reports of human rights violations and of violent clashes between demonstrators and the security forces and armed pro-government groups.¹

More than 3,000 people were detained in the context of the protests. Most were charged and released after a few days. At the end of the year over 70 people who took part in the demonstrations remained in pre-trial detention awaiting trial.

There were concerns that a ruling by the Supreme Court in March, which stated that any protest had to be pre-authorized, could jeopardize the rights to freedoms of peaceful assembly and association.

Excessive use of force

The security forces used excessive force to disperse protests. Among the measures deployed were the use of live ammunition at close range against unarmed people; the use of inappropriate firearms and riot equipment that had been tampered with; and the use of tear gas and rubber bullets in enclosed areas.

For example, in February, student Geraldín Moreno died three days after being shot in the eye with rubber bullets fired at close range during a protest in Valencia, Carabobo State. National Guard officers were charged