

THE OBSERVATORY

for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

L'OBSERVATOIRE
pour la Protection des
Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme

EL OBSERVATORIO
para la Protección
de los Defensores de Derechos Humanos

PRESS RELEASE

UZBEKISTAN: MS. MUTABAR TOJIBAEVA RELEASED !

Geneva-Paris, June 3, 2008. The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), welcomes the conditional release of Ms. Mutabar Tojibaeva, head of the "Burning Hearts' Club".

On June 2, 2008, Ms. **Mutabar Tojibaeva**, head of the human rights organisation "Burning Hearts' Club" and the 2008 Laureate of the Martin Ennals Award, was released for "health reasons". She left the prison of Tashkent at 11 am and was then driven to her native city, Margilan, in the Ferghana Valley.

Ms. Tojibaeva had been arrested on October 7, 2005 and accused of violating 17 articles of the Criminal Code and sentenced on March 6, 2006 by the Dustabad District Court (Tashkent region) to eight years' imprisonment. The proceedings were marred by numerous irregularities, in particular several violations of the right to a fair trial. She was detained at the women's colony UYA 64/7, in Tashkent, and her health had been seriously deteriorating due to the poor conditions of her detention and the various acts of ill-treatment she suffered.

The Observatory welcomes the conditional release of Ms. Mutabar Tojibaeva, and wishes to thank all the persons, organisations, and institutions that intervened in her favour.

The Observatory calls upon the Uzbek authorities to order a thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations of ill-treatments against Ms. Tojibaeva while in detention, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law, to refrain from any form of pressure or harassment against her, and to guarantee her freedom of movement and the enjoyment of other fundamental freedoms.

More generally, the Observatory expresses its concern about the ongoing arbitrary detentions of Uzbek human rights defenders, and urges the Uzbek authorities to release immediately and unconditionally the all human rights defenders in Uzbekistan, to guarantee in all circumstances their physical and psychological integrity, and to put an end to all acts of harassment against them.

The Observatory also calls upon the Uzbek authorities to conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998 and, more generally, the Observatory urges the Uzbek authorities to ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Uzbekistan.

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Un programme de la FIDH et de l'OMCT - A FIDH and OMCT venture - Un programa de la FIDH y de la OMCT

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