

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 26, 2013

His Excellency Islam Karimov
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Dear President Karimov:

We write to request information about the health and status of three Uzbek prisoners whose detentions appear to be politically motivated. The three have been characterized as prisoners of conscience by respected international organizations such as the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Human Rights Watch, Freedom Now, Reporters Without Borders, and the Committee to Protect Journalists. Their continued detention is inconsistent with our countries' cooperation in many other areas and symbolic of a troubling pattern of harsh treatment for political prisoners.

Akzam Turgunov, a public defender and human rights advocate, has been imprisoned since 2008 under alleged charges of extortion. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has declared his incarceration a violation of international law and called for his release. Mr. Turgunov, who for much of his detention was forced to work long hours in a work camp, continues to face health problems in prison at the age of 61.

Dilmurod Saidov, a journalist and member of a prominent human rights society, has been imprisoned since 2009 on alleged charges of extortion and forgery. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has also declared his incarceration a violation of international law. After years in prison, Mr. Saidov suffers from acute tuberculosis.

Salijon Abdurakhmanov, a prominent journalist who reported on social and economic justice issues, as well as corruption and human rights, has been imprisoned on alleged drug charges since 2008. His case is pending before the United Nations Human Rights Committee and was highlighted in the State Department's 2012 Human Rights Report. Because international monitors have been denied access to Mr. Abdurakhmanov, rights groups have expressed increased concern about his health.

It has been reported that these three prisoners suffer from poor health and lack of adequate medical attention, a situation that we worry may have worsened with the International Committee of the Red Cross's recent termination of visits to detainees in Uzbekistan due to extremely challenging conditions imposed by your government.

Accordingly, we ask you to please clarify the circumstances surrounding the arrests, detention, and health of Mr. Turgunov, Mr. Saidov and Mr. Abdurakhmanov, issues we previously raised directly with your Embassy in Washington, DC. We further urge that, given the deeply troubling questions regarding the validity of these cases, you move to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Tugunov, Mr. Saidov and Mr. Abdurakhmanov. Their release would further our important bilateral relationship.

We thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Mark Kirk
United States Senator



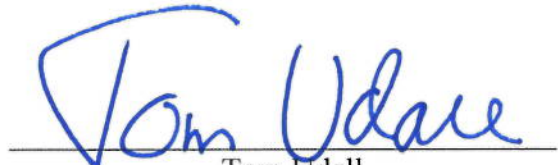
John Boozman
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



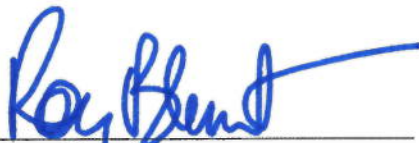
Tom Udall
United States Senator



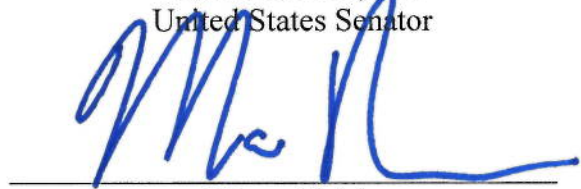
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
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Roy Blunt
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



John McCain
United States Senator