



Gaybullo Jalilov **Uzbekistan**

Gaybullo Jalilov is a practicing Muslim and prominent human rights defender who was wrongly detained in Uzbekistan between 2009 and 2018 on national security-related charges. Jalilov has been a member of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan since 2003.

Prior to his arrest, Jalilov's human rights work focused on the Uzbekistani government's violations of religious freedom and persecution of independent Muslims. He has been monitoring religious persecution cases in the Kashkadarya region since 2004. At the time of Jalilov's arrest in September 2008, he had collected information on over 200 arrests of independent Muslims.

On September 5, 2009, Jalilov was stopped by several plain cloth officers and forced into a vehicle. He was initially held *incommunicado* and his family was not informed of his whereabouts for two days. On September 23, more than two weeks after his arrest, Jalilov's father received a written statement from the Karshi City Department of Internal Affairs informing him of the criminal charges brought against his son. Jalilov was charged with a variety of security-related charges including: terrorism, incitement of hatred, dissemination of materials containing threats to public safety, and participation in a banned organization.

Jalilov's trial was plagued with inconsistencies and violations of fair trial standards. Jalilov's first hearing was held November 24, 2009 in the Kashkadarya Regional Court. The hearing was closed and Jalilov's family was barred from attending. Jalilov's lawyer also did not attend the hearing because he was not notified. During the trial, Jalilov denied the charges against him and said that he confessed under torture. On January 18, 2010, the court convicted Jalilov and sentenced him to nine years in prison.

On August 4, 2010, the government brought additional charges against him; including, membership in a banned organization and plotting to illegally remove public officials from power. His prison sentence was increased to 11 years.

Jalilov was tortured and suffered deplorable treatment while in detention. In November 2010, prison guards beat him repeatedly with truncheons leaving him nearly deaf in both ears. He also told his wife that he fears for his life and he has been kept in an animal cage. Due to his ill treatment, Jalilov attempted to commit suicide by cutting his wrists. He survived his suicide attempt.

While in detention, Jalilov was kept *incommunicado*. The last time Jalilov's wife met with him was in October 2011. No one has been able to visit him since.

Freedom Now represented Jalilov as his *pro bono* international legal counsel. In May 2012, Freedom Now [submitted a petition](#) to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on behalf of Jalilov. The [Working Group found](#) Uzbekistan to be in violation of international law in April 2013 and called for Jalilov to be immediately released.

Freedom Now mobilized international attention on Jalilov's case, including an op-ed on the [**American Bar Association's blog, a letter to then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, press releases**](#), a report to the [**UN Committee Against Torture**](#), a report to the UN Human Rights Committee prior to Uzbekistan's periodic review in [**2015**](#) and [**2020**](#), a [**letter to the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders**](#), and a report to the UN Human Rights Council prior to Uzbekistan's [**universal periodic review**](#).

In May 2011, four members of the German Bundestag [**sent a letter**](#) to Chancellor Angela Merkel raising the issue of Jalilov and other Uzbek political prisoners.

He was released from prison on March 16, 2018.