

PETITION TO:

UNITED NATIONS

WORKING GROUP ON ARBITRARY DETENTION

Chair-Rapporteur: Ms. Elina Steinerte (Latvia)
Vice-Chair on communications: Dr. Miriam Estrada-Castillo (Ecuador)
Ms. Leigh Toomey (Australia)
Mr. Mumba Malila (Zambia)
Ms. Priya Gopalan (Malaysia)

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

In the Matter of
Otabek Sattoriy
Citizen of Uzbekistan

v.

Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Petition for Relief Pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolutions 1991/42, 1994/32, 1997/50, 2000/36,
2003/31, 2006/102, 6/4, and 24/7

Submitted by:

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May 2, 2022

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY PERSONS ALLEGING ARBITRARY ARREST
OR DETENTION**

I. IDENTITY

1. *Family Name:* Sattoriy
2. *First Name:* Otabek
3. *Sex:* Male
4. *Age at the Time of Detention:* 40
5. *Nationality:* Uzbekistan
6. (a) *Identity document (if any):* N/A
(b) *Place of Issue:*
(c) *On (date):*
(d) *No.:*
7. *Profession and/or activity (if believed to be relevant to the arrest/detention):* activist and blogger
8. *Address of usual residence:*
144/2 T. Mirzayev Street
Termez, Surkhandarya Region, Uzbekistan

II. ARREST

1. *Date of arrest:* January 30, 2021
2. *Place of arrest (as detailed as possible):* Outside of Mr. Sattoriy's home in Termez
3. *Forces who carried out the arrest or are believed to have carried it out:* Plainclothes police officers from the Surkhandarya Regional Department of Internal Affairs.
4. *Did they show a warrant or other decision by a public authority?* No.
5. *Authority who issued the warrant or decision:* N/A
6. *Reasons for the arrest imputed by the authorities:* Authorities alleged that Mr. Sattoriy violated Article 165 (extortion) of the Uzbekistan Criminal Code.
7. *Legal basis for the arrest including relevant legislation applied (if known):* Article 165 (extortion) of the Uzbekistan Criminal Code

III. DETENTION

1. *Date of detention:* January 30, 2021
2. *Duration of detention (if not known, probable duration):* From January 30, 2021 until the time of submission.
3. *Forces holding the detainee under custody:* Uzbekistan's Navoi Regional Penitentiary No. 4
4. *Places of detention (indicate any transfer and present place of detention):* Following his arrest on January 30, 2021, officers transported Mr. Sattoriy to the temporary detention facility of the Termez City Police Department of Surkhandarya. On February 1, 2021, he was transported to Pre-trial Detention Facility No. 9, where he would remain until the

conclusion of his trial. Following the entry of force of the trial verdict of May 10, 2021, Mr. Sattoriy was transferred to Penal Colony No. 4 in Navoiy, where he is held at the time of submission.

5. *Authorities that ordered the detention:* Muzrabot District Court in the Surkhandarya Region
6. *Reasons for the detention imputed by authorities:* Mr. Sattoriy was convicted on four counts of extortion and one count of slander.
7. *Legal basis for the detention including relevant legislation applied (if known):* Mr. Sattoriy was convicted of violating four counts of Article 165(3)(a) and one count of Article 139(3)(a) & (g) of the Uzbekistan Criminal Code.

IV. DESCRIBE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ARREST AND/OR THE DETENTION AND INDICATE PRECISE REASONS WHY YOU CONSIDER THE ARREST OR DETENTION TO BE ARBITRARY

A. Statement of Facts

1. The Human Rights Context in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan’s Constitution¹ and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (“ICCPR”),² to which Uzbekistan is a party, protect against arbitrary arrests and detention. However, Uzbekistan’s Criminal Procedure Code (“CPC”) provides loopholes that allow law enforcement officials to continuously ignore such safeguards.³ Historically, the government has detained suspects after the period provided for under Uzbek law through various means, including filing false charges or detaining suspects as witnesses in other cases.⁴ Although the government has recently reduced the number of new arbitrary detentions, particularly concerning those targeted on the basis of their religion, arbitrary arrests of activists and bloggers continue to occur.⁵

Activists report that the current government uses criminal defamation laws, such as Article 139 of the Criminal Code, to silence voices critical of the government.⁶ Moreover, the government continues to engage in persistent and intrusive surveillance of activists and critics.⁷ Recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has increased its prosecutorial attention on critical and dissident speech by amending legislation criminalizing speech and creating new agencies to monitor and prosecute expression.⁸

¹ Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan art. 25,

https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Uzbekistan_2011.pdf?lang=en (“Everyone shall have the right to freedom and inviolability of the person. No one may be arrested or taken into custody except on lawful ground.”).

² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights art. 9, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171 [hereinafter ICCPR] (“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.”).

³ See Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan art. 221 [hereinafter CPC].

⁴ U.S. Dep’t of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor, Uzbekistan (2007), <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78848.htm>.

⁵ U.S. Dep’t of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, & Labor, Uzbekistan (2020), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/uzbekistan/>.

⁶ Human Rights Watch, *World Report: Uzbekistan* (2021), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/uzbekistan>.

⁷ Amnesty International, Annual Report: Uzbekistan (2021), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/3202/2021/en/>.

⁸ *Id.*

These events have led to a more hostile environment for those seeking to exercise their right to freedom of expression in Uzbekistan.

2. The Case of Otabek Sattoriy

a. *Background*

Mr. Otabek Sattoriy is an independent blogger and investigative journalist who has investigated and reported on allegations of corruption and human rights violations against local authorities in the Surkhandarya region in South-Eastern Uzbekistan. Mr. Sattoriy hosted channels on Telegram, YouTube, and Facebook where he regularly posted videos on issues of local concern.⁹

Mr. Sattoriy publicly advocated on behalf of victims of human rights violations and corruption.¹⁰ For example, Mr. Sattoriy frequently raised the issue of illegal land seizures, whereby local farmers would be wrongfully dispossessed of their land for development or other purposes.¹¹ As part of this advocacy, Mr. Sattoriy organized meetings between aggrieved farmers and parliamentary members, and he accompanied and represented the farmers in raising their claims to the government.

b. *Circumstances Precipitating Arrest*

On March 19, 2020, in response to increased risk of price gouging resulting from supply shortages caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic, Uzbekistan passed Presidential Decree No. UP-5969 mandating price controls on certain consumer goods to prevent artificially inflated prices.¹²

Following enactment of Presidential Decree No. UP-5969, Mr. Sattoriy began preparing an investigative report to determine whether this decree was being implemented and enforced at local markets.¹³ On December 20, 2020, Mr. Sattoriy and a fellow blogger, Farhod Ismailov, visited the Sherabad District Market with the intent of filming the market to gather evidence regarding the market's compliance with the newly-enacted price regulations.¹⁴ Once Mr. Sattoriy arrived at the market and attempted to film the premises, he was forcefully stopped by market security officers, who seized Mr. Sattoriy's phone, damaging the phone and his coat in the process.¹⁵ Mr. Sattoriy was ejected from the premises without his phone.

Immediately following his ejection from the market, Mr. Sattoriy reported the incident to the Sherabad District mayor's office.¹⁶ Mr. Sattoriy reported how he was treated by the market security officers and the seizure and damage to his phone.¹⁷ Furthermore, Mr. Sattoriy asked that the owner of the market, Mr. Lochin Turaev, return his phone and replace it with one in working condition.¹⁸ The assistant to the district mayor intervened in the dispute between market security and Mr. Sattoriy, and the assistant aided Mr.

⁹ *Uzbekistan: Blogger Held on Dubious Extortion Charge*, Human Rights Watch (Feb. 12, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/12/uzbekistan-blogger-held-dubious-extortion-charge>.

¹⁰ Call with Source A, July 2021.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *See Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, No. UP-5969, arts. 23-24 (Mar. 19, 2020), <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4770763> (in Russian).

¹³ *Overview: The Case of Otabek Sattoriy*, Uzbek Forum for Human Rights (June 22, 2021), on file with author.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

Sattoriy in retrieving his damaged phone from the market security officers.¹⁹ At the time, the market did not provide Mr. Sattoriy with a new phone to replace the one damaged by security officers.

c. *Arrest, Pre-Trial Detention, & Administrative Trial*

On January 28, 2021, the owner of the Sherabad District Market, Mr. Turaev, contacted Mr. Sattoriy and stated that he intended to replace the phone that market security damaged on December 20, 2020.²⁰ The men agreed to meet outside Mr. Sattoriy's home in Termez on January 30, 2021 to transfer the phone. On January 30, 2021, Mr. Turaev visited Mr. Sattoriy's home and gave Mr. Sattoriy a new phone, a VIVO X50 model phone.²¹ Mr. Turaev promptly left after handing over the phone.

Within minutes of Mr. Turaev leaving, plainclothes police officers from the Surkhandarya Regional Department of Internal Affairs arrived at Mr. Sattoriy's home and arrested him.²² The arrest was captured on video and subsequently circulated widely online.²³

At the time, officers claimed the arrest related to allegations that the phone that Mr. Sattoriy had received from Mr. Turaev had been provided as part of an extortion scheme.²⁴ Officers did not provide a warrant at the time of arrest, as it is the position of the government that a warrant is not required for such arrests under Uzbekistan law.²⁵

Additionally, at the time of Mr. Sattoriy's arrest, officers searched his car and home.²⁶ Although officers allegedly read aloud a warrant for the search, officers did not provide a copy of a warrant or authorization from a prosecutorial office.²⁷ Officers seized two computers, a computer tablet, five flash storage devices, and some coats.²⁸

Following the arrest, officers transported Mr. Sattoriy to the temporary detention facility of the Termez City Police Department of Surkhandarya.²⁹ While at the City Police Department, the deputy head of the department told Mr. Sattoriy that "This is what happens when you interfere in politics, we can imprison you at any time."³⁰

On February 1, 2021, the Termez City Criminal Court, in a closed session, authorized Sattoriy's pre-trial detention on suspicion of violating Criminal Code Article 165(2), which criminalizes extortion.³¹ Following

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Statement Regarding the Social Media Video "Bloggers Are Under Attack,"* Investigation Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Feb. 1, 2021), <https://tergov.uz/oz/lead/izhtimoiy-tarmolarda-blogerlarga-nisbatan-uzhum-boshlandi-sarlavasi-ostida-taralgan-videotasvir-juzasidan-malumot> (in Uzbek).

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ Video of Otabek Sattoriy's Arrest, *Gazeta.uz*, <https://t.me/gazetauzmedia/21>.

²⁴ *Statement Regarding the Social Media Video "Bloggers Are Under Attack," supra* note 20; *Uzbekistan: Blogger Held on Dubious Extortion Charge, supra* note 9.

²⁵ Answers to interrogatories by Source C.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*; *Uzbekistan: Blogger Held on Dubious Extortion Charge, supra* note 9.

²⁸ *Uzbekistan: Blogger Held on Dubious Extortion Charge, supra* note 9.

²⁹ Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

³⁰ *A Blogger Was Detained in Surkhandarya. Lawyer Says Case Is Fabricated, Gazeta.uz (Feb. 8, 2021), https://www-gazeta-uz.translate.google.ru/2021/02/08/sattoriy/?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US (in Russian).*

³¹ Supreme Court of Uzbekistan, *Official Statement* (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://t.me/oliysuduz/7621>; Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

the decision to hold Mr. Sattoriy in remand, he was transported to Pre-trial Detention Facility No. 9, where he would remain until the conclusion of his trial.³²

On February 11, 2021, the Termez City Criminal Court, in a closed session, found Mr. Sattoriy guilty of committing several administrative offenses under the Uzbekistan Code of Administrative Offenses.³³ Mr. Sattoriy was found responsible for violating articles 40 (slander), 41 (insult), and 202-2 (dissemination of false information) of the Code of Administrative Offenses.³⁴ The administrative charges related to materials that Mr. Sattoriy published on social media in January 2021 accusing employees at a local coal depot and a zoo of embezzlement and other crimes.³⁵ As a result of the administrative charges, Mr. Sattoriy was fined 9.8 million soms (approximately \$918 USD).³⁶ Authorities continued to hold Mr. Sattoriy in detention under investigation for criminal charges.

On February 24, 2021, the Investigation Department of the Surkhandarya Region Department of Internal Affairs filed formal criminal charges against Mr. Sattoriy under Article 165 (the crime of extortion), Article 139 (the crime of slander), and Article 140 (criminal insult).³⁷ Mr. Sattoriy was charged with seven counts of extortion, two counts of criminal slander, and one count of criminal insult.³⁸

The prosecution charged Mr. Sattoriy over allegations concerning several stories that he investigated and published between 2018 and 2020. In addition to charging Mr. Sattoriy for extortion related to the events of December 20, 2020, the prosecution's charges were related to several published stories, covering various issues including a housing project in Termez, the liquified gas company Hududgazta'minot, and the Republican Scientific Medical Center for Oncology and Radiology. Further details about the events surrounding the charges are provided in the following section (IV.A.2.d).

Prior to the announcement of charges on February 24, 2021, Mr. Sattoriy was not permitted to meet with his family.³⁹ Following the announcement of charges, Mr. Sattoriy's family was provided access to him at the pre-trial detention facility.⁴⁰

d. *Criminal Trial*

On March 11, 2021, Mr. Sattoriy's trial began at the Muzrabot District Court in the Surkhandarya Region.⁴¹ Trial hearings occurred during March, April, and May. During a hearing on May 4, the prosecution requested a sentence of eleven (11) years in prison.⁴² Additionally, at the same hearing, the prosecution moved to drop three of the charges against Mr. Sattoriy—two of which concerned extortion under Article

³² Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

³³ Prosecutor General's Office, *Official Statement* (Feb. 11, 2021), <https://t.me/uzbprokuratura/3675>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ Committee to Protect Journalists, *Otabek Sattoriy*, last accessed Feb. 24, 2022, <https://cpj.org/data/people/otabek-sattoriy/>.

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ Investigation Department of the Surkhandarya Region Department of Internal Affairs, *Investigation into the Criminal Case against Blogger Otabek Sattoriy Has Concluded* (Feb. 24, 2022), <https://tergov.uz/uz/investigations/predvaritelnoe-sledstvie-po-ugolovnomu-delu-vozbuzhdennogo-v-otnoshenii-blogera-otabeka-sattoriy-okoncheno> (in Uzbek).

³⁸ Committee to Protect Journalists, *supra* note 35.

³⁹ Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ Committee to Protect Journalists, *supra* note 35.

⁴² *Prosecutor Asks for 11 Years in Prison for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *Gazeta.uz* (May 5, 2021), <https://www.icc-cpi.int/itemsDocuments/ukraine/Article-14-letter.pdf> (in Russian).

165 of the Criminal Code and one of which concerned criminal insult under Article 140.⁴³ During the trial, Mr. Sattoriy maintained his innocence, and his attorney argued that the charges against him were fabricated.⁴⁴ Among other arguments advanced by Mr. Sattoriy's attorney, he observed that all the applications collected by investigators in this criminal case were filed almost simultaneously, and interrogations were carried out at the same time as the application was submitted, which, according to Mr. Sattoriy's attorney, demonstrates that all these cases were carried out in a deliberately planned manner.⁴⁵

On May 10, 2021, the Court convicted Mr. Sattoriy on four counts of Article 165 (extortion) and one count of Article 139 (slander).⁴⁶ The Court sentenced him to six-and-a-half (6.5) years in prison.⁴⁷ The events surrounding the charges for which Mr. Sattoriy was convicted are described in detail in the following sections.

i. First Count of Extortion (Criminal Code Art. 165(3)(a))

The first count of extortion is related to the events of December 20, 2020 at Sherabad District Market, discussed above in section IV.A.2.b. The prosecution alleged that Mr. Sattoriy visited Sherabad District Market to film scenes of the market on his phone, which he used to extort a new phone from the head of the market, Lochin Turaev, under the threat of publishing the negative material.⁴⁸

As noted above, Mr. Sattoriy visited the market with the intention of preparing a report, as part of his blogging activities, but was unable to do so because market security officers stopped him and damaged his coat and phone in the process.⁴⁹ A fellow blogger, Farhod Ismailov, who had accompanied Mr. Sattoriy to the market that day, testified to these events at trial, and claimed that he had seen the market security officers try to prevent Mr. Sattoriy from filming.⁵⁰ Both security officers testified that they had taken Mr. Sattoriy's phone, but claimed they did not break it.

At trial, Mr. Sattoriy did not hide the fact that he demanded that the market administration buy him a new phone to replace the broken one. Two witnesses who appeared in court, Mr. Ismailov and Mehmonov Fazliddin, a journalist with effect.uz, confirmed that Mr. Sattoriy, immediately following the altercation, went to the district mayor's office to complain about the events and damage to his phone.⁵¹ These witnesses confirmed that Sattoriy was not seeking to extort Mr. Turaev.

ii. Second Count of Extortion (Criminal Code Art. 165(3)(a))

The second count of extortion is related to prosecution allegations that Mr. Sattoriy filmed videos revealing problems in the construction of high-rise housing on Istiklol Street in Termez city to blackmail Tulkin Shopulatov, the director of the construction firm, and Isroil Khudoyberdiev, Termez city mayor.⁵² The prosecution alleged that Mr. Sattoriy attempted to induce Mr. Shopulatov to sell Mr. Sattoriy two

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *A Blogger Was Detained in Surkhandarya. Lawyer Says Case Is Fabricated*, *supra* note 30.

⁴⁵ Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

⁴⁶ Mihra Rittmann, *Blogger Jailed for 6.5 Years on Dubious Charges in Uzbekistan*, Human Rights Watch (May 11, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/11/blogger-jailed-65-years-dubious-charges-uzbekistan>.

⁴⁷ Committee to Protect Journalists, *supra* note 35.

⁴⁸ *Prosecutor Asks for 11 Years in Prison for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 42.

⁴⁹ *Overview: The Case of Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 13.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Prosecutor Asks for 11 Years in Prison for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 42.

apartments in a new high-rise building, below market rate, in exchange for not publishing negative reports about the building.⁵³

According to court documents and court testimony, Mr. Sattoriy acquired two apartments as part of compensation provided to Mr. Sattoriy's family following the government's appropriation and demolition of their property in 2018.⁵⁴

Mr. Shopulatov testified at trial that the city mayor, Mr. Khudoyberdiev, had ordered him to transfer ownership of the two apartments to Mr. Sattoriy's family in 2018,⁵⁵ when the state had appropriated the Sattoriy family's property (which included two separate houses). In exchange for the property, the government paid the family \$23,000 USD, which was not sufficient for the family to purchase an equivalent property in Termez.⁵⁶ The Sattoriy family repeatedly appealed to the mayor's office to be granted fair compensation for the demolition of their property.

According to documentation provided at trial, on October 4, 2018, following the Sattoriy family's multiple appeals to the mayor's office, the Termez mayor, the Sattoriy family, and Mr. Shopulatov's construction firm signed a tripartite agreement, whereby Mr. Sattoriy's family received the two apartments as additional compensation for the demolition of their two houses.⁵⁷ Mr. Shopulatov testified that he had transferred two apartments to Mr. Sattoriy in exchange for the \$23,000 USD under pressure from the city mayor, and that the mayor had promised to pay him the difference for the true cost of the apartments, an additional sum of approximately \$52,000 USD.⁵⁸

The two apartments were notarized in Mr. Sattoriy's name, and the Sattoriy family moved into the apartments after the agreement was reached.⁵⁹ On February 4, 2020, Mr. Shopulatov appealed to the investigating authorities demanding that the apartments be returned to him, as he had allegedly still not received outstanding payment from the city mayor's office.⁶⁰ The purchase agreement for the two apartments was then cancelled, and Mr. Shopulatov's construction company returned the \$23,000 USD to the Sattoriy family.⁶¹

There was no investigation into the legality of this transaction until after Mr. Sattoriy's arrest in January 2021.⁶²

iii. Third & Fourth Counts of Extortion (Criminal Code Art. 165(3)(a))

The prosecution made two allegations of extortion relating to the Hududgazta'minot company, a supplier of liquefied gas, which was the subject of several of Mr. Sattoriy's investigations.⁶³ Mr. Sattoriy published multiple video reports between December 2020 and January 2021, prior to his arrest, in which he criticized Hududgazta'minot company managers. Mr. Sattoriy also publicly confronted the Surkhandarya regional mayor, Tura Bobolov, about corruption in the company at a public event in December 2020.⁶⁴

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Overview: The Case of Otabek Sattoriy, supra* note 13.

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Prosecutor Asks for 11 Years in Prison for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy, supra* note 42.

⁶⁴ *Overview: The Case of Otabek Sattoriy, supra* note 13.

The third count related to events on December 11, 2020, when Mr. Sattoriy published a video on the Hududgazta'minot liquified gas supply company in which he criticized the work of the Surkhandarya deputy branch director, Utkir Turdiev.⁶⁵ In a statement submitted to the investigating authorities after Sattoriy's arrest, an employee of the Hududgazta'minot purportedly claimed that Sattoriy had demanded \$10,000 USD from Mr. Turdiev in early December in exchange for not publishing a critical video report.⁶⁶ At trial, Mr. Turdiev himself denied that Mr. Sattoriy extorted money from him.⁶⁷ The court relied exclusively on the employee's claim to convict Mr. Sattoriy on this count of extortion; no material evidence of wrongdoing was cited in any court materials.⁶⁸ Mr. Sattoriy denied demanding any money from Mr. Turdiev and did not receive any.⁶⁹

The fourth count related to events on January 21, 2021, when Mr. Sattoriy published a video blog on his Telegram and Facebook channels about Zokirjon Khursanov, a gas supply employee at Hududgazta'minot, alleging that Mr. Khursanov had embezzled the change for payment from clients who had purchased liquefied gas cylinders.⁷⁰ In a statement made to the investigating authorities after Mr. Sattoriy's arrest, Mr. Khursanov alleged that Mr. Sattoriy had extorted \$200 USD from him on January 19 before publishing the video report.⁷¹ Aside from Mr. Khursanov's statement, no physical evidence of extortion in this episode was presented either during the investigation or at the trial.⁷² Mr. Sattoriy denied demanding any money from Mr. Khursanov and did not receive any.

iv. First Count of Slander (Criminal Code Art. 139(3)(a) & (g))

The prosecution's allegation of slander charge is related to public reporting that Mr. Sattoriy conducted on Mastona Akhmedova, a human resource specialist at the Republican Scientific Medical Center for Oncology and Radiology.⁷³ In June 2020, Mr. Sattoriy prepared a video interview with Sabohat Ravshanova, a doctor employed at the same center, who alleged Ms. Akhmedova had misappropriated the monthly wages of "dead souls" she had employed, that is, employees who were in the record books but not really employed by the company or receiving a monthly wage. The report was uploaded to Mr. Sattoriy's YouTube channel and was supported by financial documentation.

At trial, Ms. Akhmedova could not answer lawyers' questions concerning which statements of Mr. Sattoriy were slanderous. Furthermore, the verdict does not indicate which specific elements of Mr. Sattoriy's report were considered by the court to be "slanderous" but rests solely on Ms. Akhmedova's claims. The video that Mr. Sattoriy published contained interviews with a doctor at the Cancer Center and are supported by documentary evidence.

e. Appeals

⁶⁵ *Prosecutor Asks for 11 Years in Prison for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 42.

⁶⁶ Interview with Source B, January 2022, on file with author.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ *Overview: The Case of Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 13.

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ *Prosecutor Asks for 11 Years in Prison for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 42.

⁷¹ *Overview: The Case of Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 13.

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ *Prosecutor Asks for 11 Years in Prison for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 42.

At the end of May 2021, Mr. Sattoriy appealed his conviction to the Surkhandarya Regional Appeal Court.⁷⁴ The appeal trial began on June 29, 2021.⁷⁵ On July 15, the Samarqand Regional Court of Appeal panel upheld Mr. Sattoriy's conviction and prison sentence, but overturned the decision to confiscate the two apartments.⁷⁶ On the overturning of the decision to confiscate, the court held that the matter of the ownership of the apartments was a civil, not criminal, matter, and the parties have the right to appeal to a civil court with the relevant documents on compensation for non-pecuniary damage caused by the crime.⁷⁷ The apartments were returned to the Sattoriy family.

Mr. Sattoriy further appealed his case to the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan. The first hearing in the appeal occurred on March 2, 2022. On April 5, 2022, the Judicial Collegium for Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court upheld Mr. Sattoriy's conviction and sentence of six-and-a-half years in prison.⁷⁸

f. *Current Status*

Following the entry of force of the trial verdict of May 10, 2021, Mr. Sattoriy was transferred to Navoi Regional Penitentiary No. 4, where he remains at the time of submission.⁷⁹ His family is permitted to visit him once every two months.⁸⁰

B. Legal Analysis

1. Arbitrary Deprivation of Liberty under Category I

A detention is arbitrary under Category I when there is no legal basis or justification for it.⁸¹ The Working Group has found lack of a legal basis for the purposes of Category I when the government fails to support its legal basis for the detention with “enough factual specifics to indicate the substance of the complaint, such as the wrongful act.”⁸²

In the present case, the Uzbekistan government's detention of Mr. Sattoriy amounts to Category I detention because the government has failed to present any substantive evidence to support the charges leading to his detention. The government's purported impetus for arresting Mr. Sattoriy concerned the events of December 20, 2020 at Sherabad District Market and subsequent interactions with Lochin Turaev. The government claimed that Mr. Sattoriy attempted to extort a mobile phone from Mr. Turaev in exchange for not publishing a negative report about Mr. Turaev's market.

⁷⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists, *supra* note 35.

⁷⁴ Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

⁷⁵ Uzbekistan Regional Appeal Court, *Official Statement* (June 29, 2021), <https://t.me/AzizAbidov/155> (in Russian).

⁷⁶ Uzbekistan Supreme Court, *Official Statement* (July 15, 2021), <https://t.me/AzizAbidov/225> (in Russian).

⁷⁷ Interview with Source B, January 2022, on file with author.

⁷⁸ *Supreme Court Upholds Sentence for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *Gazeta.uz* (April 5, 2022), https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2022/04/05/sattoriy/?utm_source=push&utm_medium=telegram (in Russian).

⁷⁹ Committee to Protect Journalists, *supra* note 35.

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ A Category I deprivation of liberty occurs “[w]hen it is impossible for the government to invoke any legal basis under domestic law for detaining the individual” Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, 16th session, A/HRC/16/47, Annex 8(b) (Jan. 19, 2011), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G11/102/76/PDF/G1110276.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁸² *Hoang Duc Binh v. Vietnam*, UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 45/2018, paras. 42-43 (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/WGAD/2018/45>.

The government's claim is unfounded. Mr. Sattoriy did request a phone from Mr. Turaev; however, the request was not made with the intent to illegally obtain a phone from Mr. Turaev. Instead, Mr. Sattoriy sought replacement for the damage done to his phone by Mr. Turaev's employees, who were acting as Mr. Turaev's agents at the time. Furthermore, Mr. Sattoriy maintained a legal right to compensation from the Sherabad District Market, in money or in kind, for the damage that the market security caused to his phone. As a result, Mr. Sattoriy's attempts to obtain compensation for the damage of his phone cannot be reasonably construed as extortion.

These facts were known to government officials at the time of Mr. Sattoriy's arrest. Mr. Sattoriy specifically raised this issue of the seizure and damage of his cell phone to the district mayor's office, and an assistant to the district mayor intervened in the dispute. Accordingly, the government lacked a reasonable factual basis for detaining Mr. Sattoriy, pre-trial and post-conviction, on the basis of extortion charges.

With respect to the remaining charges upon which the government bases Mr. Sattoriy's current detention, government officials appear to have entirely fabricated these charges in retaliation for his reporting activities, and in an attempt to silence future investigations. The government's allegations of extortion do not hold up to scrutiny. In the cases of extortion upon which Mr. Sattoriy's conviction was based, the government alleged that Mr. Sattoriy threatened to disclose negative information about the alleged victim in exchange for money. However, in each case, Mr. Sattoriy, nonetheless, published the investigations that he conducted, suggesting that no agreement or threat actually occurred. Furthermore, during the course of the trial, the government presented no evidence that money had been exchanged between Mr. Sattoriy and the alleged victims, and in one of the cases, the victim at trial denied having been extorted. The allegation of slander was equally without merit, as the report that Mr. Sattoriy published was supported by documentary evidence and the victim herself was unable to identify which statements of the report were slanderous.

The government's allegations that serve as the basis for Mr. Sattoriy's detention were merely pretextual in their attempt to silence Mr. Sattoriy's investigative activities. All of the charges related directly to reports that Mr. Sattoriy published. The government's true motivation was revealed while Mr. Sattoriy was held at the City Police Department, where the deputy head of the department told Mr. Sattoriy that "This is what happens when you interfere in politics, we can imprison you at any time."⁸³ The pretextual nature of the allegations against Mr. Sattoriy was further supported by the fact that all of the purported victim complaints against Mr. Sattoriy were filed on the same day, despite the fact that the victims appeared to not have any connection to one another. Mr. Sattoriy's domestic counsel noted at trial that the submission timing suggest that these cases were initiated in a deliberately planned manner.⁸⁴

Both because the government failed to produce substantive evidence supporting the charges at trial and because the government's entire case against Mr. Sattoriy is an attempt to silence his investigative and reporting efforts, the government's continued detention of Mr. Sattoriy lacks a legal basis and amounts to Category I detention.

2. Arbitrary Deprivation of Liberty under Category II

A detention is arbitrary under Category II of the Working Group's Revised Methods of Work when it results from the exercise of fundamental rights or freedoms protected under international law, including the rights

⁸³ *A Blogger Was Detained in Surkhandarya. Lawyer Says Case Is Fabricated*, *supra* note 30.

⁸⁴ Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

to freedom of expression.⁸⁵ The Government arrested and detained Mr. Sattoriy on the basis of his exercise of his freedom of expression.

a. *The Government's Detention of Mr. Sattoriy Amounts to a Restriction of His Freedom of Expression*

The right to freedom of expression is protected under both international and Uzbekistan law. Article 19(2) of the ICCPR provides that “[e]veryone shall have the right of freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.”⁸⁶ This right is also protected under Article 19 of the UDHR and Article 29 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan.⁸⁷ The Human Rights Committee has clarified that Article 19 of the ICCPR “protects all forms of expression and the means of their dissemination.”⁸⁸ This includes “all forms of audio-visual as well as electronic and internet-based modes of expression.”⁸⁹

In interpreting Article 19 of the ICCPR, the UN Human Rights Committee has emphasized the importance of safeguarding political debate and citizenry’s capacity to criticize political officials. The Committee, for example, has stated that “all public figures, including those exercising the highest political authority such as heads of state and government, are legitimately subject to criticism and political opposition.”⁹⁰ With respect to laws criminalizing defamation, the Human Rights Committee has suggested that States Parties consider decriminalization.⁹¹ Where States continue to criminalize defamation, the truth of the matter and the public interest of the subject matter should always be a defense.⁹²

The Human Rights Committee has been clear that journalistic activities, including the work of bloggers and independent journalists, are protected under Article 19.⁹³ The States Parties to the ICCPR have an obligation to prevent retaliation aimed at silencing those engaged in journalistic activities.⁹⁴ Any restriction on those engaging in journalistic activities must strictly comply with the requirements established in Article 19(3) of the ICCPR.⁹⁵

In the present case, Mr. Sattoriy was targeted, arrested, and detained in retaliation for his legitimate journalistic activities. All of the charges against Mr. Sattoriy, with the exception of the First Count of Extortion, related to investigations that Mr. Sattoriy published on matters of public concern, including corruption. Additionally, the First Count of Extortion related to an attempted investigation that Mr. Sattoriy was pursuing. Detaining Mr. Sattoriy on the basis of these investigations amounts to restriction of his right

⁸⁵ A detention is arbitrary under Category II “when the deprivation of liberty results from the exercise of the rights or freedoms guaranteed by articles 7, 13-14 and 18-21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, insofar as States parties are concerned, by articles 12, 18-19, 21-22 and 25-27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.” Methods of Work of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/33/66, para. 8b [hereinafter “Revised Methods of Work”].

⁸⁶ *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, G.A. Res 2200A (XXI), 21 UN GAOR Supp. (No. 16), at 52, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 999 UNTS 171, entered into force on Mar. 23, 1976 (hereinafter “ICCPR”).

⁸⁷ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc. A/810, <https://undocs.org/ccpr/c/gc/34> [hereinafter “UDHR”].

⁸⁸ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 34, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/34, September 12, 2011, para. 12,

⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁹⁰ *Id.* at para. 38.

⁹¹ *Id.* at para. 47.

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ *Id.* at paras. 11, 43-45.

⁹⁴ *Id.* at para. 23.

⁹⁵ *Id.* at para. 11.

to freedom of expression. This is further supported by the statement of the deputy head of the City Police Department made to Mr. Sattoriy, “This [referring to Mr. Sattoriy’s detention] is what happens when you interfere in politics, we can imprison you at any time.”⁹⁶ Conducting investigations into matters of public concern and publishing the results of those investigations is protected journalistic activity under Article 19 of the ICCPR, and as a result, Mr. Sattoriy’s detention amounts to a restriction on his right to freedom of expression.

b. *None of the Article 19(3) Exceptions Apply in Mr. Sattoriy’s Case*

According to the Human Rights Committee, any restrictions on protected speech must (i) be prescribed by law; (ii) serve a legitimate objective; and (iii) be necessary to achieve and proportionate to that objective.⁹⁷ As stated by the Committee, “[w]hen a State party invokes a legitimate ground for restriction of freedom of expression, it must demonstrate in specific and individualized fashion the precise nature of the threat . . . in particular by establishing a direct and immediate connection between the expression and the threat.”⁹⁸ Objectives deemed legitimate under Article 19(3) of the ICCPR include the protection of public morals, public health, national security, and the rights and reputation of individuals.⁹⁹ The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression has specified that under Article 19 only the gravest of speech offenses should ever be criminalized: child pornography, incitement to terrorism, public incitement to genocide, and advocacy for national, racial, or religious hatred.¹⁰⁰ Specifically with respect to laws criminalizing defamation, the Human Rights Committee has found that imprisonment is never a proportional and appropriate punishment.¹⁰¹

Where a restriction pursues a legitimate objective, it can still “violat[e] the test of necessity if the protection could be achieved in other ways that do not restrict freedom of expression.”¹⁰² The necessity requirement overlaps with the proportionality requirement, as a restriction must be the “least intrusive instrument amongst those which might achieve their protective function.”¹⁰³ States must thereby meet a high threshold to institute criminal prosecutions for the exercise of speech. The Human Rights Committee has emphasized that such restrictions must not “put in jeopardy the right itself.”¹⁰⁴ And, in the case of the right to freedom of expression, the Human Rights Committee has been clear that paragraph 3 should never be used to justify “the muzzling of any advocacy of . . . human rights.”¹⁰⁵

In the present case, none of the legitimate restrictions on the right to freedom of expression apply to the detention of Mr. Sattoriy. As discussed above, the government targeted Mr. Sattoriy on the basis of his journalistic activities. For this reason, the government’s actions qualify as pretextual, and thus are not a legitimate restriction on his rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

⁹⁶ *A Blogger Was Detained in Surkhandarya. Lawyer Says Case Is Fabricated*, *supra* note 30.

⁹⁷ Human Rights Committee, *Kim v. Republic of Korea*, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/64/D/574/1994, 1999, para. 12.2.

⁹⁸ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 34, *supra* note 88.

⁹⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰⁰ UN General Assembly, Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Sixty Sixth Session, U.N. Doc. A/66/290, August 10, 2011, para. 40. *See also* Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights while countering terrorism, A/HRC/31/65, April 29, 2016, para. 38; Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/1996/39, October 1, 1995, Principle 7.

¹⁰¹ General Comment No. 34, *supra* note 88, para. 47.

¹⁰² *Id.* at para. 33.

¹⁰³ *Id.* at para. 34.

¹⁰⁴ General Comment No. 34, *supra* note 88, para. 21.

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* at para. 33.

In the alternative, even if the WGAD were to find that Mr. Sattoriy's case is not entirely pretextual, none of the Article 19(3) exceptions would justify the government's arrest or detention of Mr. Sattoriy, because none of his published reports place at risk national security, public morals, public health, or the rights of others. To allow the government to criminalize Mr. Sattoriy's public reporting on the basis of one of the Article 19(3) exceptions would "put in jeopardy" the very right to freedom of expression. As a result, Mr. Sattoriy's detention does not fall within the scope of the exception to the right to freedom of expression, and the government has violated Articles 19 of the ICCPR and UDHR, rendering Mr. Sattoriy's detention arbitrary under Category II.

3. Arbitrary Deprivation of Liberty under Category III

The government's detention of Mr. Sattoriy amounts to an arbitrary deprivation of liberty under Category III of the Working Group's Revised Methods of Work.¹⁰⁶ Due process is one of the tenets of the right to a fair trial. The minimum international standards of due process are established in the ICCPR, the UDHR, the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (the "Body of Principles"),¹⁰⁷ and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the "Mandela Rules").¹⁰⁸ The Constitution of Uzbekistan likewise ensures the rights of criminal defendants.¹⁰⁹

a. *The Government Violated Mr. Sattoriy's Right to Be Free from Arbitrary Arrest*

Article 9(1) of the ICCPR guarantees "the right to liberty and security of persons," which means "[n]o one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention" and that any deprivation of this liberty must be "on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as are established by law."¹¹⁰ This right to be free from arbitrary arrest is also enshrined in the UDHR at Article 9.¹¹¹ The arbitrariness of an arrest is not determined by reference to local law, but is instead determined by a broader examination of relevant internationally recognized elements including "inappropriateness, injustice, lack of predictability and due process of law, as well as elements of reasonableness, necessity and proportionality."¹¹² The Human Rights Committee has found that an arrest or detention as punishment for the legitimate exercise of the rights as guaranteed by the ICCPR, including freedom of opinion and expression, is arbitrary.¹¹³

As explained in section IV.B.2, Mr. Sattoriy's arrest and detention was retaliation for his legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression and opinion. The government punished and silenced Mr. Sattoriy's speech, which is protected under the ICCPR and UDHR, by arresting and detaining him. Furthermore, the government failed to provide a warrant at the time of Mr. Sattoriy's arrest on January 30, 2021. As a result, Mr. Sattoriy's arrest and detention is arbitrary under Article 9 of the ICCPR and the UDHR, rendering his detention arbitrary under Category III.

¹⁰⁶ According to Category III, a deprivation of liberty is arbitrary "[w]hen the total or partial non-observance of the international norms relating to the right to a fair trial, established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the relevant international instruments accepted by the States concerned, is of such gravity as to give the deprivation of liberty an arbitrary character."

¹⁰⁷ Body of Principles for the Protection of Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, G.A. Res. 47/173, 43 UN GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 298, U.N. Doc. A/43/49 (hereinafter "Body of Principles").

¹⁰⁸ Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, G.A. Res. 70/175, U.N. Doc. A/RES/70/175, (Dec. 17, 2015), <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/175>.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, *supra* note 1, at arts. 25, 26.

¹¹⁰ ICCPR, art. 9(1).

¹¹¹ UDHR, art. 9.

¹¹² Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 35, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/35, December 16, 2014, para. 12.

¹¹³ *Zelaya Blanco v. Nicaragua* (CCPR/C/51/D/328/1988), para. 10.

b. *The Government Violated Mr. Sattoriy's Right to Release Pending Trial*

Article 9(3) of the ICCPR guarantees an individual's right to release pending trial, establishing that "[i]t shall not be the general rule that persons awaiting trial shall be detained in custody"¹¹⁴ The Human Rights Committee has clarified that "[d]etention pending trial must be based on an individualized determination that it is reasonable and necessary taking into account all the circumstances, for such purposes as to prevent flight, interference with evidence or the recurrence of crime. . . ."¹¹⁵ Moreover, principles 38 and 39 of the Body of Principles confirm that, except in special cases, a criminal detainee is entitled to release pending trial.¹¹⁶

In the present case, Mr. Sattoriy was held in pre-trial detention until his conviction, from February 1, 2021 to May 10, 2021. However, the government lacked any legitimate basis for holding Mr. Sattoriy in pre-trial detention. Mr. Sattoriy did not pose a flight risk, as his family lived in the same city, and he did not have a history of traveling abroad. Moreover, there was no evidence that Mr. Sattoriy was at risk of destroying, given that the allegations relied entirely upon testimony. Lastly, there was no evidence that Mr. Sattoriy posed a risk to public safety, as he was not accused of a violent crime and there was no reason to believe that he would commit such an offense prior to his trial. Accordingly, in the absence of a legitimate basis for holding Mr. Sattoriy on pre-trial detention, the government violated Mr. Sattoriy's right to release pending trial. As a result, Mr. Sattoriy's pre-trial detention violated Article 9(3) of the ICCPR and amounts to Category III arbitrary detention.

c. *The Government Violated Mr. Sattoriy's Right to a Fair Trial & Right to Presumption of Innocence*

Article 14(1) of the ICCPR guarantees the right "to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal."¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Article 14(2) of the ICCPR guarantees that "[e]veryone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty."¹¹⁸ This right is reiterated in Article 11(1) of the UDHR.¹¹⁹ The Human Rights Committee has emphasized that States may never "[d]eviat[e] from fundamental principles of fair trial, including the presumption of innocence. . . ."¹²⁰ This right requires that the prosecution bear the burden of proving the charge against a defendant beyond a reasonable doubt.¹²¹

In the present case, the trial did not meet the minimum standards for fairness, and failed to provide Mr. Sattoriy with a presumption of innocence. Mr. Sattoriy's conviction appeared to be a foregone conclusion, as evidenced by the statements of the deputy head of the City Police Department, who told Mr. Sattoriy that "we can imprison you at any time."¹²² At trial, the prosecution failed to provide evidence that money exchanged hands between Mr. Sattoriy and the victims with respect to the extortion charges. Furthermore, the prosecution was unable to explain how Mr. Sattoriy extorted the victims when he published his investigations in spite of the alleged threat of extortion. Lastly, with respect to the charge of slander, there was no evidence presented concerning which statements the victims found to be slanderous. On all of the charges against Mr. Sattoriy, the prosecution failed to prove key facts regarding Mr. Sattoriy's guilt, and

¹¹⁴ ICCPR, art. 9(3).

¹¹⁵ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 35, *supra* note 112.

¹¹⁶ Body of Principles, *supra* note 107, at prin. 38, 39.

¹¹⁷ ICCPR, art. 14(1).

¹¹⁸ ICCPR, art. 14(2).

¹¹⁹ UDHR, art. 11(1).

¹²⁰ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 32, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/32, August 23, 2007, para. 34.

¹²¹ *Id.* at para. 30.

¹²² *A Blogger Was Detained in Surkhandarya. Lawyer Says Case Is Fabricated*, *supra* note 30.

accordingly, the prosecution failed to meet its burden of proof. A conviction based upon inadequate evidence amounts to a violation of a defendant's right to a presumption of innocence and the right to a fair trial. Because the prosecution failed to meet its burden of proving guilt, Mr. Sattoriy's trial did not respect his right to a presumption of evidence and the right to a fair trial. As a result, the government's conviction of Mr. Sattoriy violated Article 14(1) and Article 14(2) of the ICCPR, as well as Article 11(1) of the UDHR. Thus, Mr. Sattoriy's detention on the basis of this trial amounts to Category III arbitrary detention.

V. INDICATE INTERNAL STEPS, INCLUDING DOMESTIC REMEDIES, TAKEN ESPECIALLY WITH THE LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING THE DETENTION AND, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR RESULTS OR THEIR REASONS WHY SUCH STEPS OR REMEDIES WERE INEFFECTIVE OR WHY THERE WERE NOT TAKEN.

At the end of May 2021, Mr. Sattoriy appealed his conviction to the Surkhandarya Regional Appeal Court.¹²³ The appeal trial began on June 29, 2021.¹²⁴ On July 15, the Samarqand Regional Court of Appeal panel upheld Mr. Sattoriy's prison sentence, but overturned the decision to confiscate the two apartments.¹²⁵ The apartments were returned to the Sattoriy family. Mr. Sattoriy further appealed his case to the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan. The first hearing in the appeal occurred in March 2022. On April 5, 2022, the Judicial Collegium for Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court upheld Mr. Sattoriy's conviction and sentence of six-and-a-half years in prison.¹²⁶

VI. FULL NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON(S) SUBMITTING THE INFORMATION (TELEPHONE AND FAX NUMBER, IF POSSIBLE).

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Signature: 

¹²³ Committee to Protect Journalists, *supra* note 35.

¹²³ Answers to interrogatories, *supra* note 25.

¹²⁴ Uzbekistan Regional Appeal Court, *supra* note 75.

¹²⁵ Uzbekistan Supreme Court, *supra* note 76.

¹²⁶ *Supreme Court Upholds Sentence for Blogger Otabek Sattoriy*, *supra* note 78.