

**To Minister of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan  
Mr. Rustam Shohmurod**

**Copy: To Prosecutor General of the Republic of Tajikistan  
Mr. Rahmon Yusuf Ahmadzod**

**Copy: To Deputy Minister of Justice of the Republic of  
Tajikistan, Head of the Main Directorate for  
the Execution of Criminal Sentences of the MoJ RT  
Mr. Umarov Mansurdzhon Gafforovich**

**Civil society Coalition against torture and impunity in Tajikistan expresses its deepest condolences to families of staff members of the Main Directorate for the Execution of Criminal Sentences of the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as families of convicted persons for the loss of their life during a prison riot in correction facilities of the country.**

**Civil society Coalition against torture and impunity is concerned about the increasing occurrences of prison riots and disorders in correction facilities of the country and requires thorough investigation of the cause of prison riots, bringing perpetrators to justice, raising public awareness of the results of such investigations, as well as permission for civil society institutions, independent experts, including Red Cross Committee to gain access to detention facilities for monitoring purposes.**

According to official information of Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan and media information in the evening of May 19 in a high security prison located in Vahdat district, Rohati settlement the clashes took place between inmates and prisons guards in order to destabilize the situation and organize prison escape that led to the killing of correctional facility staff members and inmates.

A group of approximately 30 inmates sentenced for membership in “Islamic State” (prohibited terrorist organization “Islamic State of Iraq and Levant”, ISIL)<sup>1</sup>, stabbed and killed three correctional facility staff members and five inmates, including former opposition figures, beat and injured other inmates, set fire to medical unit of prison, took hostage of several inmates and according to unofficial data, several staff members of correctional facility.<sup>2</sup>

During the operation to quash the revolt 24 persons were killed and 35 were arrested. Three guards and 29 inmates were killed during prison riot, however, “eight of them were allegedly killed by inmates”. According to unofficial data, about 50 persons lost their lives (aged 32 to 55<sup>3</sup>), 30 persons injured.

This is the second case of riot occurred in Tajikistan prisons in recent years which had claimed the lives of a large number of people. So, on the night between November 7 and 8, 2018 a riot took place in high-security prison of Khujand in which 53 persons were died and 186 were injured, and according to unofficial data six staff members of prison were taken to hospital, two staff members of prison died during a riot<sup>4</sup>.

The Coalition is seriously concerned with death, contradictory Media information and absence of official information. Relatives of inmates are not informed of the fate of their family

<sup>3</sup> <https://reporting.cabar.asia/ru/osh-b-dar-zindoni-va-dat-charo-muzokira-surat-nagirift/> (27.05.19 г., 09:22) 21. 05.2019 c.

<sup>3</sup> <https://reporting.cabar.asia/ru/osh-b-dar-zindoni-va-dat-charo-muzokira-surat-nagirift/> (27.05.19 г., 09:22) 21. 05.2019 c.

<sup>3</sup> <https://reporting.cabar.asia/ru/osh-b-dar-zindoni-va-dat-charo-muzokira-surat-nagirift/> (27.05.19 г., 09:22) 21. 05.2019 c.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fergananews.com/articles/10282>, <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/29596314.html>

members in a timely manner. It is reported that those family members taken the dead bodies of inmates are prevented by the authorities from ceremonies at burial. International standards, in particular, Rule No.72 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states that “prison authorities shall treat the dead body with dignity and respect and assist in funeral taking into account cultural traditions if there is no other responsible party willing or capable of doing that”.

We are also concerned about large number of victims and excessive use of force and fire arm when dealing with the riots. The UN basic principles on the use of force and fire arm by law enforcement officials<sup>5</sup> acknowledge that the threat to life and security of law enforcement officials must be considered as a threat to the stability of society as a whole and there should be circumstances in which staff members of prisons may use force while carrying out their duties. At the same time, whenever the use of force and fire arm is inevitable, law enforcement officials should minimize the possibility of damage and injuries and preserve human life; ensure medical care and other assistance to injured persons and affected persons in the shortest possible time; to ensure that relatives or close friends of injured or affected persons are notified at the earliest possible moment.

The Coalition believes that monitoring of detention facilities jointly with Human Rights Commissioner in the Republic of Tajikistan is insufficient and had repeatedly called for a wide range of independent experts to gain an access to detention facilities so that to work more systematically with inmates. Unfortunately, so far, civil society institutions do not have an access to detention facilities in order to conduct monitoring and verify information about possible human rights violations received from prisoners.

We believe that: a) respect for the fundamental guarantee of the rights of prisoners; b) communication with inmates and detainees humanely and fairly and strict respect for their rights; c) providing a working conditions for prison staff members; r) elaboration of a program aimed at reintegration of persons convicted for terrorism and violent extremism to a normal life and their rehabilitation in order to prevent radicalization of convicted persons; d) systematic training in fundamental guarantees of the rights of detainees, specificities of working with particular group of inmates, as well as tactics and methodology for operational works in detention facilities, negotiation in case of disorder - will lead to the recognition of legitimacy and power of prison staff members which will in turn reduce the risk of tension and disorder that entail deprivation of life of both prison staff members and inmates.

In view of the foregoing, Civil Society Coalition against torture and impunity in Tajikistan encourages Government of the country:

- to rapidly make the public aware of true information concerning the reasons for riot in Vahdat high-security prison, list of persons affected by prison riot, as well as the status of the investigation and prosecuting the perpetrators;
- to undertake a thorough, impartial and timely investigation of the causes of riot and each case of death in respect of this event;
- to take appropriate measures to prevent torture, other ill treatment inflicted on inmates in connection with this event and provide all guarantees of the human rights in the process of investigation and judicial proceedings against those accused for plotting and conducting the riot;

---

<sup>5</sup> Adopted by EIGHTH United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders, Havana, Cuba, August 27 – September 7, 1990

- to provide International Red Cross Committee and civil society institutions with an access to detention facilities in order to conduct independent monitoring and implement a program for re-socialization and re-integration of inmates;
- to strengthen the systematic organization of training for prison staff members regarding the rights of prisoners, specificities of working with particular group of inmates, including persons convicted for terrorism and violent extremism, as well as tactics and methodology for operational works in detention facilities and scheme of actions of the prison staff members in case of disorder.

**Brief information:** Civil Society Coalition against torture and impunity is comprised of representatives of human rights organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan and individuals implementing activities on combating torture and ill treatment and operates on the basis of agreed **Rules and principles for participation in Civil Society Coalition against torture and impunity in Tajikistan and in Strategy.**

The members and partners of NGO Coalition against torture in Tajikistan are 13 public organizations and 12 individuals:

1. PO “Apeyron”
2. PO “Association of Pamir legal experts”
3. PO “Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law”
4. PO The League of women with disabilities “Ishtirok”.
5. PO “Independent Center for Human Rights Protection”
6. Social Fund “Notabene”
7. PO “Public Health and Human Rights”
8. PO “The Office of Civil Liberties”
9. PO “Rights and prosperity”
10. Social Fund “Legal initiative”
11. PO “Save the Children”
12. PO “Human Rights Center”
13. PO “OTIFA”
14. Abdurahmon Sharipov, lawyer
15. Askar Tursunov, lawyer
16. Ahliddin Salimov, journalist
17. Gulchehra Kholmatova, lawyer
18. Jaffarbek Yoldashev, legal expert
19. Zoir Razzakov, medical expert
20. Nargis Hamrabayeva, journalist
21. Ranjet Yatimov, legal expert
22. Fazlidding Khodzhayev, journalist
23. Oynihol Bobonazarova, independent expert
24. Umed Niyazov, lawyer
25. Shukhrat Saidov, legal expert