



**2015 OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING, WARSAW,  
STATEMENT IN WORKING SESSION 4: RULE OF LAW I  
(25 September 2015)**

**Chair, Delegates, Participants,**

The International Partnership on Human Rights, Amnesty International, the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia, the Civic Solidarity Platform and Human Rights Watch are concerned that torture and other ill-treatment have effectively become an integral part of the criminal justice system in Uzbekistan and are central to how the authorities deal with criticism and dissent, combat actual or perceived security threats and repress political opponents.

Security forces and prison guards routinely carry out torture and other ill-treatment, including during arrest and transfer to detention facilities, in police custody, pre-trial detention and in prisons.

Police and secret police use torture and other ill-treatment to extract confessions and incriminating information, and to intimidate and punish detainees and their families. Those at particular risk include individuals the authorities perceive as a threat to national security, such as those who practice their faith outside state approved mosques and those who are members or suspected members of banned Islamist groups.

A flawed justice system continues to prevail in Uzbekistan. Courts continue to rely heavily on 'confessions' extracted under torture, duress or deception. Judges ignore or dismiss allegations of torture or other ill-treatment, even when presented with credible evidence in court.

The lack of independence of the judiciary and of an independent mechanism for investigation of allegations of torture results in impunity for many state actors responsible for human rights violations, including torture.

The practice of arbitrarily extending prison terms based on unsubstantiated allegations of disobedience of prison rules under Article 221 of the Criminal Code leads to many prisoners serving *de facto* life sentences with no hope of release in cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions, often amounting to torture. For example, the original nine-year sentence of former MP Murad Dzhuraev has been extended four times for allegedly violating prison rules. He has now spent 21 years in prison. He is scheduled to be released in November this year.

Uzbekistan has no independent monitoring mechanism for all places of detention and the authorities have refused to open their country to effective and independent international human rights scrutiny. Currently, there are 13 pending requests for country visits by the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

We therefore urge the government of Uzbekistan to immediately and publicly condemn the use of torture and other ill-treatment and issue an immediate invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on torture to undertake a fact-finding visit. We call on all other OSCE member states as a matter of priority to urge Uzbekistan to stop the practice of torture and to permit UN Special Procedures to visit Uzbekistan.

Thank you.