

INTERVENTION

OSCE Academy in Bishkek

Payam Foroughi, Research and Teaching Fellow
HDIM, 28 Sept 2011, Warsaw

[The views expressed in this intervention belongs to this Research and Teaching Fellow at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and not necessarily those of the OSCE Academy as a whole.]

➔ On Jan. 4th of this year, the Government of Tajikistan announced that an alleged rebel leader by the name of **Alovuddin Davlatov**, who had been suspected of having been behind a surprise attack on a military truck in Sept. of last year, whereby 28 soldiers were massacred, was himself killed in a 4-hour gun battle with government forces. This version of events seemed solid and believable and even backed up by a news report on the nightly state TV showing the bodies of the alleged rebel and up to 7 of his comrades. The official version, however, began to crumble in a few weeks given evidence from the new social media.

What thousands of Tajik citizens began to share on their hand-held mobiles was a 4-min video, also uploaded on Youtube, where a shirtless bearded man very much resembling the dead corps of Mr Davlatov was shown. But in this video the man was alive and being abused and interrogated by a number of supposed security personnel. What many in Tajikistan (at least in private) have concluded is that Mr Davlatov did not die in a gun battle, but was a victim of an **extrajudicial execution**.

It is unfortunate that three months after the said revelations, the OSCE mission in Tajikistan in its annual address to the PC in May reported that Mr Davlatov was "**killed ... together with seven of his followers during military operations**" (PC.FR/12/11, 6 May 2011). This account of events differs from other independent reports such as that of the June 2011 Economist Intelligence Unit, which told that Mr Davlatov was not killed in an armed raid, but was "**captured, tortured and executed**".

This incidence is an example of the need for the respected Government of Tajikistan, but also the civil society, to do their best to extricate their good country from the practice of torture. It is thus hoped that this incidence will be investigated and those found guilty prosecuted.

Other relevant suggestions to the Government are:

It is important to **sign an agreement with the globally-recognized International Committee of the Red Cross**, thus allowing unhindered access to **all** prisons and detainees, whether under the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior or National Security Committee;

Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture allowing for a joint UN and Government prison inspection programme;

Extend open invitations to all UN Special Rapporteurs (SR), including the SR on Torture;

Follow up on the recommendations on nearly 2 dozen cases of individual rights violations already reviewed by the UN Human Rights Committee;

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek extends its fullest compliments and cooperation to the Government of Tajikistan. Thank you for your attention.