

6 March 2017

## **Uzbekistan: Forced psychiatric confinement of Elena Urlaeva**

On 1 March 2017, human rights defender **Elena Urlaeva** was detained in Tashkent and forcibly sent to psychiatric confinement.

[Elena Urlaeva](#) is the Head of the **Human Rights Defenders Alliance of Uzbekistan** and organises public demonstrations for the right to freedom of association and assembly. She also communicates with victims of human rights violations on an individual basis to collect information on their cases, partly due to the lack of human rights organisations in the region. Recently, Elena Urlaeva has been monitoring cases on the subjection of Uzbek civil servants and students to forced labour in cotton fields.

On 1 March 2017 Elena Urlaeva was arrested at the home of a friend, Kamoliddin Ziyatov. Two other people witnessed the arrest. She was brought to a police station and was insulted and mocked by the police officers, who said she needed psychiatric treatment. She was then brought to the psychiatric ward in Tashkent. The family of Elena Urlaeva were not informed. Elena Urlaeva believes that her detention was aimed to prevent her from attending a meeting with representatives of the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation that was scheduled for 2 March 2017.

Psychiatric detention has been used many times to silence Elena Urlaeva. She was put in psychiatric confinement in 2001, 2005, 2012 and 2016. Elena Urlaeva has been detained by Uzbek authorities on numerous occasions. While in detention, she has suffered [physical attacks](#) and threats.

Front Line Defenders is worried about the physical and psychological state of Elena Urlaeva and believes that her psychiatric confinement is a retaliation measure to her peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Uzbekistan to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Elena Urlaeva from psychiatric confinement, as Front Line Defenders believes that she is being held solely as a result of her legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Elena Urlaeva;
3. Ensure that the treatment of Elena Urlaeva, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the '*Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Uzbekistan and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.



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