

Uzbekistan: 5 Years in Prison for Nasheed

News:

The Almazor District Court of Tashkent sentenced 21-year-old Sardar Rakhmonkulov to 5 years in prison. According to Sardor's relatives, Sardor was severely tortured during his 15-day detention. The BBC Uzbek writes about this.

Sardor Rakhmonkulov, who has been in custody for almost 7 months, was sentenced on 30th of January by the Almazor District Court under Part 1 of Art. 244 of the Criminal Code **"Production, storage, distribution or presentation of materials that pose a threat to public security and public order"** and was sentenced to 5 years in prison. According to his relatives, the prosecutor asked for 3 years in prison for discovering a nasheed tapped in 2020 on the Telegram account of Sardar, who worked in the IT field, but the judge sentenced him to 5 years of imprisonment.

Sardar Rakhmonkulov's mother, Saida Saydalieva, told the BBC that her son was taken away from his grandmother's house in Shaykhontokhur on July 5, 2022 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Service (SGB), arrested for 15 days on charges of hooliganism. **"At 7:30 in the morning the police knocked on the door. Having said that psychotropic substances were found in his car, they searched the house, took away the phone, computer, bag, the son who had never used any drugs in his life, confidently went with them"**, - said Saida Saydaliyeva.

Then Sardor was taken to the anti-terrorist department and where he was demanded the passwords for the phone and computer, when he refused to give the passwords, he was tortured. After checking, the nasheed was found in his phone. According to Sardor, he was tortured for about two weeks in order for him to confess for Islamic publications on Facebook.

Comment:

Observers note that recently in Uzbekistan, the cases of fabrication of criminal cases on similar charges have become more frequent on the part of the SSS officers. Saida Saidalieva, who carried parcels to her son in the Zangiata prison for 6.5 months, said that she met at least 6 such families. All of them face the same charges as her son.

Analysts have recently noted the activation of the SGB (renamed from the infamous SNB) in the Islamic direction, given that since 2016, after Mirziyoyev came to power, Karimov's total repressions have been suspended. Apparently, the special services want to revenge and a return to strengthening their influence, which has weakened under the new president. According to one of the versions, the tightening was initiated by Russia, which traditionally has a strong influence on the leadership of the Uzbek special services.

However, although Mirziyoyev in order to gain popularity among the people and form the image of a civilized ruler in the West really seriously reformed the repressive machine in the country, he also constantly throws threats and uses anti-Islamic rhetoric. Recall that in his address to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan on December 20 last year, Mirziyoyev said: **"We will not allow any kind of radicalization in our society, poison the minds of our youth with destructive foreign ideas, use religion for political purposes, replace knowledge with ignorance."**

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