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Russia/Tajikistan: Izzat Amon abducted in Moscow and transferred to Tajikistan, facing charges of fraud

On 25 March 2021, migrant rights defender **Izzat Amon** was abducted in Moscow and forcibly transferred to Tajikistan. The human rights defender's whereabouts were unknown for two days before the Tajikistan Ministry of Interior reported that he was being held in pre-trial detention in Tajikistan and facing charges of fraud, in connection to his human rights work in Russia.

[Izzat Amon \(Izatullo Kholov\)](#) is a prominent Tajik human rights defender and a Director of the Centre of Tajiks in Moscow. He has been actively defending the rights of migrants from Central Asia in Russia, particularly when their rights are violated by their employers or law enforcement officials, providing them with legal and other necessary support. The human rights defender organised an initiative to support Tajik migrants in Russia who were left unemployed and without an income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including assistance from people in Tajikistan. Izzat Amon has previously criticized the Tajik authorities' lack of support to Tajik migrants living in Russia.

On 25 March 2021, Izzat Amon was abducted in Moscow and taken to an unknown location. The human rights defender managed to pass information about his abduction to his colleagues, however his family was not informed and remained unaware of his whereabouts for two days.

On 26 March 2021, in response to a request for comment on the case, Tajikistan's Interior Ministry [denied](#) that Tajik law enforcement agencies had any connection to Izzat Amon's abduction in Russia. The following day, on 27 March, the Ministry of Interior of Tajikistan reported that Izzat Amon had been deported from Russia in accordance with the decision of the Tverskoy Court of Moscow "for violating the rules of stay in this country and illegally obtaining Russian citizenship", and was detained on charges of fraud on a large scale (Part 4, Article 247 of the Criminal Code of Tajikistan). According to the Ministry, Izzat Amon is currently being held in pre-trial detention in Dushanbe.

On 30 March 2021, in response to his request to the Tverskoy Court of Moscow for further information about the case, Izzat Amon's lawyer was informed that no case against the human rights defender was being considered by the Court. The Court noted that there was a case of a person with the same surname, however it was not Izzat Amon. In light of this information, the legal justification for Izzat Amon's detention and deportation from Russia to Tajikistan remains unclear. The human rights defender's family and lawyer have not received any information about what occurred, including how and why he was transferred to Tajikistan.

Prior to his abduction, on 23 March 2021, Izzat Amon had uploaded a YouTube video, addressing the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. In the video, the human rights defender recounted that several days before his Russian passport had been annulled. He predicts that he will be sent to Tajikistan and jailed for his work criticising the Tajik authorities. The human rights defender also mentioned that he has been under surveillance for the previous six months, which he believes is in retaliation against his work helping Tajik migrants living in Russia.

Front Line Defenders condemns the abduction and deportation of Izzat Amon to Tajikistan, and is seriously concerned by the fabricated charges against him, which it believes are in connection with his peaceful and legitimate work defending the rights of migrants in the Russian Federation.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Russia to:

1. Immediately reverse the decision to revoke Izzat Amon's Russian citizenship. and reinstate his passport;
2. Allow Izzat Amon to return to Russia;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Russia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities of Tajikistan to:

1. Immediately release human rights defender Izzat Amon and drop the charge of fraud against him, as Front Line Defenders believes that he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate human rights work;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Izzat Amon, 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;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Tajikistan are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.