



**FREEDOM
FOR
EURASIA**



FREEDOM NOW

IPHR

International
Partnership
for Human Rights



Norwegian
Helsinki Committee

January 14, 2025

H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Street, Al Bateen
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

C/O:
H.E. Yousef Al Otaiba
3522 International Court NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20008, United States

Re: Urgent Concern Regarding Kyrgyz Activist Tilekmat Kudaibergen uulu

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned international human rights organizations, write to draw your attention to the deeply concerning case of Tilekmat Kudaibergen uulu (also known as Tilekmat Kurenov), a Kyrgyz civil society activist currently in Dubai who faces potential extradition to the Kyrgyz Republic. We are concerned that Kyrgyz authorities are abusing international policing mechanisms in an attempt to forcibly return Mr. Kudaibergen to Kyrgyzstan, where he faces a significant risk of further political persecution, torture and other serious human rights violations in retaliation for his civic activism.

Mr. Kudaibergen uluu was first singled out for persecution in Kyrgyzstan in 2021 after publicly protesting against constitutional reform, initiated by President Sadyr Japarov, which introduced sweeping presidential powers. On March 15, 2021, he was arrested on unfounded charges of "attempting to seize power and organizing mass unrest" following unsanctioned searches of his home and office. On August 20, 2021, a local court found him guilty and sentenced him to 18 months in prison despite the lack of credible evidence to support the charges against him.

During his imprisonment, Mr. Kudaibergen uluu reported being subjected to physical and psychological torture. He was repeatedly placed in solitary confinement for alleged violations of prison rules, received death threats, and was intimidated by cellmates. He was released on September 17, 2022, after serving out his sentence.

Fearing further politically motivated persecution, he left Kyrgyzstan following his release in 2022 and went to the United States, where he sought asylum together with his wife and children. His asylum procedure is ongoing.

Mr. Kudaibergen uluu traveled to Dubai on November 11, 2024 to meet with other activists from Kyrgyzstan. On November 18, he was detained by Dubai police and informed of an extradition request for

him from Kyrgyzstan. He was released after 24 hours, pending an investigation into the extradition request. However, on January 3, 2025, he was detained again and held for over nine hours after the Kyrgyz government submitted another extradition request for him, which cited spurious fraud allegations. UAE authorities are now considering this extradition request.

Shortly prior to his first detention, Mr. Kuidabergen uluu's passport went missing under unclear circumstances. Mr. Kuidabergen uluu was sharing his hotel room with a former politician from Kyrgyzstan. This person abruptly cut his visit short and left Dubai, citing urgent business. After his departure, Mr. Kuidabergen uluu realised he was missing his passport. Without his passport, Mr. Kudaibergen has been unable to leave the United Arab Emirates and reunite with his family in the United States. He has registered as an asylum seeker with the office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Dubai, and UNHCR is currently assessing his application for refugee status.

Given Mr. Kudaibergen's profile and the Kyrgyz authorities' repeated attempts to suppress his activism, there are substantial grounds to believe that, if forcibly returned to Kyrgyzstan, he would face arbitrary detention, unfair trial, torture and other ill treatment, and other grave human rights abuses. Non-refoulement is a [fundamental principle](#) under international human rights, refugee, humanitarian, and customary law, prohibiting states from transferring or removing individuals from their jurisdiction or effective control when there are substantial grounds to believe the person would face a risk of irreparable harm upon return, including persecution, torture, ill-treatment, or other severe human rights violations. This principle is explicitly set out in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Article 3.1. of the Convention prohibits the forced return or extradition of a person to a state where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture. Article 3.2. states that for "the purpose of determining whether there are such grounds, the competent authorities shall take into account all relevant considerations including, where applicable, the existence in the State concerned of a consistent pattern of gross, flagrant or mass violations of human rights".

We, the undersigned human rights organizations, have, through our extensive work on Kyrgyzstan, documented the [widespread](#) nature of torture and politically motivated persecution in the country. [Official sources](#) have also documented the prevalence of torture. In addition, international human rights bodies have [voiced serious concerns](#) over the torture and persecution of activists denied their freedom of expression and other fundamental rights in Kyrgyzstan.

Against the background of the information provided above, we respectfully call upon the UAE to uphold its international obligations, including those under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by refraining from forcibly returning Mr. Kudaibergen uluu to Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, we call on you to ensure his liberty and safety while on UAE soil, to protect his fundamental rights and to coordinate with the United States to facilitate his reunification with his family.

Sincerely,

Freedom For Eurasia
International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)
Norwegian Helsinki Committee
Freedom Now