

**TO: THE UNITED NATIONS, OSCE, U.S.PRESIDENT BUSH,
U.S. CONGRESS,
AND TO OUR UZBEK FRIENDS**

May 17, 2005

We, the participants in the Network of the Center for Pluralism, and friends from over twenty countries from Kyrgystan to Serbia & Montenegro, from Lithuania to Crimea – that is from countries which were under communist dictatorships – are outraged by the recent events in Uzbekistan and by the lack of adequate response from the democratic countries.

As democratic activists, former dissidents and oppositionists, journalists, human rights activists, members of parliament and ordinary citizens, we do not accept the Uzbek government explanations that the events were provoked by “Islamic radicals”, and that shooting unarmed women and children is part of the “global war on terrorism”.

We know enough about Uzbekistan to be able to understand unarmed people’s protests against injustice and against dictatorship. We know enough history to remember the millions of people murdered as “trockists” in the Soviet Union. Calling the popular protests “Islamic revolts” is a way to gain the West’s sympathy and silence about torture and relentless persecution of human rights activists and critics of the Uzbek’s regime.

We appeal to the United Nations to put immediately the Uzbek’s government repression against its own population on the agenda, to activate different UN agencies to act accordingly to their mandate;

We appeal to the OSCE to send immediately observers and monitors to the towns and cities of the Fergana Valley, to the border crossings between Uzbekistan and Kyrgystan and to Tashkent and larger cities where peaceful demonstrations against the bloody government response are broken up by the security services.

We appeal to the OSCE to establish an Inquiry Commission to assess the real danger of “Islamic terrorism” in the Fergana Valley (or lack of it).

We appeal to President Bush to give credibility to his words and denounce the Uzbek dictatorship and to understand that the US cannot be a partner, or a friend of a cruel dictatorship. The Uzbek people have the same aspirations and the same rights as the citizens of Georgia, Poland or the US.

We appeal to the US Congress to open hearings on the recent events in Uzbekistan, and to condemn the bloodshed of peaceful demonstrators.

We want to tell the Uzbek people: We know how hard it is to gain freedom and democracy; we know how many sacrifices you have made. We know that you are not standing up for any caliphates, or foreign movements. We know that you are going on the streets because you want to feed your families, because you don’t want millions of educated youngsters to leave every year for Russia and Turkey in search of jobs, because you want to elect your representatives, because you do not want to fear the policeman or the secret agent, because you want simple justice and freedom.

We want to tell you that you have many friends all around the world.

For contact and information:

Human rights center “Citizens against corruption”, Tolekan Ismailova, info@anticorruption.kg
Institute of Democracy in Eastern Europe, Irena Lasota, irena@idee.org