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DROITS CIVILS ET POLITIQUES ET, NOTAMMENT, QUESTIONS
DE LA TORTURE ET DE LA DÉTENTION

Note verbale datée du 20 mars 2003, adressée au Bureau de New York
du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme
par la Mission permanente de l'Ouzbékistan auprès de
l'Organisation des Nations Unies

La Mission permanente de la République d'Ouzbékistan auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies présente ses compliments au Bureau de New York du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme et a l'honneur de soumettre un communiqué de presse (ci-joint) relatif à la réunion d'information tenue le 19 mars 2003, à Tachkent, par M. Abdulaziz Kamilov, Conseiller d'État auprès du Président de la République d'Ouzbékistan, à l'intention des journalistes étrangers accrédités en Ouzbékistan, à propos du projet de rapport de M. Theo van Boven, Rapporteur spécial sur la question de la torture.

La Mission permanente de la République d'Ouzbékistan auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies saurait gré au Bureau de New York du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme de bien vouloir faire distribuer le communiqué de presse* ci-joint en tant que document de la Commission des droits de l'homme réunie à Genève.

* Reproduit tel quel en annexe, uniquement dans la langue dans laquelle il a été reçu.

UZBEKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



PRESS RELEASE

Briefing by State adviser to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Mr. A. Kamilov for foreign journalists, accredited in Uzbekistan

On March 19, 2003 the briefing for foreign journalists, accredited in Uzbekistan, was held in the Guest House of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The State adviser to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. A. Kamilov spoke on the draft report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, and made the following statement:

“We consider the visit to Uzbekistan by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Mr. Theo van Boven, which was initiated by the Uzbek side and took place November 24 - December 7, 2002, as a logical continuation of our country's efforts towards promoting democratic reforms.

Moreover, considerable attention should be given to the fact that Uzbekistan was one of the first states on the post-Soviet area which invited the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. Prior to his visit, we took into consideration all his wishes and created necessary conditions which were most favourable and conducive for the productive work. He was provided by all possible assistance towards successful fulfilment of his mission; the meetings had been arranged with top officials at various ministries and institutions; visits to the penitentiaries were held.

Uzbekistan attaches the great importance to the work that has been accomplished by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Mr. Theo van Boven.

Evaluating his visit to Uzbekistan, we find it pertinent to make the following observations:

First. We consider aforesaid UN mission to Uzbekistan as the beginning of a long-term co-operation with this UN Institution on issues of human rights in penitentiaries.

Second. Despite the efforts of the Government of Uzbekistan, there are certain facts of serious violation of human rights in the detention places. We are not trying to conceal it. The mass media of our country has already reported

about 4 law-enforcement officers who were convicted for unlawful acts, including violent actions against two citizens of Uzbekistan.

Third. Strongly condemning this kind of incidents, I would like to emphasise that these cases are not of systemic character. The State will use all the resources and capabilities in its possession to continue the relentless struggle with any violation of human rights and, especially, the torture of people.

Fourth. The Uzbek side gave a special attention to the conclusions and recommendations contained in the draft report.

Therefore currently:

- the Action Plan on implementing the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture is under consideration;
- a number of human rights organisations has been granted an access to the women's prisons and juvenile settlements. It is envisaged in the future to expand an access to detainees at male prisons;
- special educational programmes are being designed for the administration and staff at the detention places;
- in the framework of parliamentary reforms, a draft of new edition of the Law on Ombudsman has been prepared and forwarded for elaboration. The draft Law envisages expansion of Ombudsman's authority.

Fifth. We highly appreciate the co-operation that we have started with Mr. Theo van Boven. His draft report is being thoroughly studied by the relevant ministries and institutions of our country with a view to apply it for the improvement of the penitentiaries in Uzbekistan. At the same time our experts made a note of certain points in the report as erroneous and incorrect.

In this regard, the Uzbek side has directed to Mr. Theo van Boven its proposals and remarks and remains hopeful that they will be taken into consideration during the preparation of the final version of the report.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan is determined to conduct in-depth democratic reforms in the field of human rights. Uzbekistan is interested in and is ready for an open co-operation in this sphere with various international organisations, such as the UN, OSCE, EC and others, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture."
