



## **Uzbekistan: Islam Karimov stayed at power and retained the dictatorial regime**

### **CA-News asked us to comment on the election of the President of Uzbekistan.**

The elections were held on 29 March 2015. Four candidates ran for the position - Islam Karimov, nominated by the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (UzLiDeP), Narimon Umarov nominated by the "Adolat" Social Democratic Party, Hatamzhon Ketmonov nominated by the People's Democratic Party (the former Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR) and Akmal Saidov nominated by the "Milly Tiklanish" (National Revival) Democratic Party.

It was officially announced that Islam Karimov was re-elected for another term. As stated by the Central Election Commission, 18,928,000 people (91.01 per cent) of the eligible population participated in the voting, Karimov was elected collecting 90.39 percent of votes. It is impossible to cross-check the official data.

### **1. Could you comment for us on the presidential elections in Uzbekistan?**

In fact, there was a substitution of the concept. A formalistic event of national importance was called the presidential elections in Uzbekistan, aimed at preserving the power of the dictator Islam Karimov. All other candidates were well aware that they have no chance to come to power. A former Chairman of the Constitutional Court of Uzbekistan Mirza-Ulugbek Elchievich ABDUSALOMOV coordinated the process resorting to the budget of the country. So do not be surprised that the Supreme Law of Uzbekistan is not respected.

This can happen only in a dictatorships and totalitarian control everywhere, in the absence of opposition, freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of assembly.

The voting figures declared, of course, are touching. No room for intrigue at all! More than 90% of the vote were given for Islam Karimov. We shall probably never find out the real results.

And now, it remains to be seen who will congratulate Islam Abduganiyevich with the victory and call this a farce the presidential election.

### **2. What Uzbekistan will be like after them?**

Prospects are sad. The official Tashkent sees any alternative view as anti-constitutional. In fact, in Uzbekistan, there is no constitutional system - there is a regime of the dictator Karimov. And the last "election" showed it very clearly.

Political repression, restrictions of rights and freedoms will be amplified. Not only will the critics of the regime and representatives of religious organisations and communities be in danger. The authorities are targeting those who lived abroad for more than three months. Through them, the authorities find out who and where applied for the status of a refugee. Those who applied for this status have openly been called "traitors of the Motherland." Moreover, the courts do not take into account that these citizens are prosecuted on the basis of self-incrimination, obtained under torture. Chances of saving the defendants is negligible, since they are actively being used by the Karimov regime propagandists. Relatives of victims of human rights violations are discriminated against, they are barred from taking the civil service.

This wave of repressions is aimed at asylum seekers who returned to Uzbekistan, their relatives living in the country and political exiles.

There are more than 100 already documented cases where the security services of Uzbekistan exert pressure on political refugees, including intimidation and acts of attempted murder.

In November 2014 an update of the "black list" became known. It includes all those whom the National Security Service announced unreliable. In general, Karimov is fast creating the political wilderness in Uzbekistan. He is aiming to save himself from criminal liability by using the participation of the most obedient. Also, he needs to protect his daughters Gulnara and Lola. The latter, together with her husband Temur Tillaev in a close cooperation of the criminal authority figure Salim Abduvaliyev holds a monopoly on the supply of consumer goods in the market via a company called "Abusahy" and the transportation of the goods by the logistics company of the same name. Meanwhile, Lola Karimova hides behind the status of a UNESCO representative in Uzbekistan. This is how a criminal family gained unlimited access to the country's budget and they are enriching themselves with the help of corrupt schemes. Trying to avoid responsibility, they (Islam Karimov's family) dump the blame on "scapegoats". Therefore, the judicial system continues to depend on the executive branch headed by Islam Karimov, and, this criminal regime will not give up the practice of torture. He radicalises the society, which gives rise to intensifying repressions.

Only the adequate response of the international community, as well as activity of human rights activists and other actors of the civil society can influence the Islam Karimov regime.

**Nadejda Atayeva, President of the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia.**