

15

Feb  
2018  
▲ Lvl. 1

No state  
reply yet

Russian Federation

Alert created on: 08 Aug 2017

## Novaya Gazeta Correspondent to be Deported

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Detention and imprisonment of journalists

### NO STATE REPLY YET

PARTNER: Index, CPJ, EFJ/IFJ, RSF

Journalist for independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta, Khudoberdi Nurmatov, also known as Ali Feruz, was detained by police on 1 August 2017 and is now set to be deported back to Uzbekistan, his native country following a decision of the Basmanyi district court in Moscow.

Nurmatov said a police officer stopped him on the street asking for his documents and then ordered him to get into the police car. At the station, officers filed out papers stating that he violated immigration laws. Nurmatov was also fined 5000 rubles (80 euros).

Nurmatov has been based in Russia since 2011 after fleeing Uzbekistan where he was allegedly detained and tortured by officers from the National Security service for refusing to secretly collaborate with them. In May 2016 and in February 2017, Russia refused to grant the journalist temporary asylum.

Friends and supporters are worried that he could be abducted by Uzbekistan security forces.

Human Rights organizations documented several cases of Uzbek citizens who had been seeking asylum or had been granted refugee status have gone missing in Moscow in recent years only to reappear some time later in Uzbek jails.

Nurmatov wrote articles on Uzbek domestic policy and the conditions in which Central Asian immigrants live in Moscow. Human Rights organisations believe that sending Khudoberdi Nurmatov back to Uzbekistan would put him in great danger as his journalistic activities and defence of human rights expose him to the worst in a country where torture is systematically used.

According to the journalist's lawyer Daniil Khaimovich, Nurmatov attempted to commit suicide in a hallway at the court house. Before trying to cut his wrists the journalist told his lawyer "I would rather die than return to Uzbekistan". He was later taken to a deportation centre in Moscow. He was allegedly beaten during his transfer to the deportation centre and sustained significant injuries.

### UPDATES

**15 Feb 2018:** On 15 February 2018, Ali Feruz was on his way to a third country after a Moscow court allowed him to travel to any country outside his native Uzbekistan.

➔ **Article published by RFE/RL: "Journalist Escapes Deportation, Leaves Russia For Third Country"**

**09 Feb 2018:** On 9 February 2018, the Moscow Basmany Court ruled that Ali Feruz has the right to file an application requesting to leave Russia for a third country.

**02 Feb 2018:** On 2 February 2018, a Moscow court allowed Novaya Gazeta's journalist Ali Feruz to leave Russia.

➔ **TASS dispatch**

**24 Jan 2018:** On 24 January 2018 Russia's Supreme Court partially accepted Nurmatov's appeal, cancelling his deportation order and ruling that his case must be sent back to the Moscow City Court for revision.

➔ **Article published by RFE/RL: "Uzbek Journalist Won't Be Deported From Russia, For Now"**

**22 Nov 2017:** On 21 November 2017, the Basmany District Court of Moscow fined Nurmatov for "illegal work" in Russia and ordered his deportation. His deportation however remains suspended following the issuing of an interim measure by the European Court of Human Rights. The deportation process will remain halted while his case is reviewed by the ECHR.

➔ **Article published by the Russian Legal Information Agency: "Newspaper journalist fined for illegal work activity in Russia"**

**23 Oct 2017:** On 20 October 2017, a Moscow district court turned down Nurmatov's claim against the Russian Interior Ministry's immigration department for refusing to grant him asylum.

➔ **Article published in the Moscow Times**

**08 Aug 2017:** A Moscow City Court ruled on 8 August 2017 that Nurmatov cannot be deported until the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) examines his complaints. The ECHR issued an interim measure on 4 August barring his transfer to Uzbekistan for the duration of the proceedings before the Court. Interim measures are urgent measures which, in accordance with the established practice of the European Court of Human Rights, apply only where there is an imminent risk of irreparable damage ([http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/PD\\_interim\\_measures\\_intro\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/PD_interim_measures_intro_ENG.pdf)).

➔ **Article published by RFE/RL : "Moscow Court Halts Journalist's Deportation To Uzbekistan"**

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



- ➔ Article published by the Echo of Moscow (in Russian)
- ➔ Report published on Mapping Media Freedom platform : "Novaya Gazeta correspondent to be deported "
- ➔ CPJ report

## FOLLOW-UPS



**OSCE** 27 Jan 2018 | OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Désir welcomes Russian Supreme Court decision as positive step, calls for release of Ali Feruz.

- ➔ Statement by Harlem Désir

**OSCE** 08 Aug 2017 | OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media closely following appeal against deportation of journalist Ali Feruz with hope for a positive outcome.

- ➔ Tweet by Harlem Désir



**08 Aug 2017** | Commissioner for Human Rights calls "on the Russian authorities to release Mr Nurmatov from the temporary detention facility and to ensure that he is provided with all the necessary procedural safeguards in the context of the administrative proceedings in question".

- ➔ Facebook post by the Commissioner for Human Rights