

## **Press Release**

### **FIDH welcomes the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee recalling the obligations of Uzbekistan regarding the respect of human rights.**

**Paris - New York, April 2, 2010** - The Human Rights Committee of the United Nations publicized on March 25, 2010 its concluding observations relative to the third periodic report of Uzbekistan on the application of the International Covenant on civil and political rights.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) welcomes the recommendations of the committee regarding the appalling situation of human rights in Uzbekistan and the fact that it took into account the concerns expressed by NGOs. This strong message given to the Uzbek government now needs to go hand in hand with an appropriate pressure of the international community so as to ensure full compliance to the Covenant.

Some of the main preoccupations of the committee are the issues of accountability and impunity, especially regarding the practice of torture. The question of the Andijan Massacres of 2005 was also addressed since the committee prompted the Uzbek authorities to conduct "an independent investigation" and ensure prosecution and punishment of those found guilty. At the same time, the right to due process was widely emphasized by the UN body.

FIDH especially welcomes the fact that the committee urges Uzbekistan to "allow representatives of international organizations and NGOs to enter and work in the country and should guarantee journalists and human rights defenders in Uzbekistan the right to freedom of expression in the conduct of their activities". Indeed, freedom of opinion, expression and association is not ensured in Uzbekistan. Nine members of one of FIDH's member organisations, Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU) are still in prison in critical health conditions on the basis of fabricated criminal cases. The situation of HRSU is emblematic of the situation of human rights defenders who face threats, violence and risk of arbitrary detention.

The question of child labor, put forward in a report published by Human Rights in Central Asia in coordination with FIDH was also acknowledged by the committee which urged the government to ensure that the new laws which were recently voted are effectively applied. Finally, the issues of discrimination against women and on the basis of sexual orientation were underscored by the committee as important points of concern.

FIDH urges the Uzbek government to implement as soon as possible the recommendations of the Committee, especially regarding the situation of human rights defenders, impunity, and accountability. FIDH will continue, with the help of its leagues, to monitor the conformity of the situation on the ground to the international covenant on civil and political rights.

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