



Association Droits de l'Homme en Asie Centrale

Centre MBE 140, 16, rue du Docteur Leroy, 72000 Le Mans, France

Tel.: +33 6 49 38 86 59; Email: asiecentrale@neuf.fr

PRESS RELEASE

2 April 2015

Poor protection of citizenship of the Russian Federation for the former citizens of Uzbekistan

Legal arrangements of the Russian Federation do not protect the interests of its citizens who were previously citizens of Uzbekistan.

We have compelling evidence that the citizens of Uzbekistan who renounce their Uzbek nationality, attested and certified by a notary, and legally acquire citizenship of the Russian Federation are not considered to be citizens of Uzbekistan.

The practice is as follows: when those who renounce Uzbek citizenship arrive in Uzbekistan as citizens of the Russian Federation, on Russian passport, they not only violate the passport regime, but also face prosecution under the following articles of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan:

- 223 (Illegal Exit from or Entry into the Republic of Uzbekistan) (punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to 10 years);
- 157 «High Treason», 160 «Espionage», applicable to current and former military personnel and employees of the law enforcement agencies, (punishable by imprisonment for up to 20 years).

Official Tashkent accused many individuals, born in Uzbekistan, who acquired the citizenship of the Russian Federation of involvement in informal religious groups and communities. Many of them have been put on the wanted list. We know of cases where Russia extradited them to Uzbekistan, despite the fact that, in accordance with Article 61 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, citizen of the Russian Federation may not be deported from Russia or extradited to another state. Individuals in the above-mentioned categories, most often, have two passports (Uzbek and Russian); this is because they hide from the Uzbek authorities the fact that they have dual citizenship, in order to be able to come to visit their families.

Under the current legislation of Uzbekistan, in accordance with articles 19 (Grounds for Termination of Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan), 20 (The Secession from Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan) and 21 (Forfeiture of Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan) of the Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the renunciation of the citizenship of Uzbekistan is lawful from the date of publication of the Decree of the

President of Uzbekistan. However, the public is not aware of the existence of at least one such decree.

For registration of Russian citizenship, it is sufficient to show the declaration of renunciation attested by a notary and sent by registered mail to the Embassy of Uzbekistan. Applications for renunciation of citizenship, sent to the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, do not result in any kind of response.

Lack of transparency in the procedure and the process of discontinuation of Uzbek citizenship leads to massive human rights violations, sometimes, to imprisonment and seizure of property acquired during the period Uzbek citizenship. Neither, any appeal to the state authorities of Uzbekistan, no litigation restore justice, they only stimulate deepening of already widespread corruption in Uzbekistan. Meanwhile, the authorities of the Russian Federation react only in rare cases. They typically exhibit a passive attitude towards the current practice.

Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA) notes the urgent need to inform the individuals, who may be affected, about the consequences of such practices.

The AHRCA would like to address:

- The head of the Federal Migration Service of Russia Mr. Konstantin Romodanovsky,
- Human Rights Ombudsman of the Russian Federation Mrs. Eleanora Panfilova

with a request to explain what legal mechanisms exist to protect the interests of the above mentioned categories of new Russian citizens.