

## **Journalists imprisoned in Central Asia, according to CPJ research:**

### **Kyrgyzstan: 1**

**Azimjon Askarov**, independent reporter and human rights activist, is serving a life sentence on retaliatory [charges](#) in connection with the 2010 ethnic conflict. Askarov was tortured in custody and his trial was marred with procedural violations. His case has also been highlighted by the [State Department](#). A CPJ [special report](#) in 2012 found that Askarov was imprisoned in retaliation for his coverage of abuses committed by law enforcement agents in southern Kyrgyzstan. Askarov is a recipient of CPJ's 2012 International Press Freedom Award and the State Department's 2014 Human Rights Defender Award.

### **Turkmenistan: 1**

**Saparmamed Nepeskuliyev**, a contributor to the independent news website *Alternative Turkmenistan News* (ATN) and the Turkmen service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, has been held incommunicado after his [arrest](#) on July 7, 2015. He has reported on water shortages and the poor social and economic conditions in the country, according to ATN Director Ruslan Myatiyev. On August 31, he was given three years in prison for drug possession, according to ATN. A week later, his mother [said](#) that authorities had denied her family access to information about the journalist's whereabouts and barred her from visiting him.

### **Uzbekistan: 4**

**Muhammad Bekjanov**, editor of the opposition newspaper *Erk*, and **Yusuf Ruzimuradov**, a reporter for the paper, are the two longest-imprisoned journalists worldwide, CPJ research [shows](#). Both journalists were jailed in 1999 on politicized anti-state charges after being extradited from Ukraine. They were convicted of publishing and distributing a banned newspaper, participating in a banned political protest, and attempting to overthrow the regime. In 2012, shortly before Bekjanov was scheduled to be released, authorities [sentenced him to another five years in prison](#), citing violation of unspecified prison rules. Ruzimuradov was due to be released in May 2014, but authorities extended his sentence for an undisclosed period because of unspecified violations of prison rules, according to [Human Rights Watch](#).

[Salidzhon Abdurakhmanov](#), a reporter for the now-defunct independent news website *Uznews*, was imprisoned in 2008 after traffic police who stopped his car said they found drugs in his trunk. The journalist denied possessing narcotics and said the police planted them in retaliation for his reporting. Abdurakhmanov had reported on corruption in regional law enforcement agencies, including the traffic police, for *Uznews*. He also contributed to the U.S. government-funded broadcasters Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America and to the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting. According to CPJ

interviews, his trial was marred with procedural violations and lack of evidence. In 2008, a court convicted him and handed him a 10-year prison term. His appeals have been denied.

**Dilmurod Saiid**, a freelance reporter, is serving a [12-and-a-half-year prison term](#) after being convicted of extortion and forgery. International human rights and press freedom groups including CPJ believe the charges were fabricated in retaliation for his journalism. Saiid had reported on official abuses against farmers for the independent regional news website *Voice of Freedom* and other outlets. Prosecution witnesses later recanted their statements and said they had been pressured by the authorities to testify against Saiid. Their statements were ignored. When the court sentenced Saiid in a July 2009 closed-door trial, his lawyer and family were not present. In November 2009, Saiid's wife and 6-year-old daughter were killed in a car accident on their way to visit him in prison. Authorities rejected Saiid's 2011 application for amnesty, citing alleged violations of penal colony rules, *Uznews* reported. In a rare note from jail in January 2013, the [journalist made reference](#) to being tortured in jail.