

Imprisoned human rights activist Mutabar Tadzhibayeva wrote "her last open letter to Karimov" and declared a hunger-strike

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Prominent human rights activist Mutabar Tadzhibayeva from the Ferghana Valley went on a hunger-strike in jail on December 7, her lawyer Dilafuz Nigmatova told Arena (<http://www.freeuz.org>).

Imprisoned two months ago, Tadzhibayeva wrote her fourth and "last open letter" to President Islam Karimov that same day.

"Mr. President! I no longer trust you and call a hunger-strike by way of proof. Movement Civil Society I've founded can do without me," the human rights activist wrote.

Tadzhibayeva listed numerous episodes of offences and application of pressure by the authorities and law enforcement agencies. She mentioned two thefts of documents and photos from her apartment, numerous attempts to kidnap her daughter, assault and battery (one such episode in the street in front of the prosecutor's office), numerous official reprimands on fake charges, and even an attempt to poison her.

On December 6, 2003, a drunk official of the regional administration called Tadzhibayeva on the phone and said in a string of invectives, "You'll answer for everything now. You've ruined your own life." Tadzhibayeva was in a traffic accident a week later. The law enforcement agencies have never responded to any of her official complaints.

"I've trusted you," Tadzhibayeva wrote to the president. "That is why I always wrote in my letters to you about the officials interfering with your policy and neglecting the law. I did not think it was the government that was guilty of human rights abuses. I pinned the blame on individual officials and openly said so in front of ordinary men and politicians."

Tadzhibayeva was arrested in October 7. She sent three letters to the president - on October 29 and November 12 and 15. Every new letter resulted in more and more pressure applied to the human rights activist who was not even permitted to see her family.

"I've spent more than two months in jail for aspiring for at least some fairness in the Ferghana Valley," Tadzhibayeva wrote.

"Neither the Constitution nor the law is observed in Uzbekistan. I'm calling a hunger-strike as of today. I also refuse medical and any other help. I was arrested for what I was doing to build the civil society you [the president - Ferghana.Ru news agency] promote. I'm determined to give up life in the name of civil society and in order to have the people finally see the sunlight," Tadzhibayeva wrote to the president.

Founder of Movement Civil Society, the head of human rights organization Fiery Hearts Club, member of the International Human Rights Organization, and nominee of the initiative "Nobel Peace Award to 1,000 Women", Tadzhibayeva was arrested on the eve of departure for an international conference of human rights activists in Dublin (Ireland).