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# Uzbek President Karimov's daughter sues French website

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**Libel proceedings brought against a French website by the daughter of Uzbek President Islam Karimov have begun in Paris.**

Lola Karimova-Tillyaeva is suing the **Rue89** online journal for describing her as "the daughter of a dictator".

She believes a number of comments in an article written by Augustin Scalbert last May are libellous.

Uzbek human rights activists living in exile in Europe are to appear as witnesses.

Mrs Karimova-Tillyaeva also disputes Mr Scalbert's claim that she paid film star Monica Bellucci 190,000 euros (£167,500; \$270,800) to appear at a charity event to "whitewash" Uzbekistan's poor human rights record.



Journalist Augustin Scalbert (right), and Rue89 editor Pierre Haski (left) are fighting the libel case

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Mr Scalbert says he can prove his claims.

Witnesses for the defence include rights activist Mutabar Tadjibayeva, who was a victim of torture and rape inside an Uzbek jail. She was released only after international pressure.

**Mrs Karimova-Tillyaeva** works in Paris as Uzbekistan's ambassador to the UN cultural body Unesco.

Numerous reports by organisations such as the UN, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have described Uzbekistan as a country with an appalling human rights record where there are thousands of political and religious prisoners.

According to the UN special rapporteur on torture, such abuse by Uzbek security services has been systematic during President Karimov's two decades in power.

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