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Central Asia news

“The State, it is I” or An unsuccessful bid to meet Gulnara Karimova

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A guard in tracksuit and the entire diplomatic corps of the Uzbek mission to the UN protect Gulnara Karimova's estate in Geneva

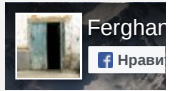
Ms. Mutabar Tadzhibayeva, a renown human rights activist, the founder and the leader of the Fiery Hearts human rights center, arrived in Geneva from Paris, where she resides, to participate in the discussion of a documentary on the Andijan tragedy of 2005. The airing of the documentary and its subsequent discussion were event-free. However, something strange happened afterwards. The following

excerpt in the Swiss newspaper *Le Temps* sheds some light: *“The Uzbek journalist Mutabar Tadzhibayeva, who was tortured in a Tashkent prison and currently lives in exile in Paris, was invited to a film festival on human rights in Geneva, to talk about the cruelties of the Islam Karimov regime. On Sunday, on her way out of Switzerland, Mr. Tadzhibayeva was summoned by the Geneva police station at the airport. The reason was a lawsuit lodged by the permanent mission of Uzbekistan at the UN HQ in Geneva; the Uzbek president's daughter, Gulnara Karimova, is the head of mission. Because Ms. Tadzhibayeva does not speak French and the claims against her were not translated for her, she decided to leave Switzerland.”*

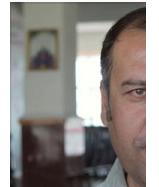
But what did Mutabar do to inflict claims on herself? *“Mutabar Tadzhibayeva joined cinematographer Michael Andersen and ex-UK Ambassador to Uzbekistan Craig Murray to visit Gulnara Karimova's house in Cognoy [near Geneva]. ‘I wanted to see what the money the regime stole from people was spent on,’ the opposition activist told over phone. She photographed the house and asked for permission to see ‘Uzbek Princess.’ After she was denied, the visitors left their business cards in the house's mailbox. The Uzbek diplomatic mission later claimed that [the visitors] attempted an unsanctioned breach of the house, infringement on private space and property inhabited by residents bearing diplomatic status.”*



Fergana obtained information from the real-estate registry of Cognoy Canton of Geneva: Goulнора Karimova, born on 08.07.1972, owns a building and a land lot located at 7 Chemin de la Prévôté, Cognoy, Geneva, sitting on 2,473 sq.m., including two houses and three facilities (a garage, a greenhouse, and a small building). According to Swiss press, the Uzbek president's daughter bought the mansion in January 2009 for \$18.2 million. Photo courtesy of Ge.ch.



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To picture the real situation, *Fergana* asked an eyewitness, whose integrity leaves no room for doubts, to describe whether the dissident activist indeed tried to breach the house owned by the head of Uzbek mission to UN agencies in Geneva. **Andre Lorsch**, a famous journalist from Switzerland, was with Mutabar Tadzhibayeva near Gulnara Karimova's house at that "fatal" moment. Below is his version:

"We went to said house with Director Michael Andersen, Professor Catherine Pujol, the rights activist Igor Vorontsov, ex-UK Ambassador Craig Murray and Mutabar Tadzhibayeva. We have not seen any signs or banners on the building, spent a few minutes and were about to leave. Then we suddenly heard someone's voice and the words 'Don't shoot, don't shoot!' in English. As it turns out, it was a guard wearing an Adidas tracksuit, who spoke Russian well, although with a slight accent. When Mutabar asked him whether Gulnara Karimova resided there, he responded in the negative and said he 'knew nothing.' He then opened the door and said this house is a "state territory"; however, he refused to say anything else. We have left after some time and returned to Geneva. That is all."

Fergana.RU: If a private person owns this house, does s/he have the right to report to police on behalf of the diplomatic mission?

Lorsch: Unfortunately, as far as the lawsuit in question is concerned, we only know what is in press in this regard. It is quite possible that the Uzbek mission did lodge the lawsuit on behalf of the house-owner. We will learn all details only when Mutabar Tadzhibayeva's representative receives a copy of the complaint. I will repeat: at the moment, we have no reliable information as to who, on whose behalf or why lodged said complaint. I have not seen it and I do not know what is written there.

Fergana.RU: Do you think the event is a rather strange one? There was no attack on the house, nor there was "an attempt to illegally penetrate"...

Lorsch: I believe the Uzbek representatives acted quite stupidly having lodged the lawsuit without any legal grounds. This is not the first instance: It was equally stupid of Lola Karimova (Gulnara's younger sister) to file a lawsuit against a French magazine for calling her "a dictator's daughter." [Swiss] police will most probably close the case as an ungrounded one. If police summon me and question me, I will obviously tell them what I have seen there: nobody tried to penetrate into the house and no one was engaged in any illegal activity.

It is becoming obvious that Gulnara Karimova and her subordinate diplomats were enraged by the very fact that a well-known oppositionist and a fierce critic of the Uzbek regime joined by several journalists approached her house. Apparently the Uzbek president's elder daughter, to paraphrase King Ludwig XIV, believes that "the state is she"...

Concerning the so far irreplaceable Uzbek ruler's younger daughter, Lola Karimova-Tillayeva: she also owns a house in Geneva registered under her husband's name. Most probably Mutabar Tadzhibayeva was unaware of the fact; otherwise, she would certainly have visited the "younger princess" as well. There is a high probability that she would be face yet another lawsuit – this time from the Uzbek representation at the UNESCO, headed by Lola Karimova-Tillayeva.



Address: Chemin Vert 14, Vandoeuvres (canton: Genève); owner: Timur Tillayev; area: 5,812 sq.m. The property was purchased in 2010 for \$45 million (L'Hebdo newspaper datat). Photo courtesy of [Ge.ch](#).

Now that we have official information about the owners of these mansions in Switzerland, the question of the origin of these millions of dollars arises again. We believe this is an extremely

important topic, which will be covered in our further publications.

Fergana international information agency.



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