

## Tajik Authorities Deny Involvement In Disappearance

**KHATLON, Tajikistan -- Authorities in the southern Tajik province of Khatlon have denied involvement in the disappearance of an outspoken Uzbek community leader.**

Salim Shamsiddinov has been missing since March 15.

A provincial police official said an investigation has not found "any sign that Salim Shamsiddinov was beaten or kidnapped by force."

Khatlon deputy police chief Eminjon Jalilov also rejected the March 26 statement by rights monitor Amnesty International that said Shamsiddinov's disappearance "could have been a politically motivated abduction."

Shamsiddinov, 58, a critic of the Tajik government, was beaten by unknown assailants in May.

He has blamed Tajik government policies for "straining relationships" with neighboring Uzbekistan.

Shamsiddinov recently called on ethnic Uzbeks living in Tajikistan to vote for an opposition candidate in the next presidential election scheduled for November.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/tajikistan-disappearance/24940182.html>