

Tajik Activists Get Long Jail Terms For Ties To Opposition Leader

DUSHANBE -- Two Tajik activists have each been sentenced to 16 1/2 years in prison for being members of a banned political opposition movement.

A Dushanbe court on March 13 found Firdavs Muhiddinov and Farhod Karimov guilty of insulting President Emomali Rahmon, being members of the banned opposition movement Group 24, and plotting to overthrow the government before handing them their sentences.

Karimov was arrested last year after police searched his computer and found photos they said "insulted" Rahmon.

Muhiddinov was detained for appearing online at a gathering of Tajik migrants in Russia and calling for Rahmon's resignation.

Both men pleaded "partially guilty" and denied any association with Group 24, which was founded by fugitive tycoon Umarali Quvatov, who was shot dead in Istanbul on March 5.

The group was banned in October after being labelled an extremist group.

Activist Umedjon Solehov was sentenced last week to 17 1/2 years in prison on the same charges.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/tajik-activists-sentenced-for-association-with-quvatov/26899417.html>