

# The May 2005 Andijan Uprising: What We Know

Jeffrey W. Hartman

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## Preface

On May 13, 2005, in the Uzbek city of Andijan, an armed confrontation took place between Islamic militants and troops from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In the course of the ensuing melee close to 200 persons from both sides were killed. There is no doubt that the militants initiated the confrontation by attacking local government offices and a maximum security prison, and that the appalling number of deaths was due to deliberate actions and poor judgment exercised by both sides. However, specific details on the day's events were lacking at the time and, on some points, remain unclear and in dispute down to the present day.

These grim events occurred at a delicate moment in the relationship between Uzbekistan and the United States. After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the U.S. Department of Defense, the Government of Uzbekistan had offered logistical and basing support to NATO's Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Thanks to this, the Pentagon stationed U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps forces at the Karshi-Khanabad airport in southern Uzbekistan, whence they conducted operations in nearby Afghanistan. Many Americans supported this arrangement as an appropriate form of cooperation among friends. Others, including activists from various non-governmental organizations, criticized it as inappropriate collusion with a government they considered repressive and hostile to the human and civic rights of its citizens. A similar polarization of opinion occurred in Europe.

This situation all but guaranteed that every piece of information emanating from Andijan would become the object of fierce contention in America and Europe.

Three further factors caused the volume of these ensuing debates to rise still higher, and their tone to grow ever more bitter. First, caught off guard and not experienced with dealing with the international media, the Uzbek government was overly reluctant to release information that might have clarified points of

contention. On many key issues it was itself doubtless seeking evidence and clarification, and was not in a position to provide the instant reporting that reporters sought.

Second, the government's reluctance to wade into the mounting controversy over Andijan was due in part to a confrontation with the western organization Human Rights Watch that had occurred only eleven months earlier. In May 2004, a jailed murder suspect named Andrei Shelkovenko died while in police custody in Tashkent. Human Rights Watch promptly announced that his death had been caused by torture. However, the Uzbek Ministry of Internal Affairs accepted a suggestion by Freedom House for an independent investigation, consisting of American and Canadian experts. By the end of May the commission concluded that the death was a result of suicide and that there was no evidence of torture. To its credit, Human Rights Watch prominently issued a press release acknowledging its error, but by this time the damage was done. Few, if any, western media took note of Human Rights Watch's mea culpa, nor did western governments. This episode goes far towards explaining the Uzbek government's cautious and defensive response to requests for information and its opposition to requests for site visits to Andijan and for the establishment of another international commission.

In the end that reluctance proved counterproductive, but it is to some degree understandable.

A third factor contributing to the volume and bitterness of the debates that followed the events of May 13 was the evolution of the media itself at the time. On that date no major American newspaper or TV channel had a reporter any nearer to Tashkent than Moscow. Of those reporters for major outlets who filed stories on Andijan, none knew the Uzbek language and all were heavily dependent on reports from civil society organizations. Some of these provided accurate and useful information. But with barely a handful of representatives in the region, weak command of local languages, and an institutional agenda to advance, many did not.



Competitive pressure among such groups and between them and mainstream media assured that much baldly inaccurate information was disseminated and repeated.

Ten years after that tragic day in May, 2005, the Government of Uzbekistan once again maintains correct and positive relations with both the United States and the European Union. While they disagree on some points, all three parties acknowledge that they share important strategic and economic interests and are eagerly advancing them in a low-keyed and constructive manner. Neither the Government of Uzbekistan, the United States' State Department, nor the European Union's Foreign Affairs Council chose to mark the decennial of the 2005 events. For perfectly understandable reasons they prefer to let the matter lie, to look forward rather than backwards, and to allow a process of healing to continue in their mutual relations.

Why, then, issue two Silk Road Papers in 2016 on the subject of Andijan and its coverage in the West? The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center had no plans to commemorate the Andijan events until Jeffrey Hartman, former U.S. Defense Attaché to Uzbekistan, submitted his study of the Andijan events for publication. The draft reflected both extensive research and careful analysis. After vetting it with colleagues, we decided to accept it for publication. But in our view the Hartman study stopped short, because it did not follow the complex story of how the American and international press treated the May 13 events. We therefore engaged Dr. John Daly to prepare a companion paper on the evolving coverage of Andijan.

The purpose of both of these related papers on Andijan is to deepen our knowledge of what actually occurred on that day and the process by which it was reported in the American and western press. Unfortunately, this was not the first instance of Islamic radicalism in Central Asia or of a governmental response that elicits criticism in the West, whether just or not. We have seen the same in every country of the region, including Afghanistan. Nor is it likely to be the last. Without some understanding of these events, and the process by which they enter the consciousness of Americans and Europeans, neither Americans, Europeans, nor Uzbeks are unlikely to advance beyond their actions and responses back in 2005.

None of the many people involved in the events in Andijan, in the press coverage of them, or in official or unofficial foreign responses, covered themselves with glory. All sides made mistakes. These two studies are offered in the spirit of Edmund Burke's admonition that "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it."

Because the authors and editors of this report respect the wish of Tashkent, Washington and Brussels to look forward rather than backwards, we have waited a full year beyond the decennial to issue these two papers. We do not assume that either of these reports will be the last on the subject, or that they should be. New information will continue to surface and new perspectives will continue to arise over time. The authors and editors of these papers welcome them both. Their sole hope, and admonition, is that those bringing them forward will do so in the constructive spirit in which the present papers were undertaken.

S. Frederick Starr

Chairman, CACI/SRSP

## Introduction

On Friday, May 13, 2005, an insurrection occurred in the Uzbek city of Andijan—the largest city in the Ferghana Valley and Uzbekistan’s third largest city.<sup>1</sup> The events started violently just before midnight when members of a Muslim society attacked both an interior ministry compound and a neighboring defense ministry barracks, stole weapons and a truck, and about an hour later rammed the truck through a city prison gate. The group freed members of their community who had been held for the last ten months. With weapons from the barracks, they armed their newly released “Brothers” (*birodarlar*), along with other freed prisoners, moved north, and attacked the regional headquarters of the National Security Service (NSS) before taking over the Andijan provincial *hokimyat*, the province’s capitol building, before dawn.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the day, the group tried to rally fellow Uzbeks to their cause. They expected to ignite a wider, popular rebellion throughout Uzbekistan. After initial surprise and several bungled responses, by late morning Uzbek security forces had cordoned off the area and settled in for a day-long stand-off and negotiations involving Minister of Internal Affairs Zakir Almatov, until events went tragically wrong just before dusk. A day that started bloody would end much worse.

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<sup>1</sup> Because the Uzbek language in Uzbekistan was originally written in Arabic script, and then Latin and Cyrillic, and most recently changed to Latin again, spellings in English are not standardized. Most Uzbek names have several alternative spellings in English to include “Andijon.” This paper will use Wikipedia as the standard for proper names in English. Although Uzbek language in Latin script uses “Andijon” more frequently, “Andijan” will be utilized throughout this essay.

<sup>2</sup> The National Security Service (NSS) is Uzbekistan’s version of the FSB. In Russian language, it is known as the *Sluzhba Natsionionalnoy Bezopasnosti*, SNB, pronounced “SNBey” in Russian. In the Uzbek language, it is the *Milliy Xavfsizlik Xizmati* although Uzbeks regularly referred to the NSS by its Russian abbreviation, “SNBey.” The provincial capitol building in Uzbek is the “*viloyat hokimiyati*.” A “*viloyat*” is a “province,” the same word as in Turkish. A “*hokim*” is a “chief” or a “governor.” A “*hokimyat*” is the seat of power for a state or city. Immediately next to Andijan’s provincial *hokimyat* is Andijan city hall, the “*shahar hokimiyati*.” Throughout this paper the term “provincial capitol building” will be used for the “*viloyat hokimiyati*,” and “governor” will be used instead of “*hokim*.”

The Muslim group's members called each other "*Birodar*," an Uzbek term of endearment for "brother" or "close friend."<sup>3</sup> Locals named them "*Yimonchilar*," something close to meaning "the followers of the faith" based on the theological pamphlet that guided the group's practices, "*Yimonga Y'ol*" or "The Path to Faith."<sup>4</sup> The Government of Uzbekistan called the group "*Akromiya*," after Akrom Yuldashev, the imprisoned author of "The Path to Faith" and inspiration to the Brothers, although the group's members never referred to themselves as "*Akromiya*" or their followers as "*Akromiyists*."<sup>5</sup> At its peak in 2004-2005, the Brothers probably had at least 80 adult male followers, roughly an equal number of adult female supporters, but also a larger number of associates, employees, and sympathizers, most of whom were from the Andijan area.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov, "The Phenomenology of '*Akromiya*': Separating Facts from Fiction," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 4, May (2006): 43; Igor Rotar, "Uzbekistan: Islamic charitable work 'criminal' and 'extremist'," *Worldwide Religious News*, February 14, 2005, <http://wwrn.org/articles/8747/>, 2.

Throughout this paper, the term "Brother" will be used to describe the community members that followed the Islamic life described by Akrom Yuldashev in "The Path to Faith." "*Birodar*" ("Brother") was the term used by Akrom Yuldashev. "*Birodar*" is still the term used by "The Path to Faith" devotees on the Internet. In Dari, "*birodar*" is also a term for "brotherhood." Although Uzbek is a Turkic language, many words derive from Dari. Some Uzbek analysts insist that members referred to themselves as "*al-Ikhwān*," Arabic for "the brotherhood" or the Brothers, but this author was unable to substantiate that claim. This is also the Arabic term for the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>4</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov, "*Akromiya*: Islamic Extremism or the Islamic Brand of Social Democracy?," *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, no. 11, May (2006): 188-189. "*Yimon*" in the Uzbek language means "faith." The suffix "*-chi*" in Uzbek denotes one who does something. "*Yimonchi*" is one who is faithful. The plural in Uzbek is expressed "*-lar*." Thus, "*Yimonchilar*" is "the ones who are faithful" or "the followers." The suffix "*-ga*" is dative, "*Yimonga*" is "to faith." "*Y'ol*" (also written "*yul*") is a "path" or "road."

<sup>5</sup> Igor Rotar, "Uzbekistan: What is known about Akramia and the uprising?," *Forum 18 News Service*, June 16, 2005, 1, [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=856](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=856); Bakhtiyar Babadjanov, "Akramia: A brief Summary," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2006, 12, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Akramiya.pdf>. Akrom Yuldashev was no relation whatsoever to Tokhir Yuldashev, the deceased leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). In order to dispel any confusion, Akrom Yuldashev will be referred to in full name throughout this paper. The terms "*Akromiya*" and "*Akromist*" originated in an Uzbek court in 1999 following Akrom Yuldashev's arrest for religious extremism. The terms came into regular use by the Uzbek state-controlled media and government after the arrest of the 23 businessmen in 2004.

<sup>6</sup> This will be discussed later, but the figure of 80 male followers is a rounded up estimate based on adding 28 arrested Brothers and 42 followers identified by the Government of Uzbekistan as having participated in the events of May 12-13, 2005. This corresponds to about 80 female supporters who gathered on Bobur Square on the afternoon of May 13, 2005. Some estimates include about 80 families and 120 adult male Brothers. The highest estimates were about 200 in total for the Brothers and their families. Part of the confusion is due to the larger number of the Brothers' additional employees, supporters, and other sympathizers.

Akrom Yuldashev was imprisoned in 1993 for establishing an unauthorized underground organization. He was arrested again in 1998 under questionable drug-trafficking charges.<sup>7</sup> Both times he was convicted, sentenced, but then amnestied. He was re-arrested following a February 1999 Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) bombing attack in Tashkent and later convicted as a religious extremist despite no known connections to the IMU or the terror attacks. Akrom Yuldashev was imprisoned from 1999 until his death in 2010.<sup>8</sup> In his absence, his followers persisted and built an Islamic community, a small business empire, and charities in accordance with Akrom Yuldashev's "The Path to Faith," a small book which is more a discussion about Islam and individual responsibility than instructions for constructing a society.<sup>9</sup>

In June 2004, this religious group, the Brothers, collided with the recently appointed Governor of Andijan Province, Saydullo Begaliyev. For years, the Brothers existed and succeeded quietly building businesses, opening health clinics, growing in membership and pursuing Akrom Yuldashev's instructions. At the same time, there were suspicions in Tashkent and Andijan that this group posed a threat. Around that same time, the group was first criticized in the state-controlled media. The religious group reportedly withheld part of its tithing, "zakat," owed to the state but in exchange provided community services to the province and some goods to the provincial government.<sup>10</sup> To some, the Brothers increasingly resembled a cult or other religious sect. Others were jealous of the Brothers'

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<sup>7</sup> Babadjanov, "Akramia: A brief Summary," 1 - 2. Akrom Yuldashev's first arrest was an apparent set-up for narcotics-trafficking. He was amnestied after conviction and sentencing. This is a familiar way in Uzbekistan for the court system and prosecutor to "save face" after a wrongful conviction.

<sup>8</sup> "Uzbeks Say Inmate Due for Release Died in 2010," *The New York Times* January 18, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/19/world/asia/uzbeks-say-inmate-due-for-release-died-in-2010.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/19/world/asia/uzbeks-say-inmate-due-for-release-died-in-2010.html?_r=0), accessed 29 February 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Adeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007 and 2014), 194. Akrom Yuldashev probably wrote "the Path to Faith" over a period of two years, but the first well-distributed version was printed around 1994. A version was annotated by Bakhtiyar Babadjanov is the last reference in the bibliography for this essay and was used for background information.

<sup>10</sup> *Zakat* is the obligatory Muslim practice of alms-giving. It is a personal responsibility and is normally based on wealth. However, as will be discussed later, the Brothers' tithing included payment to a "mutual benefit fund" and the Brothers contributed one-fifth of their income to this fund. The author was never able to corroborate the claim that The Brothers withheld the zakat, including payments to the mutual benefit fund, from their taxes; however the author would not be surprised if it

business success, and their apparent business relationship with the Governor of Andijan province, Kobil Obidov.<sup>11</sup> Still, all of the Brothers' activities were in the open and the Uzbek government even celebrated some of their good works. Indeed, as late as April 2004, President Islam Karimov's government lauded the Brothers' business and philanthropic accomplishments.<sup>12</sup>

However, after the May 2004 impeachment of Governor Kobil Obidov, who seemingly had an informal business arrangement with the Brothers, the newly appointed governor, Saydullo Begaliyev, ordered the arrests of 23 Akromiya businessmen within his first weeks in office.<sup>13</sup> The arrests set in motion a series of worsening events which resulted in the most violent civil unrest of independent Uzbekistan's short history, although the root of the trouble seemed to have grown merely from petty jealousies of local businessmen intertwined with political rivalries in Andijan Province.

Ultimately, these events in Andijan further damaged Uzbekistan's already strained relations with the United States, severely injured Uzbekistan's standing in Europe, and solidified Russia's temporary reemergence as the sole regional

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were so. The Brothers were likely involved in some sort of habitual exchange of services and goods with the provincial government under Governor Obidov. Such an arrangement would not be unusual in Uzbekistan. The Brothers provided some social services to the general population and supplied office furniture to the Andijan provincial government. Ironically, the provincial capitol building (hokimyat) that the Brothers occupied on May 13, 2005, was furnished with their own wares. Governor Obidov was probably thought of as the Brothers' official protection, their "*kryeesha*" or "roof" in Russian, a term and concept well understood in Uzbekistan. The Brothers' relationship with the previous governor and the destruction of that relationship under new Governor Begaliyev was possibly a reason the Brothers seized the provincial capitol building.

<sup>11</sup> AbduMannob Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, The Jamestown Foundation, Occasional Paper, June 2007, 9. There are several other Latin script and English language variations for the Uzbek first name "Kobil" to include "Kabul" and "Qobil." "Kobil" will be used throughout this paper.

<sup>12</sup> Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005, interview by author, February and June 2010, National Defense University, Washington, DC.

<sup>13</sup> New Governor Saydullo Begaliyev was reacting to counsel to crack down on "*Akromiya*" but the author was never satisfactorily told who gave the advice and whether it was from local powerful people in the Ferghana Valley or if it was from Tashkent. It seemed that the 23 businessmen were carefully selected to have maximum effect against the Brothers' business enterprise by removing key leaders. Uzbek male first names of respected seniors and men in leadership positions often have the suffix "*-jon*" (or "*-jan*" due to non-standardized spelling) added to them, for example "*Kobiljon*," "*Qodirjon*," "*Tokhirjon*" and so on. In the spirit of objectivity, the suffix "*-jon*" will not be used in this paper. Neither will the suffix "*-boy*" be used which usually means the youngest brother.

powerbroker.<sup>14</sup> The Uzbek government's ensuing crackdown and heavy-handed initial investigation of the events in Andijan, as well as a separate rebellion that immediately followed in Qorasuv ushered in a period of deteriorating human rights and, indeed, a reversal of earlier human rights improvements.<sup>15</sup> Years later, the circumstances of the Andijan uprising remain poorly understood and continue to be framed in sensationalist tones and with exaggerated statistics to the point where it may be more beneficial to analyze it from the perspective of *what the uprising was not*.<sup>16</sup> As will be discussed, the root causes of the rebellion and its tragic end were misjudgments on the part of all the main parties, including the local Andijan provincial government and its new governor, the Brothers, and Uzbek security forces.<sup>17</sup> To support this, this paper will discuss Andijan, the Brothers

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<sup>14</sup> Germany was the only Western nation whose relations with the Government of Uzbekistan did not deteriorate significantly. That was, in large part, because Germans needed to retain their air base at Termez for operations in Afghanistan.

<sup>15</sup> According to representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross and other NGOs in Tashkent, in 2004 and 2005, Uzbekistan's human rights performance was poor; however, conditions were improving. Access to prisoners was increasing and overall the situation was better than in Soviet times. After 2004, human rights conditions declined again until modest improvements in 2008 and 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Background information used in research for this paper includes as follows: Shirin Akiner, *Violence in Andijan, 13 May 2005: An Independent Assessment* (Washington: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, Silk Road Paper, 2006); Babadjanov, "Akramia: A brief Summary," manuscript; Bakhtiyar Babadjanov, Marina Barnett, and Martha Brill Olcott, "Akramia," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 2, (2006), summary available at <http://carnegiendowment.org/2006/05/02/akramia/5wz>; Human Rights Watch; "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain" - *The Andijan Massacre May 13 2005*, Human Rights Watch, Vol. 17, No. 5 (D), June 2005; HRW, "The Crackdown on Civil Society Following the May 13 Events" (part of *Burying the Truth: Uzbekistan Rewrites the Story of the Andijan Massacre: Coercive Pressure for Testimony*); HRW, "Andijan Massacre: Eyewitness Testimony," Video interview transcript, May 9, 2006 (Lutfullo Shamsuddinov); Durakan Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising, 13 May 2005* (Ankara, Turkey: Thesis for the Department of International Relations, Bilkent University, September 2008); Congressional Research Service, CRS Report for Congress, Jim Nichol, "Unrest in Uzbekistan: Context and Implications" (CRS RS22161) (Washington DC: CRS, June 8, 2005); OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, "Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May 2005," (Warsaw: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, June 20, 2005); AbduMannob Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*.

<sup>17</sup> The NSS' role in May 2005: The author remains uncertain as to the exact nature of the relationship between the NSS and the Andijan provincial government in 2005. In 2004 and early 2005, the NSS seemed to be doing the bidding of the provincial government. From the Brothers' statements at the rally and to reporters, it is clear that the NSS was the main target of their hatred. President Karimov was told about the events in Andijan by Minister of Internal Affairs Zakir Almatov at 1:45 am. Minister Almatov and the Ministry of Internal Affairs remained in charge throughout the day. After the Andijan uprising, the NSS became the unquestioned supreme authority in the provinces. If there

and the trial of the 23 Akromiya businessmen, as well as the tragedy that later became referred to in Uzbekistan as “the Andijan events.”

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was a power struggle or question of primacy between the NSS and Ministry of Internal Affairs before May 2005, it ended soon after the Andijan uprising. AbduMannob Polat briefly discussed this on page 15 of his report, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring Relations U.S.-Uzbek Relations*.



## The Setting: Andijan

Some believe Andijan was destined to host a violent confrontation, but that is not necessarily true. Andijan, the birthplace of the last great Timurid, Bobur (who created the Moghul Empire), had a lively but rebellious reputation throughout its two-and-a-half centuries as part of the Kokand Khanate's rule over the entire Ferghana Valley, and then under Imperial Russian control. The rebellious city was one of the main reasons that the khan agreed to a less-than-equal partnership with the Russian Empire in the late 1860s. One of the Imperial Russians' first great quandaries in the Ferghana Valley was where to locate their main garrison town—next to the traditionally rebellious town of Andijan or next to the other expected trouble spot, Margilan. The Russians built a restricted “Russians-only” garrison town just south of Margilan at New Margilan, later renamed Ferghana, in order to keep a close eye on Margilan, the Uzbek city where they expected the most trouble.<sup>18</sup> Maybe they were wrong—Andijan rebelled twice against the Russians' presence, in 1898 and 1914.

Yet during Soviet times and post-independence, Andijan was known as a religious but tolerant city home to followers of several schools of Islam.<sup>19</sup> Rebelliousness notwithstanding, Andijan never developed the dark, violent reputation of nearby Namangan. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Namangan became the center of violent Wahabbist-fed extremism, “the Namangan Caliphate.” From 1990

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<sup>18</sup> In imperial and Soviet times, Ferghana was always a closed military town. Although there are still Uzbek military garrisons in the city, it is no longer a restricted city.

<sup>19</sup> Andijan is a city where women in miniskirts walk with pious friends in *hijabs* (traditional female Muslim head and shoulder cover). It is also possibly the only place in Uzbekistan where some Uzbek women can be found in the *niqab* (the mask sometimes associated with women from the Arabian Peninsula). The author twice witnessed Uzbek women in Andijan wearing the *niqab*, something extremely rare among Uzbek women. The *niqab* is occasionally seen in Tashkent, but almost always it is visiting Arab women who wear it.

into winter 1991-92, Uzbek extremists controlled downtown Namangan, terrorized its citizens, imposed their form of “Shari’ at,” and challenged Tashkent’s control of the province. These radicals included Tokhir Yuldashev and Juma Khojaev (later “Juma Namangani”), among other militant Islamists attracted from throughout the Ferghana Valley. In December 1991, President Karimov visited Namangan, and actually met with Yuldashev and Khojaev. He attempted to negotiate with them. They attempted to strong arm the president into accepting their fundamentalist demands. Soon after their lone failed meeting, Karimov’s forces drove the radicals from Namangan to Tajikistan where they took part in the civil war in that country. Following the 1997 peace agreement in Tajikistan, they founded the IMU, moved to Afghanistan, and continued their war with Uzbekistan.<sup>20</sup>

Instead, more intellectual, more cosmopolitan Andijan became a center for *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, the worldwide Islamist secret society known for its extremism and anti-Semitism, but also non-violence.<sup>21</sup> In 1988, after quitting his candidacy to the Communist Party, Akrom Yuldashev, then a mathematics instructor, embraced *Hizb ut-Tahrir*. He remained an active member while writing his early Islamic theories until 1992 when he broke with the group and published “The Path to Faith.” One of Akrom Yuldashev’s main criticisms of *Hizb ut-Tahrir* was that its quest for a worldwide caliphate was overly idealistic. Akrom Yuldashev countered that the true path to a Muslim society was evolutionary and should start locally with a Muslim community living in pious accordance with Islam, individual Muslims as part of a faithful community, and Islamic economy as described in “The Path to Faith.”<sup>22</sup>

*Hizb ut-Tahrir*’s prominence in the Andijan area was no doubt a factor in the later events of May 2005 and the government’s overreaction to the Brothers. Almost every one of the Brothers’ (Akromiya) members was a former member of *Hizb*

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<sup>20</sup> Throughout the 1990s, former members of “the Namagan Caliphate” kept up a wave of violence in Namangan and the Ferghana Valley to include the beheadings of police in Namangan in the mid-1990s.

<sup>21</sup> “*Hizb ut-Tahrir*” means “Party of Liberation” in Arabic. It was founded in Jerusalem in 1953.

<sup>22</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov, “The Phenomenology of ‘Akromiya’: Separating Facts from Fiction,” 41.

Igor Rotar, “Uzbekistan: Islamic charitable work ‘criminal’ and ‘extremist’?,” 2.

ut-Tahrir. That included Kabul Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov, the eventual leaders of the May 13, 2005 uprising. Likewise, while before 2009 the IMU and Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) had never conducted terror operations in the Andijan area, both al-Qaeda-affiliated groups saw their ranks filled with former and active Hizb ut-Tahrir members from Andijan.<sup>23</sup> Back when Tokhir Yuldashev and Juma Khojaev were terrorizing Namangan, many of the extremists who flocked to them, and later followed them to Tajikistan, were Hizb ut-Tahrir faithfuls from Andijan.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bakhtiyar Babadjanov, among other Uzbek researchers, noted that when IMU and Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) members were identified, they were already known to Uzbek researchers and authorities for their alleged prior connections to Hizb ut-Tahrir. In interviews, several IMU and IJU members acknowledged their disenchantment with Hizb ut-Tahrir as well as gave reasons why they joined or helped found the more radical organizations. On May 26, 2009, an IJU team shot-up a border checkpoint near Xanabad (east of Andijan) and a suicide bomber attacked a police station in Andijan. Two policemen were killed in Xanabad. One policeman was killed in Andijan. As far as the author knows, those were the IJU's first and last attacks in the province.

<sup>24</sup> The IJU was formed in Waziristan in 2002 by former IMU members and other ethnic Uzbek radicals. Several key members of this younger, smaller and more radical al-Qaeda-affiliated terror group were from Andijan. The IJU revealed itself in 2004 and carried out two rounds of suicide bombings in May and July 2004 in Tashkent. In spring 2005, the IJU was allegedly coordinating another series of attacks which was supposedly disrupted by the Uzbek NSS. Prior to May 2009, the IJU was not involved in violence near Andijan until the attacks noted above. Oddly, despite their deadly record, the IJU seemed always in the shadow of the IMU. Many IJU attacks and plots were falsely referred to as the work of the "IMU" by the Uzbek public even when the IJU claimed responsibility. Despite the IJU's public contempt for the IMU, many Uzbeks continued to believe that the IJU and IMU were the same organization.

## The Brothers (Birodarlar) — Akromiya

By 2004, Akrom Yuldashev's followers were grouped in small, outlier communities in several parts of Uzbekistan, and not confined to just Andijan or the Fergana Valley. There were small sub-communities in Margilan, Kokand, Tashkent, and Jizzakh—although most of the eighty or so families affiliated with the Brothers were clustered near Andijan. The original community started at Bogi-Shamol, in the hills just southeast of Andijan, on a large tract of land donated in 1993 by an original follower of Akrom Yuldashev, Bahrom Shakirov.<sup>25</sup> Shakirov's oldest son, Shokur, was one of the 23 businessmen arrested in June 2004. Two other sons, Sharif and Khassad, helped organize and lead the May 2005 uprising with Kabul Parpiyev.<sup>26</sup>

Akrom Yuldashev advocated a moderate, innovative, culturally Uzbek, informed community of modern Islam, which had economic and social aspects. In "The Path to Faith," Akrom Yuldashev criticized the "over-Arabization" of Islam and suggested that Muslim communities embrace their religion in their language. The Brothers studied the Koran and conducted prayers in Uzbek. Akrom Yuldashev's

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<sup>25</sup> Alisher Ilkhamov, "The Phenomenology of 'Akromiya': Separating Facts from Fiction," 42. "Bogh" in Uzbek is a "garden," and "shamol" is "wind." "Bogi-Shamol" means "Garden of Wind." The town is in a peculiar group of hills southeast of Andijan. It is notable for an amusement park and Ferris wheel on the highest hill near the main road to Qorasuv and Osh, Kyrgyzstan. Bogi-Shamol is a popular spot for Andijan residents to go for daytrips and picnics.

<sup>26</sup> Bahrom Shakirov's youngest son, Khassad, participated in the uprising as Sharif's assistant. Another son or relative, Husan Shakirov, was also at Bobur Square. In its June 2005 report, Human Rights Watch misidentified the Andijan uprising's leader as Abdul Parpiyev. Kabul Parpiyev was the leader of the rebellion. Sharif Shakirov played the second biggest role in organizing and leading the Brothers on May 12 and 13, 2005. As far as the author knows, there was no person named Abdul Parpiyev involved in the uprising.

writing stressed community over personal life.<sup>27</sup> He went so far as to criticize Islam's stress on strict personal rituals, even suggesting that it was not necessary to pray five times a day.

Akrom Yuldashev encouraged the development of industry and work around Islamic values, so-called "Islamic businesses." This included a peculiar style of hierarchical management of hiring, cells, leaders, supervisors, and supervised religious leadership.<sup>28</sup> Bogi-Shamol eventually housed or was headquarters to at least ten such Islamic businesses to include a bakery, a shoe factory, a hairdresser, a cafeteria, and a kindergarten.<sup>29</sup> The community expanded to 40 prosperous businesses and employed over 2000 people, whose wages were higher than the local average. Employees did not necessarily need to be followers.<sup>30</sup> The stress was on attraction to the lifestyle and the society. Some of their products became sought out in markets throughout Uzbekistan, especially their high-quality furniture.<sup>31</sup> Internal to the community and its Islamic businesses was a system of tithing to a "mutual benefit fund" managed by the Brothers' bookkeepers. This fund paid for philanthropic causes such as medical and pharmaceutical services, an orphanage, daycare and other community services, as well as a system of no-interest Islamic loans and assistance to pay for weddings, care for illnesses, and even apartments for newlyweds. Members of the Brothers' community paid one-fifth of their earnings to this fund.<sup>32</sup> The entire operation was likened to a unique system of "Islamic

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<sup>27</sup> Akrom Yuldashev, "(I begin) in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful Surah [As-] Saff," Commentary and notes by Bakhtiyar Babadjanov, circa 2005. This is an annotated edition of Akrom Yuldashev's "The Path to Faith," circa 1994.

<sup>28</sup> Babadjanov, "Akramia: A brief Summary," 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Ilkhamov, "The Phenomenology of 'Akromiya': Separating Facts from Fiction," 42. The shoe factory was referred to as "the boot factory" by some researchers.

<sup>30</sup> Rotar, "Uzbekistan: Islamic charitable work 'criminal' and 'extremist?'" 2.

<sup>31</sup> The Brothers' Turon Production Furniture Company products were favorites not just of Andijan bureaucrats, but became a status symbol for those in Tashkent as well.

<sup>32</sup> Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising, 13 May 2005*, 24-25. The paying of one-fifth of earnings is significantly higher than the normal *zakat* payment of 2.5 percent of earned income. The author was told of this tithing by several Uzbeks in the Ferghana Valley and suspects the amount was yet another reason for authorities' suspicions. The tithe was, of course, most likely used for the Brothers' other social services and social funds which replicated, replaced or competed with government services.

socialism."<sup>33</sup> Early in 2004, President Karimov visited one of the Brothers' charitable causes in Kokand for a public relations event and congratulated them on Uzbek national television for their work. On various occasions, Karimov referred to the Brothers' community members as "the pride," "the stars," and "the sons of Uzbekistan."<sup>34</sup>

Though the government generally overlooked the Akromiya society, certain allegations drew their attention, especially in Andijan Province. For one, it was widely suspected that the group subtracted its *zakat* (tithing), including payments to the mutual benefit fund, from part of its payroll and income taxes. Before 2008, all taxes in Uzbekistan were collected locally. Normally, Uzbek companies collected and paid employees' taxes to the local district (*mahalla*) of the city or provincial government. In the case of the Brothers' workers, local governments supposedly looked the other way. The society aimed to maintain good relations with the Government of Uzbekistan and provincial governments, and the governments were customers of the Brothers' products, such as office furniture. There was even a "semi-acceptance" since "Yimonchilar" provided social services and jobs that the provinces could not. However, their competitors complained that they did not pay taxes in full.<sup>35</sup> The Brothers' companies were competing with

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<sup>33</sup> Ilkhamov, "The Phenomenology of 'Akromiya': Separating Facts from Fiction," 42. Rotar, "Uzbekistan: Islamic charitable work 'criminal' and 'extremist?,'" 2.

<sup>34</sup> Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, "Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May 2005," 8-9. Karimov and his inner circle are generally not fond of Islamic groups in the Ferghana Valley as illustrated by the Uzbek government's swift actions against Adolat and Hizb ut-Tahrir as early as 1991. The sustained favorable state-controlled media coverage of the Brothers and Karimov's continued compliments as late as 2004 seems to show the Brothers were not perceived as a threat and that opposition to the Brothers was most likely a local issue in Andijan. Note later that none of the arrested Brothers were ever brought to Tashkent, which would have signified the national government's interest. Notice also that when Karimov and Minister Almatov went to Andijan, Almatov intended to negotiate but he was not certain it was the Brothers in the provincial capitol building or who their leader was.

<sup>35</sup> Uzbek culture is beautifully complex. Business relations, like familial relations, involve many informal exchanges of gifts for influence. Uzbek businesses traditionally engage in barter, exchanges of goods and services with other companies, local governments and patrons which are not tracked by any kind of Western accounting. This can also contribute to jealousy among competitors. The author is convinced the Brothers' special relationship with Governor Obidov contributed to the ire of competitors who may have had something to do with Obidov's May 2004 impeachment, and new Governor Begaliyev's hasty actions against the Brothers and their business empire in June 2004. The fact that the Karimov government continued favorable press coverage of the Brothers while the Andijan provincial government was pursuing charges against the 23 businessmen seems to indicate

government-owned industries. Others in the government saw the Brothers as an ideological competitor. Bahrom Shakirov noted this jealousy after his oldest son's, Shokur's, arrest.<sup>36</sup>

Some of Uzbekistan's security officials drew parallels to Hezbollah and Hamas. Others emphasized that this much celebrated religious sect was inspired by a man in prison. But with more serious threats like the al-Qaeda-allied IMU, IJU, and Hizb ut-Tahrir, few in the security services sought a confrontation with Akromiya. Furthermore, Akrom Yuldashev's "Path to Faith" does not discuss politics. The Brothers frequently repeated this point after their troubles started in mid-2004.<sup>37</sup>

The May 2004 impeachment of Governor (*hokim*) Kobil Obidov is strange, as Uzbek governors can be fired by the government in Tashkent at will. The federal government appoints governors, as was practice in the Soviet Union, remaining so through 2005 in most former republics. In Uzbekistan, matters involving senior officials were normally handled swiftly and quietly. Obidov was tried for corruption, convicted, and put under house arrest. The newly appointed governor, Saydullo Begaliyev, quickly took action against the Brothers' community. On June 23, 2004, 23 Akromiya businessmen were arrested by the NSS.<sup>38</sup> These men were the heart of the society's enterprise in Andijan Province. Presumably, this was the new governor's decision as urged by locals in Andijan Province, or Begaliyev was urged to do this by Tashkent. The 23 were charged with "organizing a criminal organization," "preparing or distributing documents that contain a threat to public safety," and "setting up, leading and participating in extremist religious organizations."<sup>39</sup> They were never charged with tax evasion. Ironically,

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that this was initially a provincial matter. Researcher AbduMannob Polat and journalist Igor Rotar seem to agree that local envy toward the Brothers and their special relationship with the former provincial government probably fueled unjust extra-legal action against the 23 businessmen and the Brothers.

<sup>36</sup> Rotar, "Uzbekistan: Islamic charitable work 'criminal' and 'extremist?'" 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>38</sup> In the Uzbek, Russian and Western press, the 23 defendants were commonly referred to as "the 23 businessmen." They will be identified as "the 23 businessmen" throughout this paper.

<sup>39</sup> Rotar, 2.

Uzbekistan's state-controlled media continued favorable news stories on the society's charitable causes even after the businessmen's arrest, somewhat signaling that the Brothers' arrests were inspired by their local enemies in Andijan Province.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Trial of the 23 Akromiya Businessmen**

Some officials in Tashkent and Andijan feared that the trial of the Akromiya businessmen would become a rallying point for the international human rights community. They were right. Initially, only the Brothers' female family members quietly demonstrated at the prison and courthouse, but during the course of the late February to May 2005 trial, dozens and later hundreds of family members, sympathizers, former employees, and human rights advocates protested outside the courthouse.<sup>41</sup> The international human rights community brought worldwide publicity to the defendants now commonly known in media as "the 23 businessmen." Western press covered the story, especially the BBC. The trial became a bigger and bigger spectacle and on May 10, 2005, as the trial was rumored to be winding down, around a thousand people including many of the Brothers' society's out-of-work employees showed up to an increasingly raucous and emotional demonstration.<sup>42</sup> Police from the Ministry of Internal Affairs kept order near the courthouse, but this was the period when the Brothers' animosity toward the NSS grew. This anger was clear during speeches by the Brothers on Bobur Square at the highpoint of their May 13 rally. The increased animosity may have been due to harsh treatment of the prisoners by the NSS during the investigation,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. Igor Rotar believes that this was initially a local matter, probably fed by local business jealousies and paranoid security officials. None of the accused were ever taken to Tashkent, which would have signaled directly the national government's involvement. In that sense, Akrom Yuldashev was a national matter, whereas the Brothers were not. The arrest of the 23 businessmen had a paralyzing effect on the Brothers' business enterprise.

<sup>41</sup> The trial started on the outskirts of Andijan in the small town of Alantkul. This was likely intended to minimize publicity and possible protests. The trial was quickly moved back to Andijan probably due to the logistical hassles of moving defendants to the rural site among other challenges with the smaller building. See: Rotar, 1.

<sup>42</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005, interview by author, February and June 2010, National Defense University, Washington, DC.



actions in the courtroom, further NSS monitoring and harassment of the Brothers' society and their families, or, most likely, a combination of all these factors.

For Tashkent, there were two additional attention-diverting complications. In early March 2005, as the result of fraudulent elections in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, riots broke out in Osh, (at the time) a mostly ethnic Uzbek city and the Ferghana Valley's second population center, just 90 kilometers east of Andijan and visible from the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border. The demonstrations spread north, first to the Kyrgyz border city of Jalal-Abad (another ethnic Uzbek city), and then to the capital, Bishkek. In the first week of April 2005, "the Tulip Revolution" brought down Askar Akayev's government in Kyrgyzstan, the third of the so-called "colored revolutions" in the former Soviet republics. According to the Russian and Uzbek governments, each was supposedly encouraged by the U.S. Government and the non-governmental organizations it sponsored. The Russian media repeatedly suggested that the U.S. Government was behind Akayev's overthrow. For Karimov and his government, the revolution in Kyrgyzstan was particularly alarming since Kyrgyzstan also hosted a U.S. base at Manas. Some in the Government of Uzbekistan had previously assumed that the U.S. base at Karshi-Khanabad provided some sort of political protection from such supposedly U.S.-inspired action. Second, a new ethnic Uzbek, al-Qaeda-allied terrorist group, the IJU, which had launched terror attacks twice in 2004, was believed to be planning another series of attacks in spring 2005. The IJU conducted a series of suicide bombings and other attacks in Tashkent in spring 2004, which killed 47 people.<sup>43</sup> In July 2004, IJU suicide bombers had attacked the U.S., British, and Israeli embassies killing two more people and wounding at least nine others. Another 2004 plot to attack targets in Bukhara failed very late in the preparation stages when a bomb-making facility was uncovered. Through March and April 2005, the NSS was reportedly on high alert as the IJU's unknown plan developed supposedly to attack targets in Tashkent.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Jim Nichol, *Central Asia: Regional Development and Implications for U. S. Interests* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), 11.

<sup>44</sup> The threat of an apparent IJU plot was serious enough to warrant the temporary departure of some diplomatic and foreign businessmen's family members from Tashkent.

The coincidence of “the Tulip Revolution” and suspected (or rumored) new IJU conspiracy had the NSS, Border Guards, and Ministry of Internal Affairs “on edge” when, in the second week of May 2005, the Brothers, their families, and sympathizers from all over Uzbekistan started flocking to Andijan for what they believed would be the final week of the businessmen’s trial. Among the Brothers and their circle of sympathizers, there was a rumor that the trial and sentencing would conclude on Friday, May 13, although, in actuality, the trial probably would have continued at least through the following Monday.<sup>45</sup>

Ultimately, it was probably the rumor of the trial’s impending end, which spurred Kabul Parpiyev, Sharif Shakirov, and other Brothers to action on the night of May 12-13, 2005; but there was also another incident which may have added to their sense of urgency. On Wednesday, May 11, in a residential neighborhood of Andijan, an altercation occurred between three Brothers, or their supporters, and two local Uzbek policemen. Supposedly, an argument started about a parked or stalled vehicle and one of the policemen was hit. After the melee, local police arrested the three and took two of them to the local prosecutor, with the third being sent to the city prosecutor. The police quickly learned that the three were involved in the protests at the courthouse.<sup>46</sup> One of the members was from Tashkent. At least ten members were staying in the same house with Brothers involved in the police incident, and several of the occupants were from outside Andijan Province. For the local Ministry of Internal Affairs and police, this incident had little significance and only came to light during the investigation of the May 13, 2005 events. At the time, there was consensus among security services, to include the NSS, that

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<sup>45</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 9-10. Polat wrote that the judge and prosecutors were looking to drop some charges against the businessmen and lessen possible sentences. It appeared that the court and local government sensed the tension and feared trouble. Attempts to drop charges and lessen penalties are normal face-saving measures in Uzbek courts in order to soften obvious injustices. Nevertheless, Polat reasoned that despite expectations that the defendants would be sentenced to less time for fewer charges, the defendants still would have each served several years in prison.

<sup>46</sup> Human Rights Watch, “*Bullets Were Falling Like Rain*” - *The Andijan Massacre May 13 2005*, 9-10. Human Rights Watch (HRW) published the best chronology of the uprising from the May 11, 2005 arrest of the Brothers’ supporters through the final exchange after 5:00 pm on May 13, 2005 and the attempted escape to Kyrgyzstan.

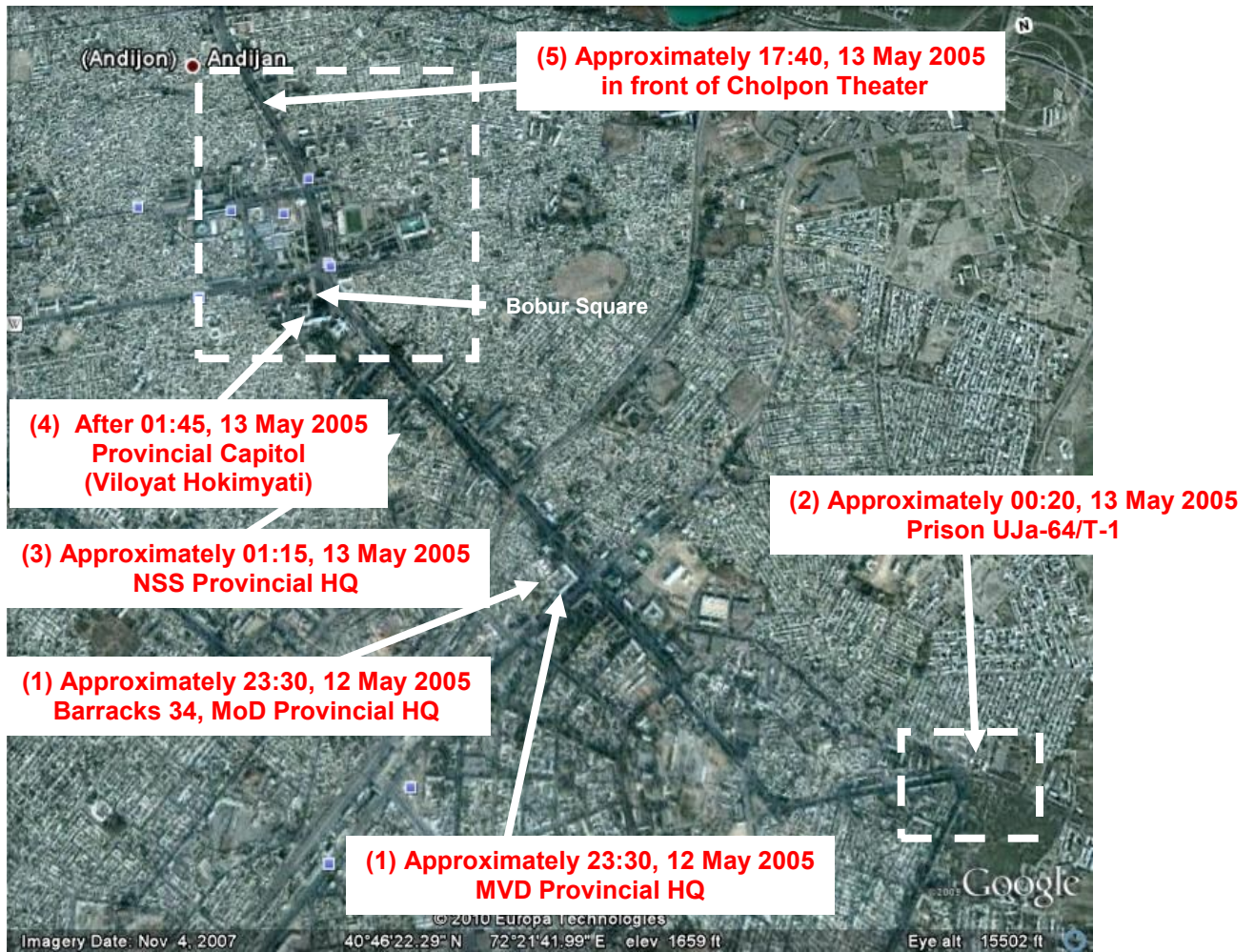
Akromiya was not a violent group.<sup>47</sup> Of course, Kabul Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov were already preparing the logistics for their assault. They had already obtained weapons from Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan. Between the Brothers and their followers gathered in Andijan, a warning (or rumor) passed internally that Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov's plot to free their Brothers from prison had been uncovered due to the arrests of the three Brothers and that action needed to be taken before the Ministry of Internal Affairs could muster police and approvals for their arrests. This was in addition to other rumors that some demonstrators were arrested on Thursday, May 12, and that the businessmen were already secretly convicted and that sentencing would take place on Friday, May 13.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 9-10; NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. Marcus Bensmann and Galima Bukharbaeva testimony to Senator Sam Brownback's U.S. Helsinki Commission (the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), U.S. Capitol, June 29, 2005, 6, <http://www.csse.gov/index.cfm> (accessed June 14, 2014). Galima Bukharbaeva testified that the businessmen's verdicts were read in prison on May 12, 2005. As far as the author knows, that claim was never substantiated.

**Map 1. Location of May 13 Events in Andijan<sup>49</sup>**



<sup>49</sup> Imagery of Andijan from Google, April 2010, image November 4, 2007 by Digital Globe and Europa Technologies. The text boxes and comments were inserted by the author.

# The Assault

## The Beginning of the Assault

The leader of the uprising was Kabul Parpiyev, who was a long-time devotee of Akrom Yuldashev. In 1998, he had been arrested with Akrom Yuldashev on trumped-up narcotics-trafficking charges.<sup>50</sup> Like Akrom Yuldashev, Parpiyev was amnestied. Parpiyev's deputy, Sharif Shakirov, was the better known among protestors at the courthouse. As mentioned earlier, Sharif Shakirov's older brother was one of the 23 defendants. For whatever reason, in April and early May 2005, Kabul Parpiyev became more outspoken, and even provided an interview at one of the courthouse protests.<sup>51</sup> More than likely, with the Brothers' senior leadership in jail, the previously unknown Kabul Parpiyev was rising to the situation and filling the vacuum left by their community's detained leadership.

On May 12, 2005, just before midnight, Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov began their attack. Their group of around fifty Brothers armed with a few AK-47s and various other firearms attacked the provincial headquarters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on Navoi Prospect and then the Ministry of Defense Barracks 34 immediately next to it.<sup>52</sup> The attackers achieved an element of surprise at both installations, killing four policemen, wounding four, and killing five soldiers at the neighboring MoD compound.<sup>53</sup> Reportedly, the few low-ranking police officers present at the time of the attack retreated from the Ministry of Internal Affairs

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<sup>50</sup> As mentioned earlier, in Uzbekistan granting an amnesty after conviction for a questionable crime such as an apparent set-up is a way for the court system and prosecutor to "save face" after a wrongful conviction. Several Uzbeks explained this to the author, including government officials.

<sup>51</sup> It is probably fair to wonder whether Kabul Parpiyev was inspired to action by events nearby in Kyrgyzstan. Parpiyev travelled across the border at least twice to Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan, in early May or late April 2005. Parpiyev had ethnic Uzbek contacts in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. This is known from Parpiyev's trial when prosecutors played recordings of his calls.

<sup>52</sup> In Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs controls the police, and the regional Ministry of Internal Affairs headquarters also serves as the province's police headquarters.

<sup>53</sup> Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising*, 13 May 2005, 83.

compound. Junior soldiers on watch at Barracks 34 withdrew to the rear of the MoD compound and continued firing, but lost control of the arms room and ammunition storage area. Parpiyev's force captured at least 57 AK-47s, 4 sniper rifles, more than 2000 rounds of various ammunitions, an unknown number of fragmentation grenades, and a Zil-130 Army truck.<sup>54</sup>

From Barracks 34 and the Ministry of Internal Affairs compound, the convoy of Brothers' cars followed the captured Zil-130 southeast for about two kilometers up the hill on Navoi Prospect around a traffic circle and at around 12:20 am the truck smashed through the main gate of Prison UJa-64/T-1.<sup>55</sup> The attackers killed three prison guards. The Brothers knew the prison's security systems, allegedly in collusion with the sympathetic warden, quickly captured the keys, freed 527 of 734 prisoners, including several female prisoners, and armed many of the prisoners who agreed to join a planned rally at Bobur Square in front of the provincial capitol building.<sup>56</sup> Reportedly, all freed prisoners were urged to flee or join the attack. Prisoners who declined to leave their cells were threatened. Despite the threats, twenty prisoners, who received AK-47s, remained in the prison and later surrendered peacefully to authorities. Ninety-three prisoners later voluntarily returned to the prison and served the remainder of their sentences.<sup>57</sup>

During the ensuing investigation, it was alleged that the warden, a pious Muslim, had cooperated with the Brothers. That accusation was corroborated by NGOs whose members inspected the prison in the weeks before the assault.<sup>58</sup> In the fall of 2004, international observers visited Prison UJa-64/T-1, and criticized lax security and the mixing of prisoners. They noted the poorly guarded main entrance

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<sup>54</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 12; Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising*, 13 May 2005, 83; Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain" - *The Andijan Massacre*, May 13, 2005, 9-10; Arthur Kasymhodjaev, "Information from the National Security Council of Uzbekistan," National Security Council of Uzbekistan, May 30, 2005.

<sup>55</sup> In Uzbekistan, there is seldom a distinction between jails or prisons. Although the 23 businessmen had not been convicted, they were confined in Prison UJa-64/T-1 along with, but segregated from, convicted murderers and drug traffickers, as well as IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir members.

<sup>56</sup> Kasymhodjaev, "Information from the National Security Council of Uzbekistan.,"; Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain," 13.

<sup>57</sup> Kasymhodjaev, "Information from the National Security Council of Uzbekistan."

<sup>58</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. The author was told this by more than one NGO worker who had visited Prison UJa-64/T-1 prior to May 2005.

and the shared confinement of religious extremists, violent offenders, and other non-violent prisoners in the overcrowded facility. The visitors interviewed several inmates, including hardened religious extremists such as IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir members, but the observers had no access to the 23 businessmen.<sup>59</sup> In the weeks before May 12, the warden had had contact with family members of the imprisoned, some of whom were among Parpiyev's and Sharif Shakirov's fellow Brothers. The relationship between the warden and the Brothers transcended the bounds of normal prison visitation and petitioning the warden.<sup>60</sup> The warden was in fact arrested soon after May 13.

### **Parpiyev's and the Brothers' Attack Continues**

The Brothers assault on the prison was a remarkable success. In less than an hour, the party freed all 23 associates and suffered no losses. Some of the other freed prisoners joined the insurrection as did many of the businessmen.<sup>61</sup> It is at around 1:00 am on Friday May 13, 2005, however, that opinions on Kabul Parpiyev's and other armed Brothers' motivations start to diverge. After the prison raid, Parpiyev and the raiders had a chance to flee to nearby Kyrgyzstan. One of Uzbekistan's least patrolled and poorest demarcated borders is less than a half-hour drive northeast of Andijan, just southeast of Pakhtobod. The area is well-known to Andijan residents.<sup>62</sup> When Parpiyev, other Brothers, and some of the freed prisoners who joined Parpiyev's group departed the prison, they were not under fire.

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<sup>59</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. At least two groups of NGO observers from Western countries visited the prison as part of on-going human rights assistance to the Government of Uzbekistan.

<sup>60</sup> In Uzbekistan, as in many countries of the former Soviet Union, prisoners' families are responsible for their imprisoned family members' meals, clothes, bedding and toiletries. Family members and friends visit daily to provide for the prisoners and petition for their better welfare. In Central Asia, this is a practice which predates the Russians' arrival although Imperial Russia had similar traditions.

<sup>61</sup> There were also claims from the government and a NGO representative that the Brothers shot three prisoners, but the author was never able to substantiate this allegation.

<sup>62</sup> The author accidentally found this open border area in 2007. It was not until a local shepherd explained the situation that the author understood that the dirt road where he was standing was the actual border. This was unusual for most Uzbek borders, especially around the Ferghana Valley. Most of these remaining gaps in the border were demarcated and fenced by 2008. Delays in demarcating and fencing the border were mostly due to bitter border disputes with Kyrgyzstan. These border disputes continued after May 2005.

Instead, the group gathered in front of the prison and started calling other possible sympathizers by cell phone to meet at the prison or at the provincial capitol building.<sup>63</sup>

Parpiyev and his followers apparently had grander intentions. Instead of fleeing, the armed group, now reinforced by some of their freed brethren and other prisoners, headed downhill northwest along Navoi Prospect and Oskaria Street, and attacked the National Security Service complex. Some researchers and journalists claimed that Parpiyev had not set out to attack the NSS complex but rather that the convoy of Brothers' vehicles came under fire as they passed the NSS while en route to Bobur Square and the provincial capitol building.<sup>64</sup> More likely, the NSS headquarters was a deliberate target. In May 2005, the NSS had arrested six additional Brother businessmen.<sup>65</sup> Some of the six were not interned at Prison UJa-64/T-1 but instead held by the NSS.<sup>66</sup> One of the three Brothers arrested after the altercation with policemen on May 11 was being held by the NSS. This better explains the Brothers' determination to breach the NSS compound. It was an unwavering assault despite the Brothers suffering many casualties.<sup>67</sup>

The outnumbered NSS night shift defended their compound against the assault, but not before requesting reinforcements from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Years later, NSS personnel remained proud of their colleagues' defense of its Andijan headquarters and the fact that no weapons were lost and no buildings were infiltrated. By contrast, NSS members looked down on their colleagues in the Ministry of Internal Affairs since the requested police reinforcements which never arrived.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 14.

<sup>64</sup> Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising, 13 May 2005,* 84-85.

<sup>65</sup> Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to U.S. Helsinki Commission, 6.

<sup>66</sup> The author was told this once but later found it corroborated in Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 13 (comment in footnote 34).

<sup>67</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

<sup>68</sup> In Uzbekistan, police from the Ministry of Internal Affairs are often looked down upon for their regular demands for bribes, other forms of corruption, and their overall lack of professionalism. Their failure to help the NSS at Andijan is well known. When asked by the author, several government and non-government Uzbek respondents characterized the Ministry of Internal Affairs police response at Andijan as "cowardly."



The fight at the NSS continued for almost two hours. In the darkness, just after 3:00 am, Kabul Parpiyev's group called off the assault after losing at least fifteen attackers.<sup>69</sup> Sharif Shakirov believed that they had actually lost more, but the fifteen lost at the NSS headquarters were probably the same fifteen unearthed by local residents at graves beside Bobur Square on May 16, 2005.<sup>70</sup> Two of the dead NSS defenders lay in front of the shot-up regional NSS headquarters until dawn when other forces arrived. During the engagement at the NSS, some of the Brothers or freed prisoners also attacked the neighboring Galla Bank and killed a guard. Parpiyev and his force of about fifty armed men remounted their convoy of vehicles and headed less than a kilometer south to the provincial capitol building at the end of Navoi Prospect on Bobur Square. Other members of the uprising had already taken control of the capitol building from the lone night watchman, who wound up their first hostage.<sup>71</sup> As the sun rose over Andijan just before 5:00 am on May 13, 2005, at least 17 Uzbek government personnel lay dead as well as 15 of Parpiyev's comrades.

### **Cordons around Bobur Square (Morning-Early Afternoon, Friday, May 13, 2005)**

Again, at this point, Kabul Parpiyev and his party could have continued north to the Kyrgyz frontier and freedom. Instead, Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov established their own command area in the capitol building and started barricading the area around the traffic circle in front of Bobur Square and around the capitol. Vehicles and buses were moved to intersections on the area's perimeter and set on fire in order to block the roads into the square. About an hour after dawn, at around 6:00 am, confused Ministry of Internal Affairs' guards and later provincial

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<sup>69</sup> Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 14-15.

<sup>70</sup> Pictures of the unearthing of the 15 graves appeared on the BBC and in the Russian press.

<sup>71</sup> In his interviews with the media cited later in this paper, Kabul Parpiyev expressed his astonishment that there was only one guard on duty at the provincial capitol building, the *hokimyat*.

government bureaucrats started arriving for work.<sup>72</sup> They were taken hostage one-by-one.

Parpiyev and other Brothers tried several times to instigate a rally. They set fire to two theaters – a nearly century-old, classical Russian drama theater adjacent to north corner of the provincial capitol building across a large garden from Bobur Square, and later the Bakir Cinema immediately opposite Bobur Square next to the Hotel Andijan. Their goal was to attract as many Andijan residents as possible to Bobur Square and the traffic circle area for what later could only be interpreted as the intended start of a wider rebellion. The two enormous fires burned throughout the day as shown in film taken by a Brother and later captured by Uzbek government forces as well as on other pictures taken from near the square.<sup>73</sup> Curious onlookers arrived and were astonished by the armed men on the nearby square and provincial capitol grounds. Even more confused were firemen from the Ministry of Emergency Services who responded to the theater fires.

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<sup>72</sup> Sunrise on May 13, 2005, was at about 4:55 am.

<sup>73</sup> Martha Brill Olcott and Marina Barnett, "The Andijan Uprising, Akramiya and Akram Yuldashev," 69 minutes of video taken by two cameramen in the Babur Square in Andijan on May 13, 2005 (complete version, provided June 2006), <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=18453> (accessed May 25, 2014); "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights From Survivors," *The New York Times*, June 22, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/22/world/asia/22andijon\\_sidebar2.html?pagewanted=print&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/22/world/asia/22andijon_sidebar2.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0) (accessed May 21, 2014). The film is the best evidence of what occurred at Bobur Square and the Andijan provincial capitol building. *The New York Times* transcript, translated to English, is an invaluable supplement to viewing the recordings. The tape refutes earlier accusations that the demonstrators were unarmed and that the crowd was not chanting "Allahu akbar." The rally participants are shown repeatedly chanting "Allahu akbar." Weapons are visible. The film also shows the Brothers and their supporters taking hostages, trying to organize a rally, making Molotov cocktails, and greeting journalist Marcus Bensmann. The Brothers' female relatives are shown "in formation" on Bobur Square chanting "Allahu akbar." Sharif Shakirov and Akrom Yuldashev's wife, Yodgoroy Yuldasheva, appear in the video, as well as two released convicts who address the audience, a murderer (who admits his guilt to the crowd) and a female drug trafficker. Had the Uzbek government released this film earlier in its investigation, it may have helped their argument and their international image. The film was not made available until spring 2006.

<sup>73</sup> Saidjahon Zaynabitdonov and Lufullo Shamsuddinov were Uzbek human rights advocates who originally defended the Brothers' cause and joined their protests at the courthouse. Both knew Parpiyev and Shakirov although there is no evidence that either knew about Parpiyev or Sharif Shakirov's plans.

Parpiyev's men prevented the firemen from battling the fires, turning some away, and taking others hostage.<sup>74</sup>

On the morning of May 13, 2005, Parpiyev gathered a total of about least 83 armed Brothers, freed prisoners, and other armed supporters near the square and provincial capitol building. During their investigation, the Government of Uzbekistan counted a total of 98 people who took up arms alongside Parpiyev and the Brothers, 15 of whom were killed in the fighting at NSS headquarters.<sup>75</sup> As shown in the captured film, a group of about 80 women, the Brothers' family members from Bogi-Shamol, arrived on the square and mustered in an almost military-like formation, a sort of women's auxiliary.<sup>76</sup> They stood around on Bobur Square throughout the day trying to attract a crowd and help organize a rally by occasionally chanting "Allahu akbar."

By the late morning on Friday May 13, 2005, the Brothers had taken numerous hostages. This is shown in the captured film and discussed in some statements by the four former hostages who survived. The hostages included at least ten Ministry of Internal Affairs patrolmen and guards, at least three firemen, suspected NSS provocateurs, and eventually the chief of the provincial tax agency, as well as two Uzbek human rights advocates.<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, there were as many as thirty. Several of the hostages were abused, and at least one was shot and killed. Another, Ghani Abdurahimov, the city prosecutor, was beaten to death by the Brothers and their supporters.<sup>78</sup> Certain officials who played roles in persecuting the

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<sup>74</sup> Burning the theaters was an interesting decision by Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov. There are other, bigger, structures nearby. The city hall building sits behind the provincial capitol building. The provincial capitol building itself seemed to be the center of the Brothers' anger. It begs the question if they would not have relished the chance to burn the new governor's office and provincial headquarters? And why not burn the decrepit Hotel Andijan between the two theaters? Burning the theaters possibly had some other significance. Their selection of the theaters remains bewildering. A tactical consideration may have been that the Brothers did not want government security forces to gain control of the theaters from which they would have had observation of the provincial capitol building and square, but the Hotel Andijan presented the same problem.

<sup>75</sup> "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights From Survivors," *The New York Times*, 2-3.

<sup>76</sup> Olcott and Barnett, "The Andijan Uprising, Akramiya and Akram Yuldashev," video.

<sup>77</sup> Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising, 13 May 2005*, 87; Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 14; Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain," 14 - 15.

<sup>78</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 11-12. The author believes that there were about 30 hostages although trying to account for all of them proved difficult. There were no less than ten police officers taken hostage, plus at least three firemen, several NSS and suspected

Brothers, their movement and their business network were targeted in acts of excessive violence.

Some of the hostages were on their way to work and had just stumbled onto the scene not knowing what was happening. Radio broadcasts in Uzbekistan seldom carry local news. Without anyone to clear a press release, nothing was announced in Andijan that morning until a statement was made in Tashkent around 10:30 am. In the meantime, Andijan residents riding or driving to work heard the latest news from Russia, America, and the world, but had no idea that an armed insurrection was occurring right in the heart of their hometown.<sup>79</sup>

Uzbeks are a curious, many times fearless, people. Unlike many cultures, it would be perfectly normal for Uzbeks to see smoke, hear gunshots, and decide to see for themselves what was happening. That is clear in the captured film as well as numerous statements provided to Human Rights Watch by women who brought their children to the square to investigate the gunfire and commotion.<sup>80</sup> No one expected this event— neither the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the NSS, nor the ordinary citizens of Andijan.

The Government of Uzbekistan's initial reaction on the morning of Friday, May 13, 2005, was just as confused as the dazed ordinary citizens who were stumbling onto the square. The government had clearly been caught by surprise and had dangerously underestimated the Brothers' capability for violence and ability to organize a mass uprising. Throughout the day, a large part of the government's problems would be command-and-control over the many types of responding government forces. The initial responsibility fell upon the provincial office of the

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NSS provocateurs, the provincial tax official, a judge, a deputy prosecutor, and two human rights defenders. The city prosecutor (Ghani Abdurahimov) was murdered by a crowd of Brothers and their supporters. One human rights defender (Ortiqali Rahmatov) was killed before the attempted break-out sometime between 4:00 and 5:00 pm. Only four hostages survived, all of whom were wounded. Human Rights Watch estimated 25-40 hostages, the OSCE estimated 20-30, while Parpiyev, himself, estimated 30. The author uses Parpiyev's estimate throughout this paper.

<sup>79</sup> When local news is broadcast, it is usually a day late, not only due to censorship, but also due to endless fact-checking that is part of Uzbek cultural perfectionism. No Uzbek official will approve news for official release without permission.

<sup>80</sup> For anyone who has ever lived in Uzbekistan, there is little doubt that it is a "police state," albeit normally a peaceful one. It is not a harsh culture. To see armed Uzbek civilians occupying downtown would be absolutely incredible to believe.

Ministry of Internal Affairs, but, as described earlier, the ministry was temporarily expelled from its own headquarters and failed to comprehend what was happening until much later in the morning. It furthermore had no control over the NSS, Ministry of Defense or Border Guards, each of which was independently rallying forces to respond to the mayhem in Andijan. Additionally, the interior ministry's and army's special forces units, which also responded, retain significant independence from their parent units and do not necessarily work easily within their command structures. There is no doubt therefore that "the stovepipe structures" of the Uzbek government contributed to the problems with Uzbek agencies failing to communicate well laterally, especially at lower action officer levels.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Defense, NSS, and Border Guards tried to coordinate responses as well as establish a cordon around the militant-held area near the provincial capitol building. An infantry brigade in Andijan responded along with units from elsewhere in the Ferghana Valley. By late morning, the problem was that some headquarters were unclear as to which areas the armed rebels held. Units received reports that the prison, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, NSS and Ministry of Defense headquarters had been attacked. As units tried to marshal and respond to the different sites, they kept accidentally driving through or past the Brothers' positions and cordons near the theater fires and provincial capitol building. Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs and later Border Guard BTRs and other military vehicles unexpectedly ran into the Brothers' obstacles, came under fire from 83 or so armed Brothers, freed prisoners and other supporters – causing them to either turn around, drive around, or even barrel through the barricades.<sup>81</sup> There were numerous accounts of BTRs, KAMAZ trucks with soldiers in the back, UAZ jeeps and other vehicles driving toward or around Bobur Square with troops firing wildly at the periphery of the crowds on the square

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<sup>81</sup> A BTR is a Russian-made, eight-wheeled, infantry fighting vehicle. Uzbek versions include BTR-70s and BTR-80s which mount either 14.5mm KPVTs or 12.7mm DShK heavy machine guns, plus 7.62mm PKT machine guns.

and near the provincial capitol building.<sup>82</sup> This occurred at various times throughout the morning and early afternoon and inevitably resulted in casualties, some of whom were bystanders hit by what were probably errant bullets. This included at least one boy whose death was described by witnesses in several different reports. There were also problems of controlling individual riflemen. For example, a Russian television network news show posted an Internet clip from Andijan showing an Uzbek Army soldier lying in the prone position behind a truck on Navoi Prospect firing north in the direction of Bobur Square; this despite his junior officer repeatedly screaming "cease fire" until finally the officer kicked the soldier in the rear end and the soldier finally stopped shooting."<sup>83</sup> Such actions are indicative of untrained, untested, and ill-disciplined units, but also raw fear.

In the early afternoon, the provincial Ministry of Defense headquarters finally established exactly where the Akromiya perimeter was and established its own defensive positions within a one-kilometer circle around the provincial capitol building and Bobur Square.<sup>84</sup> For much of the morning and early afternoon there were problems of radio command-and-control, as well as problems organizing Ministry of Internal Affairs, NSS, and other responding Border Guard units. By mid-afternoon, the Ministry of Defense controlled most of the perimeter. Border Guard units held the northern part of the circumference. Reinforcing Army paratroop units from Ferghana helped establish two additional rings, approximately three and five kilometers around the provincial capitol building area, and prevented anyone from entering the city from the west, south, and east.

Minister of Internal Affairs Zakir Almatov, himself, flew from Tashkent late in the morning to Andijan to rally his forces and gain control of the situation. He personally took overall command of the situation. Almatov was followed by Pres-

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<sup>82</sup> Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 18, 21-22; Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *"Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan,"* 6-7, 12-15.

<sup>83</sup> The Internet link to a Russian NTV news show with this clip was removed sometime before 2010. An Uzbek officer who served at Andijan and Qorasuv relayed that this was not the only instance of problems maintaining fire discipline. The Uzbek officer expressed his surprise that younger, scared riflemen returned fire indiscriminately. He explained that other acts of ill-discipline were rare but fire discipline proved challenging at both engagements.

<sup>84</sup> Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 25-26.

ident Karimov, who flew by helicopter in circles over the provincial capitol building area and observed the events from above before landing at the airport at the west end of the city. On the ground, President Karimov met briefly with scared residents at the airport and reassured them that the government would restore order.<sup>85</sup> Film footage of the meeting was included in the national evening television news.

In the afternoon, at around 1:00 pm, Almatov was able to open direct phone communications with Kabul Parpiyev inside the provincial capitol building in an effort to start negotiations. Parpiyev later claimed that he called Almatov although he changed his story later.<sup>86</sup> The phone call solved a serious mystery for many: What group was behind this, and who was their leader? Until that point, there was uncertainty among the Uzbek security forces. Akromiya was not suspected because the Brothers had never before been linked to violence and the government had failed to uncover their plot.<sup>87</sup>

There were other valid reasons why the IJU and IMU were initially suspected in Andijan, and not Akromiya (the Brothers). On the same day, at 11:30 am, a man in a trench coat approached the Israeli Embassy in Tashkent with fake explosives

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<sup>85</sup> Evidently, Karimov was convinced not to interject himself directly into the situation and to let Minister Almatov deal with the uprising. The other reason for his departure was a shooting at the Israeli Embassy. Around 11:30 am, a Ministry of Internal Affairs guard shot an ethnic Russian with fake explosives near the Israeli Embassy. The man was later learned to have a history of mental illness but initially the incident was believed to be part of a much anticipated IJU plot. There were unsubstantiated allegations after May 13, 2005, that there was shooting from some of the few Uzbek government helicopters, including Karimov's, which overflew the area near Bobur Square. The author was unable to corroborate any of this information. The authenticity of these claims is very suspect due to the confusion on the ground and the lack of any photo evidence. Certainly, the Brothers' film crew and television news crews, who filmed the Brothers around Bobur Square, would have documented such an event.

<sup>86</sup> "Andizhani rebel leader Kabul Parpiyev urges the international community to put Islam Karimov under pressure," *Central Asia News*, Ferghana.ru, June, 29, 2005; Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev," *Front Line* (from Uznews.net), June 2005, 3, <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/andijan-uprising-leaders-testimony-front-line>.

<sup>87</sup> Uzbek forces, which responded to the incidents in Andijan, assumed they were fighting the IMU or some other al-Qaeda element. Military officers from NATO countries and at least one NGO representative reached Andijan on May 13 or 14, 2005, and independently met with Uzbek soldiers. All described the Uzbek soldiers' morale as very high and that they were very proud of their performance fighting "al-Qaeda" or "IMU." Years later, an Uzbek officer, who had served at Andijan, explained that he had believed his unit fought the IMU at Andijan. It was more than a year after the Andijan events until he realized that was not the case.

and refused to acknowledge the guards' instructions. The Israeli Embassy was one of three embassies attacked by the IJU in July 2004. Fully aware of the ongoing IJU conspiracy in Tashkent, and also aware of on-going violence in Andijan, Uzbek Ministry of Internal Affairs policemen shot and killed the man. Days later, it emerged that the man was an unarmed ethnic Russian with a history of mental problems. He was not connected to any terrorist organization; however, this was not known on May 13, 2005. It was yet another event that put Uzbek security forces "on edge."

Back in Andijan, defense ministry forces still had no idea who they were fighting and assumed that the armed gunmen were IMU or other al-Qaeda affiliated terrorists. Most MoD officers and soldiers had little or no knowledge of the Brothers or Akromiya – a problem exacerbated by information not being passed between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and MoD forces. Those who might have known of the Islamic society would probably have had no reason to expect that the Brothers' first violent act would be an attempted insurrection. At the Uzbek Army's internal perimeter early on Saturday, May 14, 2005, soldiers proudly explained to Western observers how they had fought-off "al-Qaeda" and "IMU" terrorists the day and night before.



# The Bobur Square Rally and the Failure of Negotiations (Afternoon and Early Evening)

## The Rally on Bobur Square

In the early afternoon of Friday May 13, 2005, Sharif Shakirov successfully organized a rally on Bobur Square. He and other Brothers had been summoning associates by cell phone since the early morning prison break. Even on the captured film he is shown on his cell phone. The rally appeared to be Sharif Shakirov's main task throughout the afternoon, as assisted by his youngest brother, Khassad, who also worked the phones and sent people to attract more residents from the nearby neighborhoods (*mahallalar*). Early in the Brothers' video, a very confident Sharif Shakirov reflected on his perceived success and proclaimed: "the people have joined us, we won."<sup>88</sup> The square itself is smaller than a football field, approximately 250 by 100 feet (80 by 30 meters), and surrounded by gardens. In 2005, a large equestrian statue of Bobur stood on a podium on the west side of the square.<sup>89</sup> The base of the statue was large and wide enough for speakers to stand

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<sup>88</sup> "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights from Survivors," *The New York Times*, 2; Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 16.

<sup>89</sup> In 2010, the author had three "neutral" persons independently review the captured film. They calculated the crowd at its peak to be a little more than 2000 persons. The high estimate was about 2200. The low estimate was 1700. Dr. Shirin Akiner of the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies came to a similar conclusion of about 2,000 possible demonstrators based on the size of Bobur Square. AbduMannob Polat cites her study on pages 13-14 of his report. Galima Bukharbaeva testified to Senator Brownback's Helsinki Committee that no less than 10,000 people were at the square on the afternoon of May 13, 2005. She also stated that the square is 200 meters long. The author observed that Bobur Square is about 80 meters by 30 meters. It is also clear in the Brothers' captured film that the square is smaller than Bukharbaeva remembered and that there were far fewer than 10,000 people present at the Brothers' demonstration. In spring 2008, the statue of Bobur and its enormous marble base were moved to a new park near the train station in the center of the city. This may have been due to the statue's association with events on May 13, 2005, although not necessarily. In Uzbek cities, including Tashkent, large statues are sometimes moved around in the middle of the night as part of seemingly arbitrary beautification efforts. The statue is now in a more prominent place but Bobur Square is missing a "Bobur."

on, address a crowd, and be seen across the square. From reviewing the captured film taken at the height of the rally, it can be estimated that around 2000 participants and bystanders filled both the square and the area of the traffic circle behind it, between 3:00 and 4:00 pm in the afternoon, just after Friday prayers.<sup>90</sup>

The speakers included some of the recently freed businessmen, Sharif Shakirov, Akrom Yuldashev's wife, Yodgory, other Brothers, and at least two convicts freed in the jailbreak the previous evening. At around 3:00 pm, Sharif Shakirov forced two witnesses, the tax official and the prosecutor, to address the crowd and confess their wrongdoing. Each of them stated that they had been forced by the government "like puppets" to prosecute the Brothers.<sup>91</sup> Soon after this, the prosecutor was murdered by members of the crowd. Later, as shown on the captured film, one of the released convicts, an admitted murderer, addressed the audience.<sup>92</sup> Another speaker was a recently released female convicted drug trafficker. The video footage shows how organizers and the group of women regularly attempt to get the crowd chanting "Allahu akbar," with some success. As discussed on the film, this was intended to attract more people to the square to hear the on-going series of speeches, and the footage appears intended to record the uprising for posterity. The monologues were sometimes very emotional, but they were not necessarily religious or even damning of the Karimov government. In fact, some of the speakers complained about economic or political conditions but seemed to be petitioning Karimov, which, in hindsight, appears irrational because they were being filmed standing next to organizers carrying AK-47s. (Even if Karimov had heard

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<sup>90</sup> In Uzbek tradition, *juma* prayers are normally after the mid-day meal on Friday. On May 14, 2005, only about 600 refugees fled to nearby Kyrgyzstan. Of these, 439 registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and were relocated, 15 were arrested by the Kyrgyz government and forcibly returned to Uzbekistan, and the remainder either returned to Uzbekistan on their own or hid in either Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan. If the rally had been larger than 2000 people, one might expect that the number of refugees would have been higher as well.

<sup>91</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain," 18-19; Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising*, 13 May 2005, 88-89; Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to Senator Sam Brownback's U.S. Helsinki Commission, 9.

<sup>92</sup> "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights From Survivors," *The New York Times*, 2-3. There were at least two convicted murderers released during the May 12, 2005 prison break. One of them, Daniyov Akbarov, attended the rally and addressed the audience. In the captured video, he regretfully admitted his guilt and told the story how he killed a man with a fork with the victim dying days later. He later escaped to Kyrgyzstan. The other murderer went on to kill another person before his recapture.

their appeals, they were in grave trouble for participating in this armed uprising.) Armed gunmen circled the crowd and paced the capitol building's roof. It was widely said that there was anticipation among the spectators that President Karimov himself was coming to meet the crowd. This was another reason as to why people came to the square and nervously waited.<sup>93</sup> Unknown to the crowd, as mentioned previously, Karimov had already over-flown the site in his helicopter, circled the Bobur Square area, met with local residents at the airport, and returned to Tashkent.

On the captured film, the crowd, especially the women described earlier, appeared nervous. Watching it, one senses that many of the spectators were just curious Andijan residents. At some points in the film, it is not clear whether the bystanders present could walk away freely. The Brothers seem to be desperately urging the crowd to stay as the organizers try to enlarge the demonstration. For any regular Andijan resident who wandered to the square, he or she faced the problem of being inside the Uzbek security forces' cordons and being associated with the gunmen. This might help explain the crowd's nervousness, as well as the fact that some of them may have witnessed the prosecutor's murder, which occurred in broad daylight alongside a garden near the square. Occasionally, gunfire can be heard on the film. This came from Navoi Park, on the far side of Bobur Square. That was the last area during daylight where the Brothers' and their backers traded gunfire with Border Guards, and perhaps an Army unit, throughout the afternoon.

The two men who filmed the events around Bobur Square showed militants manufacturing Molotov cocktails and establishing fighting positions. The video

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<sup>93</sup> Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising*, 13 May 2005, 88-89; HRW, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain," 25. There were reasons for expecting that Karimov might appear downtown. Early in his presidency Karimov was very "hands-on." During "the Namangan Caliphate" in December 1991, for instance, Karimov visited Namangan and attempted to reason with Tokhir Yuldashev. They met in what became a public relations catastrophe for Karimov. The President was forced to declare in front of video cameras that there would be an Islamic caliphate in Uzbekistan while standing between Tokhir Yuldashev and Juma Khojaev (later "Juma Namangani.") After he returned to Tashkent, Karimov reportedly sicced the NSS on Tokhir Yuldashev and the rest became history. Tokhir Yuladashev, Juma Khojaev (later Juma Namagani) and their group fled to Tajikistan where they eventually founded the IMU. In 2011, clips of this famous episode were loaded onto YouTube. They were still accessible in May 2014.

briefly pans to show the Brothers' own barricades as well as the burning theaters. At one point, they allude to their mistaken belief that the uprising would spread beyond Andijan and that they would later be famous.<sup>94</sup> Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov proudly appeared in the film directing other armed Brothers, organizing activities, and greeting sympathizers as though they were stars in their own movie.

But the two Brothers filming the event were not the only media on hand to document the uprising. At least two journalists, German radio, television, and newspaper reporter Marcus Bensmann and Uzbek Internet journalist Galima Bukharbaeva, visited the provincial capitol building while it was being held by Parpiyev and his followers. Bukharbaeva interviewed both Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov.<sup>95</sup> They arrived separately although their time at the provincial capitol building overlapped. Bukharbaeva knew Parpiyev from the demonstrations at the trial site and may have interviewed him in early May. It is unclear how Bensmann knew Parpiyev or the other organizers, but both Bukharbaeva and Bensmann were granted access to the capitol building, including the area where hostages were being held, and met with Parpiyev. In the Brothers' film, which was later captured and released by the Uzbek government, Bensmann and an ethnic European television cameraman were shown being greeted by the Brothers' guards at the front gate to the capitol building. Bensmann and his assistant were then escorted by friendly gunmen, who did not even search their items or persons. One armed Brother starts to check Bensmann's credentials, but another Brother appears, warmly greeting Bensmann, and waving off the other Brother

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<sup>94</sup> The author watched the captured film on separate occasions in 2006 with two native Uzbek speakers to check the translations. The Brothers who made the film thought they were recording history and the start of something great. This is also clear in *The New York Times* transcript of the film cited elsewhere in this paper.

<sup>95</sup> Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to U.S. Helsinki Commission, 6-7. Although Bensmann and Bukharbaeva knew each other and travelled together to Andijan from Tashkent, they arrived separately at the provincial capitol building on May 13, 2005. Bukharbaeva interviewed Kabul Parpiyev inside the provincial capitol building (the hokimiyat) on videotape. This was witnessed by surviving hostages including Qodir Ergashev. To the author's and other researchers' knowledge, Bukharbaeva never released the tape of this interview. Bensmann and Bukharbaeva later married and now live in Germany.

while instructing him not to search the journalists. Bukharbaeva's and Bensmann's visit was one of the biggest indications of planning for a popular uprising. She had been called by a Brother early that morning in Tashkent from where she started her six-hour drive to Andijan.<sup>96</sup>

Others who arrived at the capitol building that afternoon were not treated in the same manner. An Uzbek human rights defender, Qodir Ergashev who knew several of the Brothers and advocated for them during the trial, arrived separately to investigate what was happening. Unlike the reporters, after a discussion and argument with Sharif Shakirov on Bobur Square, Ergashev was searched, robbed, detained, and held alongside other hostages. That afternoon on the square, Ergashev had criticized Sharif Shakirov for the murder of the prosecutor, the abuse of the other hostages, and the Brothers' overall forfeiture of public sympathy. Another human rights defender, Ergashev's deputy Ortiqali Rahmatov, who later tried to mediate with Parpiyev and Shakirov, was accused of being an undercover NSS informant and killed.<sup>97</sup> Ironically, Ergashev was arrested two days after the uprising by the NSS for alleged collaboration with Akromiya. He spent more than a month in jail.

While a hostage of Parpiyev and Shakirov, Ergashev witnessed the beating and shooting of a suspected NSS official. During this time, he also saw Bukharbaeva being escorted through the halls of the capitol building. Ergashev knew Bukharbaeva from the trials which she had covered in late April and early May.

## **Negotiations**

After the initial terse 1:00 pm phone conversation, Minister Almatov tried to negotiate with Kabul Parpiyev by phone on no less than two occasions on the afternoon of May 13, 2005, at 3:00 pm and just before 5:00 pm. In the first conversation, Kabul Parpiyev demanded Akrom Yuldashev's and the 23 businessmen's free-

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<sup>96</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

<sup>97</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 12; NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. This NGO representative had the opportunity to interview several of the Uzbek human rights defenders who were in Andijan in May 2005.

dom. Minister Almatov offered Kabul Parpiyev safe passage to Kyrgyzstan including the provision of buses to do so. Indeed, in recordings of the conversations played during the October 2005 trials, Almatov is heard offering freedom for the jailed Akromiya members and safe passage to the Kyrgyz border. On the same tape, Parpiyev is heard refusing the offer, however, and threatening to march on Tashkent, yet another indication of Parpiyev's plans and expectation of a wider insurrection. Curiously, this notion was never fully explained, not even at Parpiyev's trial.<sup>98</sup>

The NSS moved Akrom Yuldashev from Bekobod Prison to Tashkent on May 13, although Parpiyev was never told. Instead, at some point, Parpiyev was told that it would be impossible to free Akrom Yuldashev. The NSS also considered arranging a phone conversation between Akrom Yuldashev and Parpiyev but that also did not happen.<sup>99</sup>

In truth, the plan to arrange safe passage to Kyrgyzstan would probably have been far more complicated than Ministry of Internal Affairs officials realized. Throughout the day, the Uzbek security forces' serious command-and-control problems continued. At first, the Ministry of Defense attempted to organize cordons around the area at the provincial capitol building. Then, after Almatov's arrival, the Ministry of Internal Affairs took over orchestrating the perimeter. The challenge was that there were Army infantry battalions, a brigade headquarters, an Army Special Forces unit, an NSS Special Forces unit, various Ministry of Internal Affairs units (to include their own Special Forces), plain clothes NSS, and Border Guard units all converging on the area from separate directions. Most had different tactical communications and had no way to talk via tactical radio to units from the other agencies, although these deficiencies were never noted publicly.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> "Uzbek Prosecutors Play Tapes of Andijan Phone Negotiations," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, from Associated Press, October 21, 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1062316.html>.

<sup>99</sup> Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to U.S. Helsinki Commission, 6; NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. In Uzbekistan, the fact that the NSS initially moved Akrom Yuldashev but could not free him or put him in phone contact with Parpiyev, meant that the bureaucracy probably never received final permission for such steps from President Karimov. The exact explanation was that a certain judge did not get authorization, but that permission probably originated with President Karimov.

<sup>100</sup> Ministry of Internal Affairs, MoD, NSS and Border Guard units had various Russian-, American- and European-made VHF radios.

None of them had maps of Andijan because no such maps existed. Ferghana Valley cities were deemed “strategic,” so no city maps were ever produced.<sup>101</sup> The best alternative to a city map was a 1:50,000 scale map of Andijan Province which was useless inside the city.

To complicate this further, Andijan itself is very disorienting. Due to an earthquake in 1902, Andijan has an unusual layout. The earthquake leveled the former downtown. When the Russians rebuilt the city and new governmental structures, they built on the low ground at the north end of the city’s former periphery. The main street, renamed Alisher Navoi Prospect, leads downhill and north from the former downtown. It is a classical, leafy Russian promenade with rows of government buildings on either side, including the regional headquarters for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and the National Security Service. The provincial capitol building, city hall, the drama theater, Bobur Square, the city garden, the main bazaar, mosques, museums, the amusement park and main soccer stadium are all at the lowest elevation on the north edge of the city.

Consequently, throughout the day, government units became lost as they arrived and accidentally drove into the provincial government building area or into other units’ cordons. Witnesses commented that at least one BTR drove through the area several times periodically exchanging fire with the Brothers and other gunmen near the square.<sup>102</sup> Several of the BTRs were probably just lost. Yet another problem was that the armed plain-clothes NSS in the area looked remarkably like the Brothers and their armed sympathizers. There was at least one serious incident of misidentification and probable fratricide.<sup>103</sup>

Before 5:00 pm in the afternoon on May 13, Minister Almatov called Parpiyev one last time and asked if he should send the buses. Parpiyev later claimed that he

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<sup>101</sup> Ironically, the author visited Andijan using maps made by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for their reports on the uprising. Later, GoogleEarth became a useful aide for navigating the city. There are city maps of Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara. The only places where the author could not find city maps due to the cities’ “strategic” classification were in the Ferghana Valley and Termez. Other than Andijan, the only Uzbek city with a more complicated layout is Ferghana.

<sup>102</sup> Both the Uzbek Army and Border Guards had BTRs in Andijan although they used different camouflage patterns.

<sup>103</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

replied “No, thanks,” to which Almatov warned, “Those who are fated will die.”<sup>104</sup> Parpiyev claimed that Almatov then said that if 40 to 50 were to die he was ready for that, to which Parpiyev alleged that he wished Almatov good luck.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, “Interview with Kobul Parpiyev,” 3.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*



## Parpiyev's Attempted Break-Out: The End of the Siege

Of all the details in dispute about what happened at Bobur Square and the provincial capitol building on the late afternoon of May 13, none is more contested than how the ordeal ended. This is likely due to the chaos that ensued after 5:00 pm when approximately 2000 people, including bystanders, Brothers, and their supporters and family members, all tried to scatter and escape through security force cordons into the surrounding neighborhoods while both sides exchanged gunfire. Early accounts described the final shootout as starting near Bobur Square. But according to statements from both Kabul Parpiyev and Uzbek security personnel who were at Andijan, the uprising's tragic end started north of the provincial capitol building on Cholpon Street. Surviving hostages reported that the Brothers inside the provincial capitol building started discussing breaking out in small groups in the late afternoon, while concurrently negotiating with Minister of Internal Affairs Almatov and encouraging their rally on Bobur Square. In the course of planning their escape, Parpiyev and several Brothers argued about how best to use the hostages as shields, how to divide up the hostages, as well as different paths out of the city and various crossing points into Kyrgyzstan.<sup>106</sup> One point was clear from all witnesses' accounts including Parpiyev's: None of the Brothers trusted the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the NSS, or their offers of safe passage. Those inside the provincial capitol building considered Almatov's offers as part of a trap. They also knew that the Karimov government would never forgive their actions.<sup>107</sup>

Inside the capitol building and on the square, the Brothers, including Parpiyev, assumed that Uzbek security forces would rush and clear the square at dusk, just before 7:30 pm. By late in the afternoon, around 4:00 pm, there were a few gunfire

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<sup>106</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 12; NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

<sup>107</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan*, 12.

exchanges as MoD, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Border Guard units established checkpoints, and government command-and-control was coordinated.<sup>108</sup> Only the area around Navoi Park remained contested. Fewer government units were moving around in the city. Government BTRs could be seen within 600 feet (200 meters) of the traffic circle in front of Bobur Square. Three perimeters prevented any civilian traffic from entering the city.

Kabul Parpiyev later explained that after his final conversation with Almatov there were consultations among the Brothers' leadership at around 5:00 pm. After the meeting, Parpiyev claimed that Brothers went out on the square and told followers to disperse because an order had been given to government forces "to clear the square." This may be the origins of the accusation that government forces had an order from Karimov to "clear the square."<sup>109</sup> In his June 2005 interview, Parpiyev did not say who gave the order, but, from the context, it appears he was suggesting Almatov's threat during their last phone call included indication of an order to shoot. However, it is important to note that there was no such order in the recorded conversations between Almatov and Parpiyev. In her testimony before the Helsinki Commission, Bukharbaeva relayed Parpiyev's claims that Almatov threatened such action earlier in the day, but there is no evidence of this.<sup>110</sup> It was never corroborated by any other witnesses. Bukharbaeva never made her notes public or wrote about her account. It is also clear from Almatov's statements, repeated by Parpiyev, that Almatov never imagined the possible scale of the rebellion's violent end, anticipating, as previously mentioned, between 40 and

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<sup>108</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain," 25-26.

<sup>109</sup> "Uzbek Prosecutors Play Tapes Of Andijan Phone Negotiations," *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*; Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev"; "Andizhani rebel leader Kabul Parpiyev urges the international community to put Islam Karimov under pressure," *Central Asia News* (Ferghana.ru.), June 29, 2005; "Andijan uprising leader's testimony," *Front Line* (Uznews.net), January 4, 2007.

<sup>109</sup> Igor Rotar, "Andijan Leader Threatens 'Campaign of Terror' against Karimov Regime," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 2, No. 155, August 8 (2005).

<sup>110</sup> "Uzbek Prosecutors Play Tapes Of Andijan Phone Negotiations"; Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to U.S. Helsinki Commission, 6-7; Bukharbaeva testified that Parpiyev told her that Minister Almatov threatened "if they had to kill 300, 1400 people, they would take the rebels," but those comments were not on the recordings of Almatov's and Parpiyev's conversations.

50 dead. Furthermore, Almatov probably did not factor in how command-and-control challenges would intensify once the fighting started.

Parpiyev's description of his final conversations with Almatov, as well as the Brothers' plan to disperse, hints at a sense of fatalism. His futile negotiations with Almatov were pointless. Parpiyev had no plans for ending the uprising. It is quite probable that the failure of the insurrection to spread beyond the capitol building and Bobur Square had affected Parpiyev and his fellow Brothers. In Parpiyev's taped conversation with Almatov, and Brothers' recorded comments on the captured film, it is clear that they genuinely expected their rebellion to spread across the Ferghana Valley and Uzbekistan in a manner similar to how "the Tulip Revolution" had quickly spread across Kyrgyzstan from Osh to Bishkek just a month earlier. When this failed to occur, they were flummoxed.

According to Parpiyev, at around 5:20 pm, he led a group of 24 gunmen with about 30 hostages, as shields, out of the provincial capitol building. They headed north, around the traffic circle, through their own barricades of burned buses, past the park and soccer stadium along Cholpon Street, and into a neighborhood of small businesses.<sup>111</sup> Many of the hostages were NSS officers and suspected NSS members.<sup>112</sup> Ironically, Qodir Ergashev, the human rights advocate accused by his hostage-takers of being a member of the NSS, found himself tied up alongside real NSS members. The hostages were kept with their hands tied behind their backs several meters in front of the gunmen, who shouted instructions to the hostages and later to Uzbek security forces.<sup>113</sup> Once outside and moving, several women from the ranks of the Brothers' supporters joined the group, which grew to as many as 300 people. The provincial tax inspector was at the very front.<sup>114</sup>

North on Cholpon Street, the group of gunmen, women and hostages was halted at a Border Guard cordon about one kilometer north of Bobur Square in front of

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<sup>111</sup> One of the aspects that seemed to be forgotten in the Human Rights Watch report was that the barricades of burned vehicles on Cholpon Street near Bobur Square were put in place by the Brothers early on May 13, 2005. Neither Bensmann nor Bukharbaeva discussed Parpiyev's attempted breakout. They both contended that the shooting started at 5:20 pm, but that is inconsistent with Parpiyev's claims in interviews from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

<sup>112</sup> Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev."

<sup>113</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 12-13.

<sup>114</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain," 28 -29.

the School Number 15 and the Cholpon Cinema. Two BTRs reinforced the checkpoint with sandbags in the road and riflemen behind them.<sup>115</sup> A small drainage canal on both sides of the road prevented bypassing the cordon.<sup>116</sup> According to Lutfullo Shamsuddinov, who observed from his bicycle just south of the checkpoint, as well as Qodir Ergashev, then a hostage and human shield, some shots were fired initially at the checkpoint. These were possibly warning shots, since no one was reportedly hit on either side. After some shouting and threats by both sides, a NSS captain stepped forward and intervened to negotiate the group's safe passage.<sup>117</sup>

As told in several accounts, the young NSS officer spoke with the Border Guards first and assured them that Minister Almatov and the NSS approved of the group's safe escape. The Border Guards repeatedly stated that they needed to talk to their higher command and coordinate approval for what the NSS captain was trying to arrange.<sup>118</sup> After what Ergashev and Shamsuddinov described as a long wait, as well as repeated impatient shouts and threats from Parpiyev's group, higher authorities gave the Border Guards orders to allow passage to the group and their escorts. This was probably before 6:00 pm. After the Border Guards met one last time with the NSS officer, the captain turned to talk to Parpiyev's group who was facing north still standing about 150 feet (50 meters) to the south on the west side of the road. The NSS captain shouted that he wanted to come forward and talk to the group but, as he moved forward, gunfire started and the two groups engaged each other. A rebel reportedly shot the NSS captain in the chest and he died in the street.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

<sup>116</sup> Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev."

<sup>117</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

<sup>118</sup> In May 2005, the State Border Guard Protection Committee was a separate and independent service. This changed after the Andijan events when the State Border Guard Protection Committee became subordinate to the NSS, the same way it is organized in Russia where the Border Guards are subordinate to the FSB. Some looked at the post-Andijan reorganization as copying Russia, but command-and-control issues in May 2005 at Andijan and Qorasuv probably had more to do with this reorganization.

<sup>119</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. The author had been told this story separately by Uzbek government officers who were at Andijan on May 13 and 14, 2005. In 2010, it was repeated by a member of a second Western NGO who had interviewed Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan after the uprising. There is a more romanticized version of this episode where the NSS captain

At that point, both sides exchanged fire, including heavy machine-gun fire from the two Border Guard BTRs. Hostages, sympathizers, and gunmen tried to turn south back toward the capitol building and Bobur Square. Some managed to scatter west into surrounding neighborhoods. According to Shamsuddinov, Ergashev, and Parpiyev, a major firefight ensued about 300 feet (100 meters) south of the Border Guards' checkpoint between two rows of stores and School Number 46.<sup>120</sup> Ergashev was shot in the leg and lay wounded on the side of the street besides killed and wounded gunmen and bystanders, dead hostages, and the other three surviving hostages, who included a policeman, a fireman, and a member of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.<sup>121</sup> Ergashev lay there until first light, around 5:00 am on May 14. Parpiyev claimed that the shooting continued after dusk, until about 7:20 pm. By that time, he and other survivors were able to slip away through neighborhoods in the north of Andijan. Parpiyev complained that he and his group requested shelter from local residents in these mahallas (neighborhoods) but that the local public either ignored them or turned them away.<sup>122</sup>

From Cholpon Street, the shooting quickly spread south, where up to 2,000 bystanders, gunmen, and sympathizers had tried to escape from the traffic circle and Bobur Square. Within seconds of the firefight to the north, the area around the provincial capitol building was engulfed in automatic weapons fire from numerous points. Shooting came from the Brothers, themselves, on the rooftops around the provincial capitol building, and from Army BTRs south of Bobur Square. The Army BTRs and at least one truckload of infantry moved forward between the square and Navoi Park. People scattered or were shot when they got near gunmen on both sides. The firing near the square continued until after 8:00 pm. A thunderstorm then briefly passed through the area between 9:00 pm and 10:00 pm. Some survivors managed to drag themselves out of the area, and in some instances friends or comrades found them. Most of the other wounded and

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may have laid his rifle in the street and possibly removed his body armor. He then started walking slowly toward Parpiyev's group when he was suddenly shot in the chest and "all hell broke loose" as both sides engaged one another. The NSS captain reportedly died unconscious on Cholpon Street. The author was never able to verify this account.

<sup>120</sup> Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev."

<sup>121</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Bullets Were Falling Like Rain," 34.

<sup>122</sup> Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev."

dead lay on Cholpon Street, near the traffic circle and around Bobur Square until daylight, just before 5:00 am on May 14. During the firefight and immediately after, some units in BTRs and a truck advanced toward Bobur Square and the provincial capitol building, but there is no evidence that organized units crossed the site until first light the next morning.<sup>123</sup>

Later, critics of the Uzbek government claimed that Uzbek government forces entered the square and Cholpon Street during the night and shot survivors. Qodir Ergashev was among those who initially made such claims, but he also stated that Uzbek forces did not appear until just before dawn when they recovered survivors, including himself. Due to the Uzbek forces' command-and-control problems, the chaotic fighting at the Cholpon Theater and the square, darkness and a storm, accusations that Uzbek forces entered those areas before twilight do not seem reasonable.

During the night, a large group of Brothers, their family members, and sympathizers led by Kabul Parpiyev reassembled in a neighborhood north of Cholpon Street and traveled north by foot. Despite the brief thunderstorm, they moved without incident to within one kilometer of the Kyrgyz border. An hour after daylight, around 6:00 am on May 14, within sight of the normally loosely guarded border area near Teshik-Tosh, east of Pakhtobod, the group fought two Border Guard patrols and suffered an additional eight casualties. Parpiyev and the group finally crossed into Kyrgyzstan at a nearby alternate crossing point.<sup>124</sup> They were followed by a few others who made it separately on foot. Later in the morning, additional fugitives were ferried by private cars and minibuses from Andijan's neighborhoods to the border.

Others escaped by road convoy to the border town of Qorasuv (Kara-su) an hour-and-a-half east of Andijan. There, a second, separate uprising against the Uzbek government ignited on May 14. Fighting continued in Qorasuv for a week until

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<sup>123</sup> This disputes accounts that Uzbek government forces crossed the square from south to north in an organized manner late on May 13, 2005, and that they shot survivors. According to their own accounts, Qodir Ergashev and the other surviving hostages were not approached and evacuated until just before dawn.

<sup>124</sup> Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 33-34.

Uzbek security forces forcibly secured the town and re-sealed the nearby border with Kyrgyzstan on May 20. Although the events in Qorasuv were likely inspired by the violence that had occurred in Andijan, there is no evidence that the Brothers or their sympathizers were involved in the fighting at Qorasuv.<sup>125</sup>

Sharif Shakirov, Parpiyev's main deputy in the plot, was killed in the gunfire back in Andijan somewhere near the provincial capital building while on the phone with a BBC journalist. His last words were recorded as he fell and lay dying at the end of the interview.<sup>126</sup> Incredibly, Kabul Parpiyev was among those who made it to Kyrgyzstan. Parpiyev gave several phone interviews from Kyrgyzstan in June 2005, then from Kazakhstan in August and November 2005. Besides providing his account of the uprising, and taunting the Karimov government, Parpiyev vehemently refuted NSS claims of foreign involvement in the Andijan uprising.<sup>127</sup> He stated his regret that the mistreatment of fellow Brothers and the arrest of the businessmen resulted in the violent acts that he helped organize and lead on May 12 and 13, 2005.<sup>128</sup> Kabul Parpiyev was eventually captured in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, by a joint NSS—Kazakh Committee for National Security (KNSB) operation in late November 2005.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> The author travelled to Qorasuv and spoke to some people who were involved in the fighting, but other than the proximity of time and location, it appears that the rebellion at Qorasuv was a local, separate event from the events at Andijan. Qorasuv is a border town and there had been issues there during the March–April 2005 unrest in neighboring Kyrgyzstan. Parpiyev probably acquired weapons near Qorasuv, but neither the Brothers nor Parpiyev were involved in the fighting there.

<sup>126</sup> "The Andijan Massacre: A Year After," translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, New York, NY: Columbia University, March 6, 2006, available from [www.columbia.edu/cu/news/06/06/transcript.doc](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/06/06/transcript.doc), accessed June 12, 2014; "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights From Survivors," *The New York Times*, 2. Sharif Shakirov's assistant and youngest brother, Khassad, escaped to Kyrgyzstan from where he gave several interviews to *The New York Times* and other media. He was later arrested by the Kyrgyz government and deported back to Uzbekistan.

<sup>127</sup> Igor Rotar, "Andijan Leader Threatens 'Campaign of Terror' against Karimov Regime"; "Andizhani rebel leader Kabul Parpiyev urges the international community to put Islam Karimov under pressure," *Central Asia News* (Ferghana.ru), June, 29, 2005; Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev"; "Andijan uprising leader's testimony," *Front Line*, January 4, 2007.

<sup>128</sup> Igor Rotar, "Andijan Leader Threatens 'Campaign of Terror' against Karimov Regime."

<sup>129</sup> Going to Shymkent, Kazakhstan, was not a smart move on Kabul Parpiyev's part. The IJU organized their July 2004 suicide attacks in Shymkent. The suicide bombers and IJU terror experts prepared at safehouses in the ethnic Uzbek neighborhoods of Shymkent before the attackers moved on to Tashkent. One of the attackers was an ethnic Uzbek and a citizen of Kazakhstan. That caused the

From the group of about 600 Andijan refugees who joined Kabul Parpiyev when he crossed into Kyrgyzstan, 439 registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and were eventually moved to Romania, and later the United States and other Western countries. The refugees included Akrom Yuldashev's wife, Yodgory, who lived for three years in Boise, Idaho, before returning to Uzbekistan, apparently without repercussions.<sup>130</sup> Despite protests by the United States and other governments, fifteen Uzbeks who fled with Parpiyev to Kyrgyzstan, including Khassad Shakirov, were detained by the Kyrgyz government and extradited to Uzbekistan in late July 2005.<sup>131</sup>

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Government of Kazakhstan to undertake a more serious effort against the IJU. By late 2004, NSS liaisons were in Shymkent working closely with the Kazakh Committee for National Security (Komitet Natsiyonalnoy Bezopastnostiy, or KNB) associates. This was known publicly due to several arrests of IJU members. As noted in stories about his arrest, Parpiyev made the NSS's task easier by providing several phone interviews with international media from Shymkent. The author believes that the Kazakh government was uncharacteristically public about Parpiyev's arrest and extradition, as well as the KNB's cooperation with the NSS, in order to discourage Uzbek militants from using the ethnic Uzbek areas around Shymkent as a base of operations or sanctuary.

<sup>130</sup>"Uzbekistan: Akram Yuldashev's wife returns from exile in America," *Ferghana.ru*, May 5, 2008, <http://enews.fergananews.com/news.php?id=286> (accessed December 17, 2014). As early as spring 2006, the Government of Uzbekistan reached out to the families of the 439 Andijan refugees who immigrated to the United States and other Western countries. They tried to assure them that they could return to Uzbekistan, without repercussions, so long as they had not committed a crime at Andijan, such as taking up arms. No less than dozens of families accepted the offer. To the author's knowledge, the Government of Uzbekistan has honored its pledges.

<sup>131</sup>"Uzbekistan Denounces the Evacuation of Andijan Refugees from Kyrgyzstan," *EurasiaNet.org*, July 31, 2005, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav080105.shtml> (accessed December 17, 2014); "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights From Survivors," *The New York Times*, 1.



## The Aftermath

After the uprising, Russian and Western media, human rights groups and Western governments spread spectacular allegations of a massacre of 500 to 1500 people. But the final list of dead was probably much closer to the Government of Uzbekistan's listing by name of 211 individuals who perished.<sup>132</sup> The death toll included at least 43 Government of Uzbekistan security personnel, 14 of whom were hostages.<sup>133</sup> About 40 Brothers were killed. The remaining persons killed included hostages, curious on-lookers who visited the square, residents who attended the rally, mere bystanders from neighborhoods near the capitol and Cholpon Street, and some of the Brothers' family members and supporters killed near Bobur Square or during the attempted escape to the Kyrgyz border. Women and children were among the dead. This included a young boy who was shot in the back near Bobur Square on the afternoon of May 13. Only four of the estimated 30 hostages survived. The number of wounded civilians who required hospitalization was just under 250.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Some NGOs working in Tashkent were aware that, despite the official tally of 189 dead, the official list accounts for 211 persons identified as killed at or near Andijan, May 12-14, 2005. Two former Government of Uzbekistan officials reasoned that after the initial statistic was updated to 189 in July 2005, government investigators were reluctant to go back to Karimov to correct the initial figure, especially since it had been publicly announced. The July 2005 announcement was greeted by the international diplomatic community and press with hostile accusations that the real figure was much higher and possibly in the thousands.

<sup>133</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 13; Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising, 13 May 2005*, 91. Kuzu cited an earlier account of 38 Government of Uzbekistan security personnel killed, announced in June 2005. The author believes that the other five government security personnel were possibly NSS members, which would explain why they were suddenly added later. The final toll of 43 Government of Uzbekistan security personnel killed at Andijan does not include firemen, other Ministry of Emergency Situations members, the provincial tax official, or the prosecutor.

<sup>134</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005. The number of those hospitalized was never as contentious as the number of those killed. Part of the reason was because government forces quickly secured all nearby hospitals and started collecting information on those with wounds

The Government of Uzbekistan twice released a list of casualties by name. A big difference between the government's numbers, and others' estimates, is that the Uzbek government tallied its death toll by-name after confirming those persons were killed on May 12–14 in an action associated with the rebellion, to include the prison break and the escape to Kyrgyzstan.

This part of the official investigation was more complicated than it may seem to the casual observer.<sup>135</sup> The first casualty list was announced in June 2005 and named 173 persons killed at Andijan. The second total, 189, was announced in July 2005. This second figure is the total that the Government of Uzbekistan still claims as the official death toll at Andijan. However, the number of confirmed dead continued to increase throughout the government-sanctioned investigation, which lasted from May to November 2005. This was because some families, fearing retribution from the government, buried their dead relatives in secret, and other families quickly buried them in accordance with Muslim tradition before the next sundown on Saturday, May 14, or Sunday, May 15. The remains of Brothers from other cities were spirited away by friends and family back to their home villages or cities, to include Tashkent. The government-sanctioned investigation also faced the daunting task of subtracting casualties whose deaths had nothing to do with the violence in Andijan Province on May 12 -14, but which were added to initial figures by local morgue personnel.<sup>136</sup>

There were accusations by Western governments and human rights organizations of mass graves around Andijan. Indeed, several groups and governments called attention to what they claimed was a mass grave in the hills southeast of Andijan which was noticeable from commercial imagery. However, this mass grave was

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associated with the uprising. This was part of a clumsy effort to identify potential wounded gunmen. The Uzbek military maintains its own closed medical system. It is doubtful that wounded government forces were included in the figure of "just under 250" or that they were taken to civilian hospitals.

<sup>135</sup> The Government of Uzbekistan's official investigation included both government and non-government Uzbek citizens to include members of the Academy of Sciences.

<sup>136</sup> The city morgue reported 300 total deaths in Andijan for the entire month of May 2005. However, in testimony to Senator Brownback's committee, Marcus Bensmann reported that he saw mortuary tags "49" and "372" attached to bodies at an Andijan hospital on May 14, 2005. The author cannot explain the disparity of data from the Andijan city morgue. Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to Senator Sam Brownback's U.S. Helsinki Commission.

located in Bogi-Shamol, the town which was the center of the Brothers' business empire and society. Many of the Brothers and their families, including the Shakirovs and Yodgory Yusldasheva, lived in Bogi-Shamol. The graves were likely dug by the remaining Brothers, their male family members and their employees.<sup>137</sup> If the Government of Uzbekistan intended to hide bodies and graves, they certainly would not have chosen Bogi-Shamol to do so.

The Uzbek government's official figure of 189 dead is probably incorrect and based off a preliminary total of casualties provided to President Karimov during summer 2005. It is believed that sometime in late July 2005, during the on-going official investigation, a Government of Uzbekistan official requested a preliminary total of casualties which, in turn, was briefed to President Karimov. The death toll from "the Andijan events" as of late July 2005 was 189 confirmed "by name" deaths associated with the uprising. At the end of the researchers' work, in late November 2005, the final list of 211 killed was presented and explained, but apparently no one wanted to go back to update President Karimov. In a Western society, updating preliminary figures would probably have been a simpler matter. To many Uzbeks, this instead would be viewed as correcting erroneous or incorrect data. For these reasons, "189 deaths at Andijan" remained the Government of Uzbekistan's official figure for the tragedy even though some Uzbek officials possess lists of 211 persons confirmed killed as the result of the Andijan uprising on May 12, 13, and 14, 2005.<sup>138</sup> This figure includes at least eight Brothers and their supporters killed just south of the border with Kyrgyzstan on May 14, 2005, whose remains were initially taken to Kyrgyzstan and later repatriated.<sup>139</sup>

A probable second reason for the death toll not being re-adjusted (again) was the expected sharp condemnation of the Karimov government by the international community. When the first adjustment to the Andijan death toll was announced

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<sup>137</sup> As of December 2014, pictures of the mass grave at Bogi-Shamol were still available on the Internet, however no one ever seemed to note the significance of the location which was very close to the Brothers' unofficial headquarters and hometown. Continued focus on this cemetery and the supposed secretive activity in the hills far from downtown Andijan highlighted some analysts' gullibility and ignorance about the Brothers and Uzbekistan.

<sup>138</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

<sup>139</sup> Human Rights Watch, *"Bullets Were Falling Like Rain,"* 34.

in June 2005, it revived earlier international condemnation and calls for a joint, international, and independent investigation. Under such pressure, the official death toll remained “189” despite a final list containing 211 names of persons killed as the result of the Andijan uprising.<sup>140</sup>

A maximum of 2000 people were near the capitol building and Bobur Square after the rally around 5:00 pm on May 13. Starting with the Government of Uzbekistan’s final (unpublished November) total of 211, if you subtract 43 Government of Uzbekistan personnel killed at Andijan (soldiers, border guards, and NSS personnel), subtract all those others killed before 5:00 pm on May 13 (four policemen, three prison guards, a bank guard, fifteen Brothers killed fighting at NSS headquarters, at least one young bystander, and two hostages), and also subtract the eight killed on May 14 at the Kyrgyz border, Government of Uzbekistan’s statistics imply that 134 people were killed and about 250 seriously wounded inside the perimeter during the final gunfight after 5:00 pm on May 13. The 134 killed inside the perimeter would have included at least 24 hostages, approximately 25 Brothers or their armed supporters, and around 85 bystanders and other residents. Considering that Qodir Ergashev, Galima Bukharbaeva, Marcus Bensmann, Kabul Parpiyev, Sharif Shakirov, Khassad Shakirov and Yodgory Yuldashev were all at the capitol and Bobur Square around 5:00 pm, but only one of them was killed (Sharif Shakirov), and another wounded (Qodir Ergashev), the Uzbek government investigation’s unpublished figure of 211 killed appears plausible.<sup>141</sup> The Government of Uzbekistan’s claim of 250 wounded most likely did not include its own personnel because the estimate was based on statistics from local hospitals, and the Uzbek military maintains its own closed medical system.<sup>142</sup> As repeated many times in statements to Human Rights Watch, as well as

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<sup>140</sup> NGO representative accredited to Uzbekistan in 2005.

<sup>141</sup> Galima Bukharbaeva went through a horrible ordeal. She was nearly wounded as a bullet passed through her backpack. The author attended a Carnegie Endowment event where Bukharbaeva displayed her backpack and some of its damaged contents. Unfortunately, her account was inconsistent with the captured film taken on Bobur Square on the afternoon of May 13, 2005. Bukharbaeva claimed it was a peaceful demonstration, that the protesters were unarmed, and that no one was chanting “Allahu Akbar!” The film clearly shows that was not true. Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to Senator Sam Brownback’s U.S. Helsinki Commission, 7.

<sup>142</sup> Many militaries around the world, including the U.S. Armed Forces, maintain their own closed medical systems.

Bukharbaeva's, Bennsmann's, and even Parpiyev's personal accounts, many people who were encircled in the square or on Cholpon Street were able to escape down the side streets and hide or continue on through the surrounding neighborhoods. Nevertheless, in the West and in Russia, unsubstantiated estimates of hundreds more killed were repeated many times with the probable intent to tarnish the Karimov government's human rights record.<sup>143</sup>

As stated earlier, the Government of Uzbekistan eventually identified 98 individuals who took up arms and participated in the uprising. This included Brothers, freed prisoners, and others. At least 52 of those who allegedly took up arms with Kabul Parpiyev were arrested. From Prison UJa-64/T-1, at least 42 prisoners remained at large a month after the uprising. This included Daniyar Akbarov, the convicted murderer who addressed the rally; he successfully escaped to Kyrgyzstan.<sup>144</sup> In February 2016, the Uzbek government reported that Akrom Yuldashev died of tuberculosis in 2010 at a prison at Bekobod, Uzbekistan. His widow, Yodgory, initially sought refuge in the United States but then returned to Uzbekistan and lived freely for several years while advocating for her husband's release. She eventually moved back to Boise, Idaho, where she still resides today along with other participants of the Andijan uprising who made it to Kyrgyzstan and received refugee status. Kabul Parpiyev is serving a life sentence. Back in the Andijan area, the Brothers ("*Birodarlar*") and their community still exist in Internet chat rooms. They are rumored to occasionally meet in secret but their society

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<sup>143</sup> Some of these groups' willingness to say or report anything to embarrass the Karimov government was demonstrated after the July 10, 2008 ammunition storage site explosions at Kagan near Bukhara. After the Kagan explosions, human rights representatives in Bukhara reported hundreds of casualties, mass evacuations, and that entire sections of Kagan, including the train station, had been leveled. These allegations were repeated in the internet press and among foreign governments. When the author visited Kagan several days after the blasts, it was clear that human rights contacts had grossly exaggerated the damage. Seven persons perished in the disaster. Bukhara was never evacuated. The Kagan train station was fully functioning. The author saw that not even the glass had shattered at the train station or in downtown Kagan. To the author, the incident illustrated how some of these organizations' hatred of Karimov and their desire for attention led some of them to sensationalize their reporting, which some Western media and some foreign governments accepted without challenge.

<sup>144</sup> "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights From Survivors," *The New York Times*, 2-3.

was, for the most part, destroyed by the arrests and the consequences of their revolt.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Years after the uprising, Andijan residents maintained that Akrom Yuldashev's devotees still met and periodically demonstrated their continued bitterness toward the government.

## The Andijan Uprising — What It Was Not

Like accusations about the death toll, there were many other unsubstantiated charges about what happened at Andijan. In this regard, it is important to note what the Andijan uprising *was not*. Despite the Government of Uzbekistan Prosecutor General's original claims of IMU or IJU involvement, there are as yet no proven links to foreign jihadist groups.<sup>146</sup> Parpiyev received some help from ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>147</sup> He purchased small arms and ammunition there in early May 2005, and called two ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan from the provincial capitol building on the afternoon of May 13, 2005, but these persons were not linked to the IMU or IJU. The Government of Uzbekistan eventually accounted for all the armed Brothers and their armed supporters who joined them.<sup>148</sup> Two were ethnic Uzbeks from Kyrgyzstan but they had no affiliation with the IMU or IJU. All others were Uzbek nationals.<sup>149</sup> Overall, there is as yet no evidence that this was a foreign jihadist action. The uprising, like the Brothers' community, was Uzbek.

Despite the best hopes of many and those of the Brothers, the uprising was not popular. At its peak, as shown on the rebels' own film on the afternoon of May 13, Sharif Shakirov and the Brothers rallied only about 2000 people and many of them were bystanders who were trapped inside the square and the government's cordons.<sup>150</sup> The rebels' own film affirms that the speakers at the rally inspired little

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<sup>146</sup> Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising, 13 May 2005*, 91-92. Prosecutor General Rashid Kadirov claimed there 50 foreign fighters were present at Andijan.

<sup>147</sup> These events were emphasized during Parpiyev's trial.

<sup>148</sup> Polat, *Reassessing Andijan: The Road to Restoring U.S.-Uzbek Relations*, 13.

<sup>149</sup> Kuzu, *The Andican [sic] Uprising, 13 May 2005*, 91-92.

<sup>150</sup> Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, "Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan," 7. In its report, the OSCE claimed there were between 10,000 and 15,000 people at Bobur Square between 5:00 and 6:00 pm. From the timeline of events, that is impossible since Sharif Shakirov had already tried to disperse the crowd and Kabul Parpiyev had already begun the ill-fated

sympathy and roused little enthusiasm. (One speaker was noticeably unstable and an admitted drug dealer; another speaker was drunk.<sup>151</sup>) Despite Bukharbaeva's claims to the contrary, the demonstrators occasionally chanted "Al-lahu akbar," although it was with modest energy and seemed more an attempt to attract participation than to conjure jihadist venom. Parpiyev and the Brothers held the provincial square for most of the day, burned theaters to attract a crowd and organized a rally, but their efforts never inspired the broader participation that they dreamed of. Their insurrection never spread beyond a few blocks in north Andijan— nothing close to the point where Kabul Parpiyev could march on Tashkent as he had threatened Minister of Internal Affairs Almatov over the phone earlier in the day. The uprising utterly failed, despite unprecedented real time publicity given it by the Uzbek national news and President Karimov's visit, which called even more attention to the ongoing event.<sup>152</sup>

There is no evidence that the final clash was ordered either by President Karimov, Minister Almatov, or anyone else. It is doubtful that there ever was any such order to "clear the square."<sup>153</sup> The origin of claims about any order to "clear the square" may have arisen with Parpiyev and Sharif Shakirov when, according to Parpiyev's interviews, the Brothers themselves tried to clear Bobur Square in preparation for their breakout around 5:00 pm on May 13. They wanted to create a diversion amid fears that government forces were about to launch an assault.<sup>154</sup> It is very doubtful that unprepared Uzbek government forces, which would have been directed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, even had the capability to launch an assault across the square in any effective manner without serious risk of fratricide. Various government forces surrounded the Brothers and their supporters

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break-out. The OSCE's claims are also refuted by the Brothers' film and also the size of the square which is nowhere near large enough for such a crowd.

<sup>151</sup> "Scenes and Comments on Video, With Insights From Survivors," *The New York Times*, 1-3.

<sup>152</sup> Very unusually, Uzbek national television and radio provided updates about the event in Andijan from 10:30 am onward to include President Karimov's visit.

<sup>153</sup> By procedure, that order likely would have come from Minister of Internal Affairs Zakir Almatov to both his ministry and the other government security forces. It is doubtful that any such edit within the Ministry of Internal Affairs could remain confidential from the Uzbek populace and the international press.

<sup>154</sup> "Uzbek Prosecutors Play Tapes Of Andijan Phone Negotiations," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. Shahida Yakub, translation by Galima Bukharbaeva, "Interview with Kobul Parpiyev"; Bensmann and Bukharbaeva testimony to U.S. Helsinki Commission, 6-7.



on all sides. Any assault would have put other Uzbek forces down-range and resulted in far more incidences of fratricide. Uzbek forces lacked the communications or a unified headquarters for any such offensive action. Indeed, they could barely control their own cordons. Uzbek government forces could not coordinate passage of Parpiyev's group despite hours of discussion.<sup>155</sup> The unfortunate final conflagration that ended the Andijan uprising most likely started with the shootout on Cholpon Street and spread out-of-control back toward Bobur Square. Despite numerous claims, rumors, and contradictory statements, there is no credible evidence that Uzbek forces crossed the square and Cholpon Street until first light, just before 5:00 am on May 14.<sup>156</sup> Without a disciplined, trained force, one could only expect that the wild, indiscriminate fire witnessed earlier in the day would be repeated when ill-prepared government forces were rushed by hundreds of panicked people mixed with gunmen, whom many of the soldiers believed were IMU terrorists.

The Andijan uprising and the violent confrontation that ended the rebellion were certainly avoidable. These events were due to a series of profound misjudgments on both sides. Parpiyev and the Brothers could have freed their brethren, rallied their community and fled. But they wanted a confrontation; this, indeed, was the goal of Parpiyev's and Sharif Shakirov's entire operation. Parpiyev lacked a non-violent course of action to end the stand-off. For the Brothers, their only option for success was a national rebellion and, as was evident in Parpiyev's and other Brothers' statements on their own film, they believed a wider rebellion would be

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<sup>155</sup> By their nature, Uzbek military officers are deliberate, bureaucratic, and detail-oriented. It is inconceivable that the Uzbek forces could have or would have hastily assaulted the square and provincial capitol building without a plan, without solid authorities, and without command-and-control.

<sup>156</sup> There were many complaints in Human Right Watch's report that ambulance crews did not arrive on Bobur Square or Cholpon Street until dawn on May 14, 2005. Holly Cartner, Human Rights Watch's Executive Director for Europe and Central Asia, mentioned this in her testimony to the Helsinki Commission. The author suspects that there were no ambulance crews on the scene until dawn due to the lack of security. The Brothers had taken other Ministry of Emergency Situations personnel as hostages on May 13, 2005. The author saw no evidence that any government personnel went onto the square, the provincial capitol building, or Cholpon Street during hours of darkness. It appears that the government forces waited until first light on May 14, 2005. Uzbek soldiers who served at Andijan also denied that government forces had crossed the square or entered the provincial capitol building before first light.

sparked by their uprising in Andijan. When it became clear around 5:00 pm on May 13 that Parpiyev, the other Brothers, and their supporters stood alone at Bobur Square and the provincial government building, they tried to disperse the remaining crowd as a diversion, and focused instead on escaping to Kyrgyzstan. The Uzbek government, the NSS, and especially the Andijan provincial government could surely have handled this matter more deftly. By their nature, Uzbeks are normally more pragmatic and such delicate matters are resolved quietly out of public view. Petty Uzbek business jealousies and religious suspicions appear to have prompted the Andijan provincial government and the NSS to unnecessarily corner Akrom Yuldashev's followers. New Governor Saydullo Begaliyev and the NSS inadvertently turned a local issue into a national spectacle and, ultimately, a bloody tragedy with international significance. This was in spite well-known risks of publicizing actions against a group that the Uzbek government had recognized for its industriousness, charity, and cooperation with the provincial government.

Finally, contrary to Human Rights Watch's repeated allegations, the Andijan uprising's tragic end was not a massacre. "The protesters" were not unarmed and helpless, and the government forces' actions were not unprovoked.<sup>157</sup> Both the Brothers and the government recklessly put unarmed people at risk. The Brothers did this to their own family members, as well as their hostages, whom they used as human shields. Kabul Parpiyev, Sharif Shakirov, and other Brothers were armed, and initiated assaults on Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defense compounds, as well as the prison, the provincial capitol building, and, despite claims otherwise, the local NSS headquarters. They occupied the capitol building and Bobur Square, cordoned the area with burning vehicles, took hostages, and readied for a fight. They had ample opportunities to flee to Kyrgyzstan

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<sup>157</sup> As late as May 13, 2014, Human Rights Watch still claimed that Uzbek government forces opened fire on the Andijan protesters indiscriminately and without warning. The May 13, 2014 statement is posted at [hrw.org](http://hrw.org). Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines a "massacre" as: (1) The act or an instance of killing a number of usually helpless or unresisting human beings under circumstances of atrocity or cruelty, (2) a cruel or wanton murder or (3) an act of complete destruction. Wikipedia defines a "massacre" as a specific incident in which a military force, mob, or other group kill many people—and the perpetrating party is perceived as in total control of force while the victimized party is perceived as helpless or innocent.

but refused them because their goal was a mass uprising, not escape. This was an armed rebellion. The Government of Uzbekistan responded clumsily due to poor intelligence and command-and-control, and ill-disciplined soldiers who, at times, fired wildly and indiscriminately. BTRs' heavy machine-guns are for engaging military vehicles, not mixed crowds of armed and unarmed people. The inept Ministry of Internal Affairs was incapable of directing a joint Government of Uzbekistan response. For Uzbekistan, the unpreparedness, especially in the Fergana Valley, was shocking. The bloodshed caused by both sides was unnecessary and achieved little.

## **Author Bio**

Colonel Jeffry Hartman was the U.S. Defense Attaché in Uzbekistan between 2007 and 2009. This paper is a result of his research conducted over the course of ten years. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.