

# Ukraine Holds Tajik Ex-Premier Over 'Serious Crimes'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

February 06, 2013

**The  Moscow Times**

KIEV — Ukrainian police detained a former prime minister of Tajikistan, authorities said Wednesday, years after he was accused of being behind a assassination attempt on veteran Tajik leader Emomali Rakhmon.

Authorities in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, said Abdulmalik Abdullojonov, 64, was being held Tuesday after arriving at Kiev's Borispil Airport on a flight from the United States, where he has lived since 1998.

Abdullojonov has long denied accusations by Tajik officials that was he was involved in an attempt on the life of his political rival Rakhmon in 1997.

Ukrainian police confirmed the arrest of Abdullojonov, who was wanted by Tajik authorities for "very serious crimes."

"The question of his extradition is now being decided," a statement by the Ukrainian police said.

Abdullojonov was prime minister from 1992 to 1993, soon after the Central Asian state's independence from the Soviet Union. He could face up to 20 years in prison in Tajikistan, the statement added.

Tajik police said Abdullojonov, who ran unsuccessfully against Rakhmon for president in 1994 and then left the country, had been detained by the Ukrainian authorities at Tajikistan's request.

He is wanted on suspicion of activities aimed at carrying out a seizure of power in Tajikistan, a Tajik police source said.

"He has been on the wanted list for 16 years. We very much hope that the Ukrainian authorities will take into account the irrefutable evidence gathered on Abdullojonov," the source said.

The source did not give details of the charges against the former prime minister.

In April 1997, Rakhmon was wounded in the leg in an attempt on his life while he was visiting Khujand in the north, a power base of Abdullojonov. Authorities accused Abdullojonov, who was not in the country at the time, of organizing the assassination attempt.

Predominantly Muslim Tajikistan, which lies on a major transit route for Afghan drugs to Europe and Russia, remains volatile after a 1992-97 civil war in which Rakhmon's Moscow-backed secular government clashed with Islamist guerrillas.

Rights groups have accused Rakhmon of cracking down on dissent and blocking websites before a November election that could extend his two-decade rule.

Rakhmon brought Abdullojonov into the government in the early days of independence as a concession to the north of the country.

But Rakhmon soon sought to sideline him and sent him to be an ambassador in Moscow, from where Abdullojonov staged his unsuccessful bid for the presidency. In 1998, Abdullojonov left for the United States.

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