

# URGENT ACTION

## IMPRISONED ACTIVIST ALLEGEDLY TORTURED

**Azat Miftakhov has been imprisoned since 2019 on charges widely seen as politically motivated. In April 2026, after transfer to an Arctic penal colony, Azat Miftakhov was reportedly tortured, including through beatings, electric shocks and threats of rape, raising serious concerns about his treatment and that of other prisoners. These allegations of torture must be independently and effectively investigated and those suspected to be responsible held to account in fair trials.**

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 51.26**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

**Prosecutor for Supervision of Law Enforcement in  
Correctional Institutions of the Yamalo-Nenets  
Autonomous Okrug  
Mityayev Mikhail Arkadyevich**  
emails: [proknadzor-iu-yanao@89.mailop.ru](mailto:proknadzor-iu-yanao@89.mailop.ru)  
[prokyan-iu@yandex.ru](mailto:prokyan-iu@yandex.ru)

Send a copy of your letter to:  
**Ambassador Alexander N. Darchiev**  
**Embassy of the Russian Federation in the USA**  
2650 Wisconsin Ave NW,  
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Mr. Mityayev,

I write to express concern about the treatment and continued imprisonment of **Azat Fanisovich Miftakhov**. Since his April 2026 transfer to Penal Colony No. 18 “Polar Owl” (Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug), he has reportedly been tortured and otherwise ill-treated, including beatings, electric shocks, and threats of rape, allegedly involving prison staff and inmates acting on their instructions.

Mr. Miftakhov, a mathematician and former postgraduate student at Moscow State University, has been imprisoned since 2019 in proceedings widely viewed as politically motivated. After completing his initial sentence, he was re-arrested in September 2025 and given a further term under “justifying terrorism” provisions, amid similar concerns about the evidence. He has previously reported ill-treatment in custody.

These allegations are grave and must be independently and effectively investigated. Torture is absolutely prohibited under international law, and anyone responsible must be held accountable in fair proceedings.

I urge you to ensure a prompt, independent, impartial investigation; guarantee Mr. Miftakhov’s protection from further torture or ill-treatment; and review the legality of his detention.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Azat Miftakhov is a Russian mathematician, former postgraduate student of the Mechanics and Mathematics Department of the Moscow State University and an anarchist activist. He was detained on February 1, 2019 during a broader crackdown on individuals allegedly linked to the anarchist movement. Azat Miftakhov reported that police subjected him to threats of sexual violence and to physical abuse to extract a confession, including the use of a screwdriver against his body. Medical evidence reportedly corroborated signs of abuse. He was also held incommunicado for nearly two days, in violation of both Russian law and international standards, placing him at greater risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

The initial charges against Azat Miftakhov concerned allegations of manufacturing or possessing an improvised explosive device, reportedly discovered in the forested area near Balashikha, a Moscow suburb, in January 2018. The charges were not substantiated and were subsequently dropped, but upon his release from custody (six days later) he was immediately detained again on new charges under Article 213(2) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (“hooliganism by a group of persons by prior conspiracy”) related to a different incident, in which several individuals broke a window of an office of the ruling party United Russia and threw a smoke device inside, causing no injuries or significant damage.

The case against him relied heavily on questionable evidence, including testimony from anonymous witnesses and weak circumstantial links. Despite his consistent denial of involvement – and statements from co-defendants who entered guilty pleas indicating that he was not involved – he was convicted on January 18, 2021 and sentenced to six years’ imprisonment. His prosecution has been widely seen as politically motivated and linked to his activism and perceived dissenting views.

In May 2023, it was reported that state officials disclosed intimate materials identifying him as an LGBTI person to other prisoners. These actions, in addition to violating his privacy, exposed him to a grave risk of abuse within the prison system, a fact undoubtedly known to the officials.

Azat Miftakhov was due for release on September 4, 2025 but was re-arrested immediately after leaving the penal colony and charged with “justifying terrorism” under Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code, based on alleged comments made in detention, which he denies. On March 28, 2024, he was sentenced to an additional four years in a penal colony, in what reflects a broader pattern of “revolving door” repression used to prolong the detention of those imprisoned on political grounds. The sentence given to Azat Miftakhov by the court turned out to be one year longer than the prosecution had requested.

On April 21, 2026, he was transferred to serve his sentence to Penal Colony No. 18 “Polar Owl” in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, one of Russia’s most remote penal institutions and a sister facility to the Penal Colony No. 3 “Polar Wolf” where prisoner of conscience Aleksei Navalny died. Shortly after arrival, he reported being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including through beatings, electric shocks and threats of rape, allegedly involving prison staff and inmates acting under their direction. These allegations are consistent with long-standing concerns about the use of torture and other ill-treatment in Russian places of detention and the lack of accountability for such abuses.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Russian or English

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 15 July, 2026

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Azat Miftakhov (he/him)