

ACAT (Harrow group) – prayer case of the month (*October 2021*)

Please pray as you feel led for **Valentina Chupik**, a human rights activist who was arbitrarily detained on 25 September by the Russian border police at the Sheremetyevo International Airport, in Moscow, upon her return from a trip to Armenia.



Valentina Chupik fled her country of origin, Uzbekistan, following the massacre in the city of Andijan on May 13, 2005, and the acts of torture the security services of Uzbekistan perpetrated against her. She has resided in Russia since then, where she was granted refugee status in 2008. Since arriving in Moscow, she has established an NGO that provides free legal assistance to migrants from Central Asian countries. It has carved out a reputation as one of the most active advocates of the serially abused migrant labour community. Among other things, she has criticised the Russian authorities' migration legislation, including the latest version of a draft migration law, which is currently being prepared by the Russian government. Independent media sources claim that **Valentina Chupik's** arbitrary detention is related to her criticism of Russian migration policy and the above-mentioned bill in particular.

There are strong reasons to believe that the attacks of the Russian authorities against her are politically motivated: firstly, she was deprived of her refugee status when she was not in the country; and secondly, her refugee status was extended in March of this year and then subsequently withdrawn when she began actively criticising the Russian authorities.

Valentina Chupik remains detained at the deportation centre of Sheremetyevo Airport, where there is a lack of ventilation, natural light and windows, and she has been denied access to her lawyers. She could be deported at any time to Uzbekistan, where, according to both The World Organization Against Torture and The International Federation for Human Rights, she faces a grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Update: EGYPT: Some good news! Journalist Esraa Abdel Fattah (our prayer case for January 2020) has been released.