

Administration of the "Azia Trans Terminal" profits from equipment failure.

In connection with the New Year's breakdown of the autoloader at the customs warehouse "Tovarka" ("Merchandise") there is a critical situation there: people still have to wait in long lines and pay large amounts of money for loading their containers. Two entrepreneurs tell the details of the situation, on condition of anonymity.

The Uzbek customs warehouse "Tovarka" ("Merchandise") had a critical breakdown on New Year's day, but the problems there were not a one-day blip. As severe as this one was, there have been numerous reports of people who are required to wait in long lines and pay huge amounts in order to load their containers. Two such customers, self-styled entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan's unfriendly business climate, told their stories on condition of anonymity.

One of the customs warehouses of Tashkent, "Uzrailwaycontainer", popularly called simply "Tovarka", is located near the city's North Terminal. There, under the direction of the company "Azia Trans Terminal," international containers containing anything: clothing, spare parts, equipment, furniture, or the like are received. In the warehouse, there are two custom platforms. One is under the large "Kozlov" crane, and on the other works by the autoloader named "Squid". The entrepreneur said that "usually, loading took a maximum of a half an hour, and cost \$2-4. But on December 27, 2012, a cylinder for the winding cable on the Kozlov crane broke, and, at that moment, the autoloader also went out of order.

"Then, since their containers still needed processing, consignees requested a replacement crane, then a second crane, and, later, a third one. Price for loading containers rose up to \$145, \$220, \$290, and then even up to \$440, when a container was unloaded by two big cranes.

"This price gouging takes place with full acknowledgment of the administration of "Azia Trans". Sensing easy money, the administration, headed by general director Razzakov Zhurabek and executive director Saidkamolov Sobir took command of the loading of containers after New Year's Eve. The "Squid" autoloader was taken from another warehouse, "Chukursay", since that would be easier than to repair their own cranes.

"Now on the platform proudly standing with his hands behind his back as if God and King, Zhurabek and Sobir kicked out the whole line of cars awaiting shipment, making them leave the station. About 30-40 drivers and company representatives are running around them with requests to allow the cars to be loaded, since all the money for the storage and loading operations have been deposited by the businessmen and receipts for loading were ready since long ago.

"Very few lucky businessmen and truckers are able to get permission and drop off their cars for loading. When asked, they said the price of "compensation" for this permission is up to \$100.

"All this can be called a word, Lawlessness! They do not fear anything! Although, a hundred meters from the office of "Azia Trans" there is Transport Prosecutor's Office.

"There is a very complicated procedure of issuing registration at the customs post, collating with the inspectors on the inspection and registration regiment, agreeing with other warehouses to receive the load, paying several times the costs...and only then can representatives finally load

their containers. Since they need all of this permission from all of these people, it might take three or four days before they can load!

“And the most amazing thing is, the next day you have to go through the same procedure from the very beginning, and then pay for another day of storage of the load to the same "Azia Trans" and get new receipts.

“It would seem that it couldn't get worse, but the situation continues to deteriorate. New containers are coming. There is a "glut." That is, if you do not pick up your container for the first day, the containers are deeply "buried" by constant displacement down the queue, and to pull them out becomes very problematic. We need help to resolve this situation.”

Another entrepreneur corroborated the story:

"This situation is the fault of administration of "Azia Trans Terminal", which kicked all the containers off-site, despite the fact that they have all the documents in order. Thus, for the drivers and the representatives of the firms created such conditions, that they have to pay extra to these two, Razzakov and Saidkamolov, which makes them money" out of thin air.

“What's more, if you didn't pick up your container immediately, it is barricaded by other containers. Each day new ones arrive, and then not only is it more difficult to remove your container, but it is also much more expensive.

“In the old days, drivers calmly entered the platform, agreed among themselves about the order, and loaded their containers. Crane operators were paid a couple dollars only to encourage them [almost as if like a waiter's tip].

“Usually, loading and unloading is paid by bank deposit, once. In case you could not remove your container, the same day you need to recall the customs officer, who will inspect again. Also, you will need to re-negotiate with the loaders and re-pay for the warehouse because the payment is daily. In general, the procedure is quite complicated, since simultaneously the customs officer and loaders, and administration of the company, who give approval for loading and removal of container from the warehouse, must be present.

“All of us resent this, because all the money for loading and storage are deposited and receipts for shipping are ready, but they are not allowed on this same load. And they have no choice but to offer a bribe. Everyone pays bribes, everyone takes bribes.

“Breakdowns of the cranes took place before, too, but they were quickly deal with and they were not as serious. I do not even recall such a big precedent as this one.”

According to the Uzbek Yellow Pages, JV "Azia Trans Terminal" was established in 2007 and is engaged in terminal handling of large containers and loads; expediting, customs declaration and automotive transportation of the load.

I tried to contact the office of the organization, but no one answered the phone.

