



PACE: "Kazakhstan: political oppression, injustice and torture must be stopped"

On 11 October, 2017, 26 Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) signed a [written declaration](#) calling for the immediate cessation of political oppression, injustice and torture in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The signatories included deputies from across the political spectrum and different national delegations, such as: **Mr Stefan Schennach** (Austria; SOC), **Lord Donald Anderson** (United Kingdom; SOC), **Mr Andres Herkel** (Estonia; EPP/CD), **Ms Alice-Mary Higgins** (Ireland; SOC), **Mr Luis Alberto Orellana** (Italy; SOC), **Mr Mart van de Ven** (Netherlands; ALDE) and **Ms Gisela Wurm** (Austria; SOC).

The appeal reiterates the message contained in a previous [written declaration](#), expressing alarm at the continuing crackdown on civil society and government critics in the country. In the text of the declaration, MPs stated that "Kazakhstani authorities have used a regular practice of fabrication of criminal cases, for example the pretence of financial crimes, terrorism or social discord, against peaceful protesters, bloggers, journalists, oppositionists and their associates".

Unlawful arrests and detentions have indeed included the oil-worker leaders **Mr Amin Eleusinov** and **Mr Nurbek Qushaqbaev**; land-reform protesters **Mr Maks Bokayev** and **Mr Talgat Ayan**; and a blogger and Putin critic, **Mr Sanat Dosov**. Illegal extraditions are carried out by Kazakhstani security services, as is the case with **Mr Zhaksylyk Zharimbetov**, a kidnapped refugee and a former associate of exiled opponent **Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov**. The kidnapping of **Mr Zharimbetov** represents the continuation of a politically motivated case against **Mr Ablyazov** and his opposition activities in Kazakhstan. Other former top managers and employees of the BTA Bank's such as **Tatiana Paraskevich**, **Anatoliy Pogorelov** also under the risk of extradition.

Likewise, MPs underlined that "A threat to be prosecuted both in Kazakhstan and abroad is used even against their family members as a form of punishment like in the case of the Khrapunovs or in the case of the Tokmadis, in order to obtain false confessions against the opposition".

Furthermore, Members of PACE called for the immediate release of two Kazakh nationals convicted on politically motivated charges – **Mr Mukhtar Dzhakishev** and **Mr Muratkhan Tokmadi** – after they refused to sign incriminating testimony against **Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov**. They recalled, "No justification can be found for the use of torture and lack of medical aid as means of pressure on political prisoners **Mukhtar Dzhakishev** and **Muratkhan Tokmadi**".

Mr Dzhakishev is a prominent businessman and close friend of Mr Ablyazov. Mr Dzhakishev is being held in Karaganda Province, one of the harshest penal institutions in Kazakhstan. Over eight years of detention, he has developed a chronic disease and is in need of urgent

hospitalisation. MPs stressed that "The [UN Human Rights Committee](#) demanded that the judgment of the Kazakhstani authorities be revoked and Dzhakishev be released from prison".

While **Mr Tokmadi**, a renowned businessman, was arrested on charges of 'extortion' committed 12 years before. In the detention facility, the representatives of the National Security Committee demanded that Tokmadi 'confess' that in 2004, he allegedly committed 'a murder which was ordered by Mukhtar Ablyazov'. Tokmadi refused to give the testimony, convenient to the investigators against Mr Ablyazov whom he had never previously met. Subsequently, another two criminal cases were initiated against him on charges of 'possession of weapons' and 'murder committed 19 years before. Mr Tokmadi was sentenced to three years' incarceration and had part of his assets confiscated, on 10 October, 2017.

PACE's condemnation of Kazakhstan's human rights breaches and arbitrary application of the rule of law comes at a time when the Council of Europe has scheduled a vote on "The Relations of the Council of Europe with Kazakhstan" next November, 2017.

Read the full text of the Written Declaration:

["Kazakhstan: political oppression, injustice and torture must be stopped"](#)

Read our reports:

["Kazakhstan: The life of political prisoner Mukhtar Dzhakishev is in danger"](#)

["The case of Muratkhan Tokmadi"](#)