



Members of PACE to President Nazarbayev: "Stop any practice of political prosecution and release political prisoners"

On the 11th of October, 2017, Members of [the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe \(PACE\)](#) signed a joint letter of concern addressed to the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, over the unlawful detention of two political prisoners: [Mukhtar Dzhakishev](#) and [Muratkhan Tokmadi](#).

The letter is an initiative by six deputies of PACE from different countries and political backgrounds, namely: Petra De SUTTER (Belgium; SOC), Alice-Mary HIGGINS (Ireland; SOC), Ulla SANDBÆK (Denmark, UEL), Pieter OMTZIGT (Netherlands; EPP/CD), Frank SCHWABE (Germany; SOC) and Gabriela HEINRICH (Germany; SOC).

MPs stated their concern over the case of [Muratkhan Tokmadi](#), a businessman sentenced to three years' imprisonment on politically motivated charges and whose human rights have been repeatedly disregarded by Kazakhstani authorities.

The criminal prosecution of Muratkhan Tokmadi and the pressure exerted on his family members is linked with the international hunt against the Kazakh dissident Mukhtar Ablyazov. As stated by Members of PACE: "**Mr Tokmadi is being coerced to confess to a murder, committed 13 years ago, allegedly on the instruction of Mr. Ablyazov**", whom he had never previously met. MPs also underlined the alarming pressures exercised on the detainee's wife, Dzhamilya Aimbetova-Tokmadi, "**who has been threatened with the criminal prosecution based on the refusal to provide false statements about her husband and forced to leave the country due to the well-founded fear for her life**". References to Berik Imankaliyev, one of the distant relatives of Tokmadi's family, were also made. According to the MPs, Berik Imankaliyev "**was subjected to torture and forced to give false confession... against Mr Tokmadi**".

Violations of the prisoner's rights were also reported in regard to the fact that "**Mr Tokmadi's lawyers were threatened with the revocation of their professional licenses in case they continue to defend their client**".

It is noteworthy that last year and in recent months the French Conseil d'État, as well as INTERPOL authorities, recognised the political motivations behind the persecution of Mukhtar Ablyazov, several members of his family and former associates.

The urgent case of [Mukhtar Dzhakishev](#) was also raised in the letter. Dzhakishev is a prominent businessman who was sentenced to 14 years in prison because he refused to sign a false confession against Mukhtar Ablyazov and deny his friendship with him.

His prison conditions are a matter of grave concern for Members of PACE. **"During eight years of his detention, Dzhakishev was beaten, after which he developed kidney disease. Currently, Dzhakishev needs urgent hospitalisation in a public clinic. Dzhakishev does not receive the necessary medical care in the penal institution. As a consequence, his state of health may even lead to his death"** MPs wrote.

Deputies reiterated their support for the UN Human Rights Committee's demand that the judgment of the Kazakhstani authorities be revoked and Dzhakishev be released from prison, thus urging Kazakhstan to align with its international obligations.

MPs concluded their appeal calling on Kazakhstan **"to stop any practice of political prosecution and release political prisoners"** and **"abide by the international standards and terminate unlawful practices against Kazakhstani citizens"**.

Download the letter from members of PACE:

1. [the initial letter with original signatures](#)
2. [a version stating the exact titles of the signatories](#)

Read our reports:

- ["Kazakhstan: The life of political prisoner Mukhtar Dzhakishev is in danger"](#)
- ["The case of Muratkhan Tokmadi"](#)
- ["The list of Kazakhstani political prisoners and persons subjected to politically motivated prosecution by Kazakhstan"](#)