



MEPs call upon the highest Kazakhstani authorities to stop politically motivated prosecution and mistreatment of political prisoner Iskander Yerimbetov

On December 13, 2017, a group of MEPs signed a letter addressed directly to the highest authorities of the Republic of Kazakhstan, raising their concern about the situation of human rights and individual cases of politically motivated prosecutions, and **demanding that the case of Mr Iskander Yerimbetov be fairly treated and properly investigated**. Moreover, on December 21, MEP **Helmut Scholz** (Germany; GUE/NGL) submitted a written question on the case of Mr Yerimbetov to the HR/VP, Federica Mogherini.

During the Strasbourg session of December 2017, several MEPs – **Ana GOMES** (Portugal, S&D), **Tunne KELAM** (Estonia, EPP), **Jaromir STETINA** (Czech Republic, EPP), **Indrek TARAND** (Estonia, Verts/ALE), **Kazimierz Michał UJAZDOWSKI** (Poland, ECR), **Julie WARD** (United Kingdom, S&D), **Tomáš ZDECHOVSKÝ** (Czech Republic, EPP) – joined forces to show their "**deepest concern over the current situation of human rights and the ongoing use of torture in the Republic of Kazakhstan**".

It is worth mentioning that the signature of MEP Indrek Tarand in defence of Kazakhstani political prisoners is of particular significance, as the Kazakh propaganda had previously used Mr Tarand's name, without his authorization, affirming his alleged sharing of their rhetoric in the [smear campaign against the ODF](#).

In the letter, MEPs addressed specifically the recent and urgent case of Mr Yerimbetov, condemning the mistreatment and acts of torture to which he is being subjected in jail. In relation to this, they recalled other similar cases of ill treatment carried out in detention centres towards other political prisoners, such as civil activist [Mr Max Bokayev](#), and prominent businessman, [Mr Mukhtar Dzhakishev](#).

After being arrested on November 13 by unidentified people wearing civilian clothes, Mr Yerimbetov, according to the information available, was forced to take drugs with the aim of obtaining false testimonies from him. Mr Yerimbetov is most likely being subjected to such treatment in retribution for the activities of his sister Ms **Botagoz Jardemalie** – a political refugee in Belgium and formerly wanted by Kazakhstan under Interpol's arrest warrant regimes – who worked as a defendant of the political dissident and refugee in France, Mr **Mukhtar Ablyazov**. The unfair nature of the case has been worsened by the continuous pressures that the family and legal representative of Mr Yerimbetov have been facing (e.g. restrictions on their

ability to visit him and check on his health condition).

MEPs reiterated their firm "condemnation of politically motivated prosecution" and called on the authorities of Kazakhstan "to release political hostages and respect the human rights of its citizens", underlining that this represents "a preliminary condition to the implementation of the **Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement** negotiations between the EU and the Republic of Kazakhstan", [adopted by the European Parliament in Strasbourg](#) on 12 December, 2017.

On the same matter, MEP **Helmut Scholz** (GUE/NGL) submitted a written question to HR/VP Federica Mogherini on "Torture and politically motivated detention of Mr Iskander Yerimbetov in the Republic of Kazakhstan", urging the EEAS to respond concretely to the deteriorating human rights conditions and collect evidence concerning the real health and detention conditions of Mr Yerimbetov.

The letter to Kazakhstani authorities and the Written Question were achieved thanks to the ODF advocacy missions at the European Parliament in Brussels (7–9 December 2017) and Strasbourg (11–13 December 2017), with a delegation composed of the Foundation's President, Ms **Lyudmyla Kozlovska**, as well as Kazakh lawyer and political refugee Ms **Botagoz Jardemalie** and political dissident Mr **Mukhtar Ablyazov**.

Download the letter from Members of the European Parliament:

- [the electronic version of the letter](#)

Download the written question from MEP Scholz:

- [the electronic version of the WQ](#)

Read our reports:

1. [On the anniversary of the Zhanaozen tragedy, the ODF presents the most high-profile cases of politically motivated prosecution in contemporary Kazakhstan](#)
2. [The list of Kazakhstani political prisoners and persons subjected to politically motivated prosecution by Kazakhstan](#)

Read our statement:

- [Iskander Yerimbetov, one of the defendants in the case of Ablyazov, is being subjected to torture in the detention centre](#)