

THE AFTERMATH OF THE BLOODY JANUARY CRACKDOWN ON PRODEMOCRATIC PROTESTS IN KAZAKHSTAN





The Open Dialogue Foundation was established in Poland in 2009 on the initiative of Ukrainian student and civic activist Lyudmyla Kozlovska (who currently serves as President of the Foundation). Since its founding, statutory objectives of the Foundation include the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the post-Soviet area. In July 2017 area of interest of the Foundation was expanded due to the rapidly deteriorating situation in Poland and other EU member states affected by illiberal policies implemented by their populist governments. The Foundation has its permanent representations in Brussels, Warsaw and Kyiv.

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Human Rights Protection Foundation Qaharman – a Kazakhstani human rights organisation which was established for the purpose of protecting fundamental human rights in Kazakhstan, in particular, the right to peaceful assembly, right to a fair trial, and right to participation in the management of state affairs, as well as freedom of speech and dissemination of information. As a public initiative, Qaharman began its activities in Kazakhstan in 2019, and in February 2020, it was officially registered. One of its leaders is Dana Zhanay. Qaharman activists monitor politically motivated trials and the right to peaceful assembly.

Twitter: [@qaharman_kz](https://twitter.com/qaharman_kz); e-mail: qaharman.hr@gmail.com



The human rights movement '405' is a public initiative founded in 2019. One of its leaders is Anna Shukeyeva. The main goal of the movement is to protect participants of peaceful assemblies and bloggers who are subject to political prosecution under Article 405 of the Criminal Code of Kazakhstan ("participation in the activities of the organisation after its recognition as extremist"). The movement protects the right to peaceful expression, which should not be regarded by the authorities as 'extremism'.

Twitter: [@hr405kz](https://twitter.com/hr405kz); e-mail: movement405hr@gmail.com



The Bostandyq Kz human rights movement intends to fight for the observance of the constitutional rights and freedoms of the citizens of Kazakhstan, and to inform about human rights violations in the country. The movement was founded on 14 September 2020 and its leaders are Daryn Khassenov, Berik Mustagulov, Kaliaskar Amrenov and Lyazzat Anafina.

Facebook: [Bostandyq Kz](https://www.facebook.com/BostandyqKz)



The human rights movement Veritas was established on 17 September 2020. The aim of the movement is to protect human rights in Kazakhstan, with special attention to freedom of speech, peaceful assembly and peaceful association. The movement monitors the implementation of Kazakhstan's commitments in the areas of human rights, environment, health and anti-corruption, and informs the EU, the UN, PACE, the OSCE, GRECO and the governments of democratic states about the results of the monitoring. Veritas conducts public campaigns to protect politically persecuted activists, political prisoners and victims of torture. The leaders of the movement are: Aliya Zhakupova, Alma Nurushева, Gulzhanat Temirkhan, Nazym Serikpekova, Roza Musayeva.

Facebook: [Veritas human rights movement](https://www.facebook.com/VeritasHumanRightsMovement); e-mail: veritas15.09.20@gmail.com



The "Femina Virtute" human rights movement, was established on 4 November 2020, and aims to combat discrimination against women in Kazakhstan and to document violations of women's, civil and political rights. The members of the movement conduct solidarity actions in defence of human rights and train citizens to defend their rights. Based on the monitoring results, the movement provides information to the European Parliament, the European Commission, the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, governments and politicians of the EU states, as well as the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK, Norway and Switzerland. The leaders of the movement are Aizhan Ismakova, Ulbolsyn Turdiyeva and Sholpan Dzhanzakova.



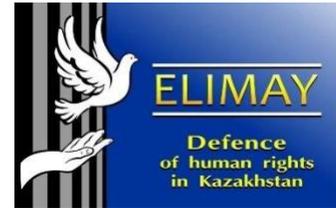
Facebook: [Femina Virtute](#) ; e-mail: ulbolsynturdiyeva@gmail.com

Human rights movement "Article 14" was established on 5 November 2020 with the aim of monitoring the right to fair justice in Kazakhstan. The members of the movement inform citizens of Kazakhstan and the international community about violations of the right to a fair trial, fight for greater transparency in the justice process, and draw public attention to violations during trials. The leaders of the movement are: Abaibek Sultanov, Almas Nurlybayev, Saule Aimukhametova, Bibigul Imangaliyeva.



Facebook: [Article Hrm](#) ; e-mail: article14hrm@gmail.com

The Human Rights movement Elimay was established on 17 October 2020. The movement aims to protect civil and political rights and freedoms in Kazakhstan. The movement calls to put an end to all forms of political repression and release of political prisoners in Kazakhstan. The movement's leaders are: Raigul Sadyrbayeva, Aliya Issenova, Bayan Akberdinova, Tlegen Zhubanov and Serik Chalabayev. Raigul Sadyrbayeva was arrested after drafting this report. She is under criminal prosecution now. She is facing up to 10 years imprisonment.



Facebook: [ELIMAY ~ defence of human rights in Kazakhstan](#) ; e-mail: elimayfreedom@gmail.com

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KEY POINTS

- In early January 2022, mass protests were held across Kazakhstan demanding that Nursultan Nazarbayev step down from power and extensive political reforms. The authorities declared protesters 'terrorists' and resorted to a violent crackdown on the protests, ordering to shoot to kill without warning. A Russian-led CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) military force was deployed in Kazakhstan. Firearms were used against the protesters. At least 238 people died as a result of the January events.
- Contrary to international appeals, the Kazakhstani authorities have failed to conduct an objective and transparent investigation into the shootings and torture of peaceful citizens. Mass repression was launched against the protesters, and human rights defenders who documented persecution, shootings.
- Kazakhstani President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced the construction of a "new Kazakhstan" and initiated a nationwide referendum on amendments to the state constitution. The referendum was held with multiple violations.
- The constitutional amendments are supposed to facilitate the transition from a super-presidential form of government to a presidential-parliamentary republic. In reality, the adopted amendments do not change the existing rigid vertical of presidential power in Kazakhstan.
- Massive repressions against activists, civil society representatives and human rights defenders continue in the country. Fundamental rights and freedoms - the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association as well as freedom from torture and arbitrary deprivation of liberty - are severely violated in Kazakhstan.
- Kazakhstan is a strategic ally of Russia and helps it circumvent international sanctions imposed in connection with military aggression against Ukraine.
- The international community should demand an independent international investigation of the January events, including the role of the CSTO in suppressing peaceful protests. Independent representatives of Kazakhstani civil society should participate in the investigation.
- Personal sanctions should be imposed on individuals involved in systematic human rights violations in Kazakhstan, as well as on high-ranking Kazakh officials who contribute to circumventing the sanctions imposed on Russia.

Description of sources and the methods used to obtain factual information:

The sources of information for the Submission were documents on criminal cases, responses by the authorities to inquiries, testimonies, and interviews with victims of politically motivated persecutions as well as their lawyers and relatives.

All of the individuals whose cases have been addressed in this Submission have granted the Open Dialogue Foundation powers of attorney to represent their interests, in particular the right to distribute information about their cases and to defend their rights in international bodies and organizations, as well as to file petitions on their behalf.

Within each case, after the presentation of the narrative of the facts, a separate section indicates the external sources and links to these sources. The sources include, in particular:

- Reports, statements, and letters from UN bodies, the European Commission, the European Parliament and its members, members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy, members of the parliaments of EU states, and the embassies of EU states.
- Reports, studies, and statements from international human rights organizations, international associations of lawyers, data and expert conclusions of Kazakhstani human rights defenders, and journalistic reports and video recordings of court hearings.
- Documents on criminal cases, decisions of investigative bodies, responses by state bodies to requests from human rights defenders, and court decisions.

In addition, the report includes information received from participants of the human rights monitoring Facebook group #IHaveAChoice #ActivistsNotExtremists,¹ administered by the Open Dialogue Foundation with support from the Human Rights Protection Foundation “*Qaharman*” and the Human rights movement “405.” Information from the regions is being collected in cooperation with human rights defenders from the Human Rights Initiative “*Bostandyq Kz*,” the human rights movement “*Veritas*,” Human Rights Movement “*Femina Virtute*,” Human rights movement “*Article 14*,” the Human Rights movement “*Elimay*”. The group, consisting of more than 8,700 participants from different cities in Kazakhstan, was established to collect information and provide assistance to victims for their participation in peaceful protests.

1. JANUARY PROTESTS

In early January 2022 mass protests swept across Kazakhstan. They took place in over 60 localities (at least 43 cities and 26 towns) and were the largest protests in 30 years. The protesters demanded a complete overthrow of Nursultan Nazarbayev's regime, systemic political reforms and the establishment of a democratic parliamentary republic.

The Kazakhstani authorities called the protesters "terrorists" and resorted to violent dispersal of the protesters. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev gave the order “to shoot to kill without warning” at the protesters. At Tokayev's invitation, a CSTO military force, consisting mainly of Russian Federation military personnel, was sent into Kazakhstan to suppress the protests. Firearms and special equipment were used against the protesters. According to official figures alone, at least 238 people were killed during the January events.

After the suppression of the protests, a crackdown on protesters, activists, journalists and human rights defenders began. According to official reports, at least 10,000 people were detained during the dispersal of the protests. Activists; peaceful protesters; those who helped the injured; those who had videos from the protests on their phones; and those who brought food and water to the protesters were subjected to mass arrests and criminal prosecution. They were charged with "participation in mass riots", "attacks on

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/>

buildings" and "acts of terrorism". Arbitrarily detained peaceful protesters were denied access to lawyers and their relatives. They were subjected to mass brutal torture in police departments and pre-trial detention facilities.

On 20 January 2022, the European Parliament in its urgent resolution called for an international investigation into the January events in Kazakhstan.² The Kazakhstani authorities have publicly refused to ensure an international investigation and have stated that they will conduct an objective and thorough investigation themselves.³

Five months on from the tragic events of January, it can be said that the Kazakhstani authorities:

- have failed to conduct a transparent and objective investigation;
- are engaged in the persecution and intimidation of victims of shootings and torture, as well as their relatives;
- have failed to bring to justice those involved in the shooting, torture and persecution of peaceful protesters;
- have politically persecuted human rights defenders and journalists involved in data collection on victims of shootings and torture;

As of 14 June 2022 there are **145 political prisoners** in Kazakhstan. Of these, 133 were added to the list of political prisoners after the January events. A further 122 are victims of criminal prosecution but they are not held in detention. 54 of them are participants of the January events.

2. LACK OF A TRANSPARENT AND OBJECTIVE INVESTIGATION

Five months after the January events, the Kazakhstani authorities have failed to conduct a transparent and objective investigation into what happened. Moreover, the lists of at least 238 people who died as a result of the January events have still not been made public. So have the names of more than 10,000 people who have been detained and arrested. The position of the Kazakh authorities on the publication of the lists of those killed has changed several times in the meantime:

- In January 2022, the General Prosecutor's Office stated that the information about the dead was not to be disclosed;⁴
- in March 2022, the General Prosecutor stated that no one prohibits the publication of the lists;⁵

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0012_EN.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1OFVEVqENHpnQI9Nyw-eNlVbFBvFvIKDBRs-kkyYk5Sm5qG-I900XD8

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwzhOH-xcgI>

⁴ <http://tirik.info/nikto-ne-zapreshhaet-sledstviyu-publikovat-spiski-pogibshih-v-yanvare-generalnaya-prokuratura/>

⁵ <https://orda.kz/prokuratura-otkazalas-publikovat-spiski-pogibshih-vo-vremia-krovavogo-janvaria-iz-za-tajny-sledstvija/>

- on 5 June 2022 (the day of the so-called referendum) Tokayev stated that the lists would be published, but did not specify when.⁶

Kazakhstani and international human rights organisations have regularly called for an international investigation into the January events. However, it should be taken into account that the Kazakhstani authorities have not previously conducted any independent, thorough and transparent investigations into political killings or repressions. The shooting of peaceful oil workers in Zhanaozen in 2011 and the mass torture of those arrested in the Zhanaozen case remained without any independent and credible investigation. No one has been brought to justice for the six political killings that took place in Kazakhstan in 2020-2021. There is reason to believe that the Kazakhstani authorities do not intend to conduct an objective and transparent investigation in this case either. Therefore, Kazakhstani human rights organisations and the Kazakh Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty have started to collect data on shootings, torture and politically motivated criminal persecution independently.

The human rights monitoring group "ActivistsNotExtremists", whose efforts resulted in this report, collected **detailed data on 187 individuals** who were victims of politically motivated criminal prosecution in connection with the January events in Kazakhstan. At least **133 of them are held in pre-trial detention facilities** (SIZO) and are political prisoners. A further 54 are under house arrest or are under written pledge not to leave the place of residence based on politically motivated fabricated cases. They also face imprisonment. Those prosecuted are mostly charged with "mass disorders" (Article 272 of the Criminal Code), "attack and seizure of buildings" (Article 269 of the Criminal Code) and "acts of terrorism" (Article 255 of the Criminal Code). Human rights defenders have also collected data on at least 77 people killed [Attachment 1].

The Kazakh Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty identified 194 people killed during or immediately after the January protests.⁷

The Kazakhstani authorities have yet to provide data on the "20,000 foreign terrorists" who Tokayev claimed in early January allegedly attacked the city of Almaty. In March, the General Prosecutor said there were no 20,000 foreign terrorists, disproving Tokayev's claims.⁸ On the day of the so-called referendum on 5 June, Tokayev said the information about the 20,000 terrorists was provided to him by former law enforcement leaders. On 5 June 2022 Tokayev declared that there were terrorists, but not in one city of Almaty, as he had claimed in January, but in 13 cities at once.⁹

The authorities continue to push the version of alleged 'foreign terrorists', as this was the formal reason for inviting a Russian-led CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) military to help suppress the large-scale protests. In order to maintain the narrative of "terrorists", the authorities declare civilians killed in shootings as "terrorists and looters". For example, **Nurbolat Alpamys**, a 19-year-old student, who was planning to study in the USA, was posthumously considered a suspect in the case on "mass disorders" (Article 272 of the Criminal Code) for participating in a peaceful protest on 5 January 2022, where he sustain a fatal gunshot wound to the head.¹⁰ **Nursultan Kuatbayev**, aged 18, was killed on 7 January 2022, when he was returning home from his relatives. A criminal case was opened posthumously against him under Article 255 of the Criminal Code "acts of terrorism".¹¹

⁶ <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/tokayev-v-kazahstane-opublikuyut-spisok-pogibshih-/31884001.html>

⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/zhertvy-yanvarskikh-sobyti-2022/31874935.html>

⁸ <https://inbusiness.kz/ru/last/v-kazahstane-ne-byli-20-tysyach-inostrannyh-boevikov-genprokuratura>

⁹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31883960.html>

¹⁰ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31887381.html>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3268886903430570/>

3. TORTURE

Arbitrarily detained peaceful protesters were denied access to lawyers and relatives. They were subjected to mass brutal torture in police stations and pre-trial detention facilities. They were forced to incriminate themselves and "confess" to "terrorism", "aiding terrorists" or "participation in looting for money". Officially, **at least 8 of the 238 people killed** in the January events died in custody after being subjected to "unwarranted investigation methods".¹² According to the Kazakhstani authorities, more than 234 cases have been opened on complaints of torture filed by detainees during and after the January events. However, only 11 law enforcement officers are suspects.¹³

Torture victim **Sayat Adilbekuly**¹⁴ said that the authorities are "covering up" torture in pre-trial detention facility SI-18 in Almaty - they are changing the staff and making renovations.¹⁵ According to victims' testimonies, prosecutor Azamat Kurmanov and head of pre-trial detention facility SI-18 in Almaty Aset Dzhumadiyev were involved in torture against the persecuted, but were not held accountable.^{16, 17}



Sayat Adilbekuly. Photo: vlast.kz

"We didn't kill anyone, we didn't beat anyone, what are we afraid of, we need to tell the truth! Activists, lawyers help us. The lawyers may have their licenses taken away tomorrow, but they still defend us. We all carry a big responsibility, we have to go till the end. If necessary, we are ready to contact Europe to impose personal sanctions. We will also demand compensation!"

said Sayat Adilbekuly

¹² <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31854125.html>

¹³ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31810522.html>

¹⁴ <https://vlast.kz/obshestvo/50302-perezit-anvar.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3231487447170516/>

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3251683798484214/>

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3245425482443379/>

4. EXPRESS TRIALS

The authorities have fast-tracked trials that have resulted in the sentencing of peaceful protesters to restriction of liberty or imprisonment on trumped-up charges within a month without due process of law. For instance, on 6 June 2022, **Moldabay Sadibekov**, a 51-year-old civil activist and father of five children from Shymkent, was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of "participation in mass disorder" for participating in a peaceful protest on 4 January 2022 and shouting slogans "Old man, leave!" and "Zhanaozen, go!"¹⁸ During the trial, the prosecutor stated, "*This is the worst crime. It threatened society, the integrity of the state, its sovereignty. The crime was committed deliberately and in cold blood*".

5. INTIMIDATION AND PERSECUTION OF SHOOTINGS AND TORTURE VICTIMS AND THEIR RELATIVES

In order to prevent transparent and objective investigations and to ensure impunity for members of the law enforcement agencies, the Kazakhstani authorities exert pressure and persecute victims of shootings and torture as well as their relatives.

The family of four-year-old **Aikorkem Meldekhan**, who sustained a fatal gunshot wound to the head in January 2022, has been forced to flee Kazakhstan because of threats from the National Security Committee. The security services were unhappy that the girl's father, Aidos Meldekhan, had told journalists about her death. Meldekhan had been summoned for questioning by the police and threatened.¹⁹ Aikorkem Meldekhan was shot dead on 7 January 2022 while travelling in a car with her older sister and two brothers.²⁰ Aikorkem's older sister had eight pieces of shrapnel left in her body after the shelling and they cannot be removed at this time. One of Aikorkem's brothers is undergoing psychological rehabilitation.



Aikorkem Meldekhan. Photo: Radio Azattyq

Akylzhan Kiysimbayev, a father of four children and a torture victim²¹, identified several staff members of pre-trial detention facility SI-18 in Almaty who tortured him. He has been seeking to have them brought to justice for 5 months. According to Kiysimbayev the conditions for torture in SI-18 were created by the head of the institution, Aset Dzhumadiyev. According to Kiysimbayev, Azamat Kurmanov, an employee of

¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3286148578371069/>

¹⁹ <https://mediazona.ca/news/2022/06/09/aikorkem-2>

²⁰ <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kazakhstan-almaty-aikorkem-meldekhan-child-killed-in-january-unrest/31685197.html>

²¹ <https://vlast.kz/obshestvo/50302-perezit-anvar.html>

the Prosecutor's Office of Almaty, also witnessed torture against him, but he did not do anything about it. Kurmanov threatened Akylzhan Kiysimbayev and his family, demanding not to seek an investigation into the torture.^{22, 23}



Akylzhan Kiysimbayev. Photo: vlast.kz

"We will not achieve anything on our own. We were all together, we have to support each other. Here, Yermek Abdreshev, I carried him at the pre-trial detention facility for four days. I saw how he was tortured, I can be a witness. We should be united as one. I limp myself, with a crutch, but I do not miss anything. Someone has to answer for the lives taken, for the tears of their mothers. I have four daughters myself, but I'm not afraid to put my head on the line. Even if I get killed, at least I would die for the truth,"

said Akylzhan Kiysimbayev

Kosai Makhanbayev, a doctor by training and a participant in peaceful protests, was prosecuted for holding an action demanding the prosecution of law enforcement officials who tortured him. On 2 June 2022, Makhanbayev was arrested for 15 days for allegedly "violating the law on peaceful assembly" for a peaceful protest outside the Prosecutor's Office in Almaty.²⁴ Kosai's elderly mother was hospitalised in a

²² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3245425482443379/>

²³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3282325798753347/>

²⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3282159975436596/>

serious condition due to the persecution of her son: law enforcement officials called her and threatened to send her son to prison.²⁵

6. IS COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ELVIRA AZIMOVA COVERING UP THE CRIMES OF THE AUTHORITIES?

The Commissioner for Human Rights, Elvira Azimova, is one of the regime's key advocates. Prior to the January events, Azimova repeatedly emphasised during her international visits the "effectiveness of human rights reforms" within President Tokayev's concept of a "listening state"²⁶. Kazakhstani human rights defenders have complained that the Ombudswoman's work is limited to meetings with international partners, while cases of human rights violations at home go unheeded²⁷. In Kazakhstan, the Commissioner for Human Rights is appointed by the Senate upon the proposal of the President, which makes the position dependent on the President.

On 24 January 2022, in order to imitate the participation of the Kazakh public in the investigation of the January events, the authorities initiated the establishment of the "*Public Commission for the Investigation into the Unrest*". Elvira Azimova was also a member of this commission. She allegedly travelled to regions of the country, monitored detention conditions of detained protesters and studied their complaints. President Kasym-Jomart Tokayev cited Azimova's visits to detainees in pre-trial detention facilities as an example of the involvement of an "independent public" in the investigation of the January events.²⁸

Azimova's public statements demonstrate that she is repeating the rhetoric of the authorities on the January events:

- Azimova called some of those detained during the January events "terrorists". "*We want there to be a clear separation between terrorists, between those who committed theft, looting and those who participated in peaceful rallies*"²⁹, stated Azimova after visiting some pre-trial and temporary detention facilities on 17 January 2022. During the January events President Tokayev claimed that Kazakhstan was "attacked by 20,000 terrorists" without providing any evidence of that.³⁰ As "proof" of the presence of terrorists in Kazakhstan, the authorities showed on national television **Vikram Ruzakhunov**, a well-known musician from Kyrgyzstan.³¹ In a video from the temporary detention facility, Ruzakhunov stated that he came to participate in the protests for allegedly "200 dollars." His face, however, showed signs of beatings resulting from torture. International criticism forced the Kazakhstani authorities to release Ruzakhunov. After his release, he said he had been forced to incriminate himself under severe torture.
- So far, the Kazakhstani authorities have failed to prove a single case of a terrorist attack in court. Not a single court verdict on terrorism charges has been passed.

²⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3282325798753347/>

²⁶ <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-bern/press/news/details/175413?lang=ru>

²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/toregozhina/posts/4367775399901678>

²⁸ <https://kazpravda.kz/n/kasym-zhomart-tokayev-prava-grazhdan-narushatsya-ne-budut/>

²⁹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31658544.html>

³⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-59907235>

³¹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31646954.html>

- On 14 March 2022, Azimova said that more than 4,000 people were injured during the January events in Kazakhstan, 3,000 of whom were military and law enforcement personnel.³² She stated this at a plenary session of the Mazhilis. In doing so, Azimova supported the authorities' rhetoric that the main victims were law enforcement officers who suffered from "terrorist" attacks.

No convictions for torture and violence against detainees have yet been passed in connection with the January events. On the contrary, the participants of the January events are being prosecuted for complaints about misconduct by law enforcement agencies. The case of **Adilkhan Bedenbayev**, a lawyer from Kyzylorda, received a lot of publicity. He was detained while simply driving his car in the city. He was charged with "participation in mass disorder" (Article 272 of the Criminal Code). After he was detained, he was beaten with iron bars, tortured with a stun gun and threatened with persecution of his family members if he did not admit his guilt. The reason for the lawyer's persecution was his complaints about the misconduct of law enforcement officers.³³ Bedenbayev's wife met with Elvira Azimova in person and reported torture against Bedenbayev, providing photo evidence of torture, but there has been no response.³⁴ Bedenbayev remained in a pre-trial detention facility for three months before being placed under house arrest.

7. POLITICAL PERSECUTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND JOURNALISTS

In order to obstruct the gathering of information about the facts of mass crimes against protesters during the January events and to prevent them from being widely publicised, the Kazakhstani authorities have resorted to persecution of human rights defenders and journalists. At least 33 cases of persecution of human rights defenders, journalists and lawyers have been documented since the beginning of 2022.

The human rights defenders **Raigul Sadyrbayeva** and **Aliya Isenova**, whose names were mentioned in the European Parliament Resolution dated 20 January 2022, are still being prosecuted for their alleged "participation in mass disorders" for monitoring protests in Semey in January 2022.³⁵ Raigul Sadyrbayeva was tortured and also threatened with being raped, having a bag put over her head and killed, but these cases are not being investigated objectively and transparently. Raigul Sadyrbayeva identified the police officers who participated in the torture, but they have not yet been arrested. Human rights defender Aya Sadvakasova is being prosecuted on charges of "spreading knowingly false information" (Article 274 of the Criminal Code) and "participation in an extremist organisation" (Article 405 of the Criminal Code) for messages posted on social media of human rights violations in Kazakhstan.³⁶

Human rights defender **Bakhytzhn Toregozhina** and **Shalipa Bekkulova** from the Human Rights Public Association "Ar.Rukh.Khak", who are engaged in gathering information on the mass shootings and torture of participants in the January protests, are also subjected to persecution. Shalipa Bekkulova has been repeatedly interrogated as part of a political criminal case, and her house has also been searched and her electronic devices seized.^{37,38} The devices seized contained, among other things, evidence of the shootings and torture of participants of the January protests, which human rights defenders were able to collect. It

³² <https://ortcom.kz/en/novosti/1647250717>

³³ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-kyzylorda-january-events-adiikhan-bedenbayev-lawyer-torture/31800849.html>

³⁴ <http://tirik.info/pytki-advokata-adilhana-bedenbaeva/>

³⁵ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur57/5665/2022/en/>

³⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3252448428407751/>

³⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2333831603602776/search/?q=%D0%A8%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BF%D0%B0>

³⁸ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31818379.html>

has also become known that the authorities are questioning activists regarding the alleged funding of activists by human rights defender Bakhytzhan Toregozhina. There is a threat that the authorities want to link her human rights organisation with the "financing of extremism and terrorism" (or the "financing of mass disorder"). The General Prosecutor's Office said that "looters" allegedly received US \$20 to \$100.³⁹
⁴⁰ It is worth stressing that human rights organisations pay for the services of lawyers and collect humanitarian aid for political prisoners, torture victims and their families, which is a legitimate part of human rights activities.

On 18 May 2022 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist **Ayan Kalmurat** was summoned for questioning by the Prosecutor's Office of Almaty as a witness in a criminal case in connection with performance of his professional duties from 2 to 6 January as he was covering protests in Almaty.⁴¹

On 29 January 2022, in an interview with the state television channel *Khabar*, Tokayev stated that he rejected calls for an international investigation into the suppression of protests in Kazakhstan: "*As for the international investigation into the events in Kazakhstan, I do not consider it necessary to conduct such an investigation. We will handle it ourselves,*" said the President of Kazakhstan.⁴² The repressive actions against human rights defenders and journalists engaged in gathering information on the January events contradict the authorities' stated intention to conduct an objective and comprehensive investigation. On the contrary, such actions by the authorities show that they are trying to hide the truth about the shooting of peaceful protesters.

8. "NEW KAZAKHSTAN" = OLD KAZAKHSTAN

Restrictions on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly

In March 2022, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced that after the events of January 2022, he intends to build a "new Kazakhstan". "*Ahead of us lie large-scale reforms, ahead of us the construction of a new Kazakhstan. Together with you, with the youth, we will definitely build a new country,*"⁴³ Tokayev said. Soon afterward, discussions began about amending Kazakhstan's constitution and moving away from the super-presidential form of government that was established under Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Tokayev's "New Kazakhstan" continued the practice of political persecution of peaceful protesters and restrictions on the right of peaceful assembly. In 2022, human rights activists of the "ActivistsNotExtremists" coalition have documented at least 63 cases of refusals to hold peaceful assemblies issued by the authorities.⁴⁴

Statements by the Kazakhstani authorities about the alleged "notification" nature of peaceful assemblies are untrue. For example, the opposition movement "Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan" announced peaceful actions in support of Ukraine to be held across Kazakhstan on 1 May 2022. The organisers of the rallies received 20 refusals in 10 cities in Kazakhstan. In an attempt to obstruct the rallies, the authorities resorted to preventive political persecution. In particular, four administrative arrests and six political

³⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3270909009895026/>

⁴⁰ <https://tengrinews.kz/crime/uchastie-pogromah-vyiplachivali-20-100-dollarov-466774/>

⁴¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3270894766563117/>

⁴² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwzhOH-xcgI>

⁴³ <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/623812ca9a794734bebf11b5>

⁴⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3284391055213488/>

criminal cases were documented. On 1 May 2022, the day of the announced actions, 59 cases of political persecution were documented.⁴⁵

Restrictions on the right to freedom of association

Following Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's announcement that he was building a "new Kazakhstan", former political prisoners and activists united in an initiative group to create the opposition party "Alga Kazakhstan". The predecessor of this party is the unregistered opposition party "Alga", which was declared extremist and banned by a Kazakhstani court in December 2012. The banning of the "Alga" party and the trial against its leaders (Vladimir Kozlov, Muratbek Ketebayev and Mikhail Sizov) is one of the most striking examples of political repression against the opposition in Kazakhstan under Nursultan Nazarbayev.

On 4 May 2022, an initiative group for the creation of the opposition party "Alga Kazakhstan" submitted a notification with 1584 signatures (out of the 1000 required) in order to start the registration process of the party. However, on the same day - two hours later - the Ministry of Justice returned the documents, refusing to start the registration of the party. The Ministry referred to the fact that the list of the initiative group allegedly did not meet the requirements of the law. However, the Ministry did not give a reasoned and specific answer as to which data do not meet the requirements of the law.

On 16 May 2022 an initiative group on creation of the party filed a lawsuit against the decision of the Ministry of Justice. Litigation is ongoing at the moment. The activists claim that the representatives of the Ministry of Justice are deliberately dragging out the legal process.^{46,47}

9. POLITICAL PRISONERS AND POLITICAL PERSECUTION UNRELATED TO THE JANUARY PROTESTS

According to the estimates of the human rights coalition "ActivistsNotExtremists", as of 14 June 2022 there are 12 political prisoners in Kazakhstan. At least 68 more people are being prosecuted in politically motivated criminal cases (unrelated to the January protests) [Attachment 2]. Of these, 48 are being prosecuted on charges of "extremism" for supporting the opposition movements DCK and "Koshe Partiyasy". A European Parliament resolution on Kazakhstan dated 20 January 2022⁴⁸ recognised the peaceful nature of the activities of the DCK and "Koshe Partiyasy" (the DCK was also recognised as a peaceful movement in previous resolutions on Kazakhstan dated 14 March 2019⁴⁹ and 11 February 2021⁵⁰).

Despite calls by the European Parliament to reverse the secret decision to ban the DCK and "Koshe Partiyasy" movements, the authorities continue to prosecute alleged supporters of these movements.⁵¹ The parole, granted to a number of political prisoners in recent months, demonstrates the effectiveness and necessity of sustained and public international pressure, including European Parliament resolutions, declarations by PACE deputies, etc.

⁴⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/qaharman.kz.7/posts/pfbid0mvHA1nBXGea7ip4VcZGNLWxuwHAQ5FCZ9XZjERU1s3HZHNgX997KA6SiE1uwgG1U>

⁴⁶ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31891777.html>

⁴⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31836900.html>

⁴⁸ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0012_EN.html

⁴⁹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0203_EN.html

⁵⁰ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0056_EN.html

⁵¹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31812561.html>

10. “AMENDMENTS” TO THE CONSTITUTION AND REFERENDUM

On 5 June 2022, a referendum on amendments to the Constitution was held in Kazakhstan. According to official data, more than 77% of those who voted in the referendum supported the amendments. The referendum was announced on 29 April 2022. In fact, preparations for the referendum lasted a little over 1 month, which shortened the time for the public information campaign, and the amendments themselves did not go through the stage of public debate. There were 56 amendments to the Constitution, which were voted on in a single package. Referendum participants had no option of supporting or not supporting individual amendments, only 'for' or 'against' the entire package. The referendum was conducted with multiple violations. Observers noted cases of massive ballot box stuffing, use of administrative resources, coercion to vote, obstruction to the work of independent observers and persecution of activists.^{52,53,54, 55, 56,57}

The key constitutional amendments include a mixed electoral system (70% proportional and 30% majoritarian system), the re-establishment of the Constitutional Court, a ban on the President of the state being a member of any party, a ban on holding public office for the President's immediate family members and a constitutional enshrinement of the Commissioner for Human Rights.

The idea of the referendum is linked to an attempt to legitimise the Kazakhstani authorities and specifically Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the Kazakhstani and international public after the January events in Kazakhstan. Many of the changes have a superficial character and do not change the existence of a rigid vertical of presidential power in Kazakhstan. For example, the Constitutional Council will now be the Constitutional Court, whose judges are appointed by the President, which means that it will not become more independent. The Ombudsman is appointed by the Senate on the proposal of the President. Thus, the institution of the Ombudsman remains dependent on the President. Human rights defenders have repeatedly pointed out that the current Commissioner for Human Rights, Elvira Azimova, is pushing the agenda of the Kazakhstani authorities. The privileges of former President Nursultan Nazarbayev remain enshrined in the Constitution, which guarantees him and his family state security, protection and immunity from prosecution.

11. KAZAKHSTAN IS A REAR AREA OF THE KREMLIN PROTECTING IT FROM EU AND US SANCTIONS

During hearings in the European Parliament on 21 April 2022 representatives of the European Commission expressed their concerns that EU and US sanctions imposed on Russia due to its invasion in Ukraine may cause damage to Kazakhstan.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the Kazakhstani authorities have turned Kazakhstan into a rear area of the Kremlin to help Russia circumvent the EU sanctions.

⁵² <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31885266.html>

⁵³ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31884348.html>

⁵⁴ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31883983.html>

⁵⁵ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31885967.html>

⁵⁶ <https://cabar.asia/ru/referendum-v-kazahstane-zhdat-chuda-ne-stoit>

⁵⁷ <https://orda.kz/uchitelei-ne-zastavljali-golosovat-na-referendume-ajmagambetov>

⁵⁸ https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/afet-committee-meeting_20220421-1345-COMMITTEE-AFET

Public exposure by civil society and the opposition of direct support for Russian military aggression and circumvention of sanctions is forcing the Kazakhstani authorities to modify their plans and conceal their intentions. The Kazakhstani authorities fear secondary sanctions and being subjected to sanctions in principle, therefore they keep an eye on their image and try to "balance".

This is evidenced by the following facts:

1. Since the middle of March 2022 human rights defenders have been receiving anonymous reports from Kazakhstani citizens about the threat of criminal liability for up to 7 years for distributing information about conscription in the military enlistment offices of Kazakhstan to participate in military operations in Ukraine. The Kazakhstani authorities refute reports about the movement of military equipment on the territory of Kazakhstan to the border with Russia, stating that it is a "exercise" and that such reports "do not correspond to reality". At the same time, human rights activists report the threat of criminal liability against those who report such movements on the territory of Kazakhstan.
2. The Kazakhstani authorities have been assuring the EU⁵⁹ and the USA⁶⁰ about their support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. At the same time the Kazakhstani authorities are prosecuting the participants of peaceful rallies, who protests against Russian aggression in Ukraine.^{61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67}
3. At the beginning of April, right in the heat of the war against Ukraine, Kazakhstan was conducting joint "military exercises" with the title "Regional security – 2022" hosted by the Russian-led CSTO. Russia itself also participated in these exercises. The Colonel General and Deputy Chairman of the CIS Air Defence Coordination Committee under the Council of Ministers of Defence of the CIS Yuriy Grekhov reported that the main aims and objectives of the joint exercise were "*to practise cooperation in the preparation and conduct of combat operations by troops (forces) of the Unified Regional Air Defence System of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation in the Central Asian region of collective security, and to study problematic issues in the joint use of troops (forces)*".^{68, 69}
4. On 11 April 2022, consultations were held within the framework of the CSTO on the conduct of joint activities by CSTO member states in 2022. In particular, "*the participation in joint exercises of a new unit of the collective security system - the Joint Radiation, Chemical and Biological Defence and Medical Support Unit of the CSTO - was approved*".⁷⁰

Whilst Western countries are imposing more and more sanctions on Russia and limiting their trade with it, member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), particularly Kazakhstan, are redirecting Western imports to Russia. This is enabling Russia to continue its aggressive international behaviour.

⁵⁹ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/central-asia/interview/kazakh-official-we-will-not-risk-being-placed-in-the-same-basket-as-russia/>

⁶⁰ <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/turbulence-across-eurasia-will-not-slow-kazakhstan%E2%80%99s-progress-201591>

⁶¹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31786312.html>

⁶² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3247016938950900/>

⁶³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3235182206801040/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3242291139423480/>

⁶⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3241570242828903/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3243117876007473/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3232971470355447/>

⁶⁸ <https://ru.sputnik.kz/20220413/kazakhstan-i-rossiya-proveli-sovmestnye-ucheniya-po-pvo-24172035.html>

⁶⁹ <https://avesta-news.kz/sovmestnoe-uchenie-regionalnaya-bezopasnost-2022-prohodit-v-turkestanskoj-oblasti/>

⁷⁰ https://odkb-csto.org/news/news_odkb/obsuzhdeny-voprosy-organizatsii-meropriyatiy-sovmestnoy-podgotovki-organov-upravleniya-i-formirovani/

- Kazakhstan is turning into a trade hub for Russia because its main advantage is associated with logistics. Apart from the geographical factor, it also has to do with the fact that Kazakhstan is in the same economic union (the EEU) with Russia which makes it possible to register Western cargoes in Kazakhstan and then easily redirect them to any destination in Russia. According to analysts, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the road freight volumes of Kazakhstan have increased 2.5 times and will continue to increase.⁷¹
- Russian companies that have been affected by the sanctions imposed on Russia may relocate production to Kazakhstan in order to solve the problem of a shortage of components. For example, “Ural Motorcycles”, a motorbike manufacturer, has resorted to such a move. Most of Ural's motorbikes are supplied to Western countries.⁷²
- It's easy to open bank accounts in Kazakhstan and it is also possible to transfer roubles and subsequently convert them to US dollars. When making transactions with foreign companies, the issue of the origin of money can also be solved. If you make payments throughout the chain until you reach the final buyer or seller, you will see that Russia is involved. So now a Kazakhstani company that buys imported equipment pays for it with credit money. Then, this equipment is transferred to another company, for example, a Russian one, which exports this equipment to Russia and resells it to a third party, and the debt (the loan funds) is repaid by a Russian firm through negotiation.⁷³
- Kazakhstan's “Altyn Bank” (50% of the bank is owned by Chinese investors) has opened up the possibility for Russians to remotely issue virtual cards of the international payment systems Visa and Mastercard.⁷⁴ As part of international sanctions against Russia, Russian citizens have been restricted from making payments for goods and services using these payment systems.
- Russian airlines are establishing direct flights to Kazakhstan while all democratic countries are denying access of the Russian aeroplanes to their airports.⁷⁵

The Kazakhstani authorities are financing Russia's war in Ukraine by purchasing assets from Russian banks that are under sanctions – “Sberbank Kazakhstan”, “VTB Kazakhstan” bank and “Alfa-bank Kazakhstan”:

- On 13 April 2022 a son-in-law of Nursultan Nazarbayev, Timur Kulibayev⁷⁶ through a “Khalyk Bank” purchased a part of the credit money in the amount of over \$800 mln from “Sberbank Kazakhstan”⁷⁷ The sole 100% shareholder of “Sberbank Kazakhstan” is JSC “Sberbank Russia”. Its ultimate shareholder is the Central Bank of the Russian Federation.⁷⁸ Timur Kulibayev is the head of “KAZENERGY”, the Kazakhstan Association of oil-gas and energy sector organisations,⁷⁹ and an ex-member of the Board of Directors of the Russian company “Gazprom”. In December 2020 the British newspaper the Financial Times reported that T. KULIBAYEV “skimmed the cream off” the contracts intended for the construction of a gas pipeline linking China with Europe.^{80, 81}

⁷¹ <https://hvylya.net/analytics/251230-stranam-evraziyskogo-ekonomicheskogo-soyuza-ostalis-schitannye-dni-chtoby-vyyti-iz-voynny-protiv-ukrainy>

⁷² <https://www.idelreal.org/a/iz-rossii-v-kazakhstan-perenositsya-proizvodstvo-mototsiklov-ural-/31821278.html>

⁷³ <https://hvylya.net/analytics/251230-stranam-evraziyskogo-ekonomicheskogo-soyuza-ostalis-schitannye-dni-chtoby-vyyti-iz-voynny-protiv-ukrainy>

⁷⁴ <https://espreso.tv/kazakhstanskiy-altyn-bank-dopomagae-rosiyanam-oformlyati-kartki-visa-ta-mastercard-v-obkhid-sanktsiy?amp>

⁷⁵ <https://kapital.kz/economic/104380/aeroflot-zapuskayet-pryamyye-reysy-v-kazakhstan-iz-moskv.html>

⁷⁶ https://forbes.kz/leader/hroniki_milliarderov_1650595294/?fbclid=IwAR0hCb3BCEpSf5IYyV4LzJrsWRzt3T1WKvNTXuqSCx_R4WRsnrURwXyS_w

⁷⁷ <https://kapital.kz/finance/104570/halyk-bank-vykupil-u-dochki-sberbanka-kredity-na-330-mlrd-tenge.html>

⁷⁸ <https://forbes.kz/ranking/object/7>

⁷⁹ <https://www.kazenergy.com/ru/association/structure/>

⁸⁰ https://www.radiofree.org/2020/12/03/report-son-in-law-of-ex-kazakh-president-profited-from-secret-pipeline/?printer_app=1

⁸¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/2694cddf-33c0-40cc-bea6-23a20253df7d>

- “Freedom Finance”, an investment company owned by Russian citizen Timur Turlov, may acquire shares in Russia's Sberbank. “Freedom Finance” is headquartered in Almaty. According to anonymous sources, Turlov is a figurehead of the Nazarbayev family and his entourage used to conceal more than \$3 billion in assets. According to “Frank Media”, “Freedom Finance” is ready to grant a capital in the amount of \$800 mln and a remuneration equal to \$200-300 mln to a shareholder of Sberbank Kazakhstan with the support of a regulator in Kazakhstan. And to make this deal go through it's necessary to have an OFAC licence, so the National Bank of Kazakhstan is ready to fly to Washington to get it.⁸²

In order to obtain the OFAC licence to help Sberbank Kazakhstan evade the sanctions, TURLOV has renounced his Russian citizenship, ostentatiously provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine and and was granted Kazakhstani citizenship on an expedited basis.⁸³ The estimated wealth of Turlov is over US \$3 billion^{84 85}

Another possible buyer could be the Kazakhstani government, represented by the national management holding “Baiterek”, which is currently negotiating with the Russian Federation to buy “Sberbank Kazakhstan”.⁸⁶

- The sole shareholder of another sanctioned bank, “VTB Kazakhstan”, is PJSC “VTB Bank” (Russia), which is ultimately controlled by the Russian government.⁸⁷ VTB is working to find new investors to sell the bank in Kazakhstan and change ownership.⁸⁸
- According to some reports, members of the Nazarbayev's family controls 80% of the banking sector of Kazakhstan, including the JSC Bank “CenterCredit”. Kazakhstan's Bank “CenterCredit” completed a transaction to purchase Alfa Bank Kazakhstan from its shareholder, the Russian bank Alfa Bank. Upon completion of the transaction, the new owner urgently renamed “Alfa Bank Kazakhstan” to “Eco Center Bank”. On the websites of both seller and buyer it was explicitly pointed out that *“the adopted measures would facilitate the efforts to get the bank delisted from the list of Western and USA sanctions”*. Following public criticism by the civil society and opposition on social networks, the statement was instantly removed from the websites of these two financial institutions that same day. In the morning of 21 April 2022 an updated version of the press release was published, and this time it didn't mention



После заключения сделки Банк ЦентрКредит станет 100%-ным акционером Альфа-Банка и планирует провести ребрендинг.

Информация была опубликована на официальной странице Альфа-Банка. Сообщается, что договорённость о заключении сделки достигнута.

«АО «Альфа-Банк» полностью выйдет из состава акционеров и отзовёт своих представителей из Совета директоров. После юридического завершения сделки Банк ЦентрКредит проведет ребрендинг Банка. Принятые меры будут способствовать выходу Банка из санкционных списков США и ряда других стран», – говорится в сообщении.

Альфа-Банк станет полностью казахстанским, и БКЦ готов поддержать его собственными средствами.

Alfa Bank's message, which explicitly states that "the measures taken will facilitate the bank's removal from the sanctions lists"

⁸² <https://frankrg.com/65547>

⁸³ <https://kz.kursiv.media/2022-04-19/glava-freedom-holding-timur-turlov-nameren-poluchit-grazhdanstvo-kazahstana/>

⁸⁴ https://forbes.kz/leader/hroniki_milliarderov_1650595294/?fbclid=IwAR0hCb3BCepSf5IYvV4LzJrsWRzt3T1WKvVNTXuqSCx_R4WRsnrURwXyS_w

⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/mukhtar.ablyazov/posts/2524054247729120>

⁸⁶ <https://vlast.kz/novosti/50300-holding-baiterek-vedet-peregovory-o-pokupke-sberbanka-kazahstan.html>

⁸⁷ <https://forbes.kz/ranking/object/22>

⁸⁸ <https://orda.kz/dochki-sberbanka-i-vtb-v-kazahstane-mogut-smenit-sobstvennika/>

anything about "facilitating" the efforts to get the bank removed from the list of sanctions.⁸⁹

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

We, members of the human rights protection group #ActivistsNotExtremists — The Open Dialogue Foundation, Human Rights Protection Foundation “Qaharman”, Human Rights Movement “Elimay”, Human Rights Initiative “Bostandyq Kz”, Human Rights Movement “Femina Virtute”, Human Rights Movement “Article 14”, Human Rights Movement “405”, Human Rights Movement “Veritas” call on UN, OSCE and EU institutions as well as governments of the USA, Canada and other democratic states to take urgent measures to stop the widespread political repression and crimes against human rights in Kazakhstan. We consider it necessary to:

- Demand from the Kazakhstani authorities to invite UN special envoys in order to allow an enquiry into the facts and circumstances surrounding the deaths of protesters and law enforcement officers in Kazakhstan in January 2022 and other allegations of human rights violations; to find out whether the unrest was a result of foreign interference or internal power struggles and address their root cause particularly;
- To investigate the role of Russia and other CSTO countries taking violent military action against peaceful demonstrations in January 2022;
- To establish an independent group under the auspices of international observers to investigate the causes that triggered the mass protests in Kazakhstan in January 2022;
- Demand that the Kazakhstani authorities stop repressing human rights defenders and journalists and that they unblock all forms of communication and stop meting out reprisals against those who share news independently;
- Demand that the Kazakhstani authorities immediately cease the persecution of participants of the peaceful protests that took place in January 2022;
- Introduce personal sanctions against Kazakh officials responsible for systematic human rights violations in the country;
- Investigate facts of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia for the purpose of circumventing international sanctions imposed on Russia in connection with military aggression against Ukraine. Introduce personal sanctions against high-ranking officials in Kazakhstan who facilitate the circumvention of sanctions imposed on Russia.

⁸⁹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31814099.html>