



POLITICAL REPRESSIONS AND POLITICAL PRISONERS IN KAZAKHSTAN

An overview of the state of democracy and the situation regarding respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Kazakhstan

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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, the Foundation's area of interest 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, Miami and Kyiv.

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Human Rights Protection Foundation “Qaharman” – a Kazakhstani human rights organisation 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. Qaharman activists monitor politically motivated trials and the right to peaceful assembly.

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The human rights movement “405” is a public initiative founded in 2019. 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”.

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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.

Facebook: [Bostandyq Kz](#)

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.

Facebook: [Veritas human rights movement](#); 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.

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



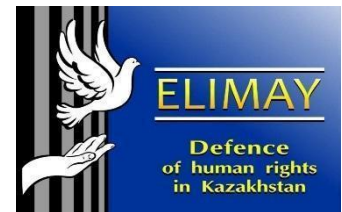
Human rights movement “Article 14” was established on 5 November 2020 with the aim of monitoring the right to fair justice in Kazakhstan. The members of the movement inform citizens of Kazakhstan and the international community about violations of the right to a fair trial, fight for greater transparency in the justice process and draw public attention to violations during trials.

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 for an end to all forms of political repression and the release of political prisoners in Kazakhstan.

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



Freedom Kazakhstan Foundation was founded on 13 July 2020 by the Kazakhstani businessman and philanthropist Barlyk Mendygazyev. The aim of the Foundation is to provide financial and legal assistance to victims of political repression in Kazakhstan – political prisoners, participants in peaceful protests, civil activists and human rights defenders. The Foundation supports the creation of a sanctions list of Kazakhstani officials who are involved in gross human rights violations. The leader and founder of the Foundation is Barlyk Mendygazyev.

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The Open Dialogue Foundation (ODF) on behalf of the human rights monitoring group #ActivistsNotExtremists presents an overview of the state of democracy and the situation regarding respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Kazakhstan. This report has been prepared in the context of the debate on the report entitled “The Parliamentary Assembly should support Kazakhstan to continue its democratic reforms”¹, which will take place on 30 September 2025 at PACE. This report evaluates PACE’s role in supporting Kazakhstan’s democratic reforms, focusing on human rights developments, adherence to international law and Council of Europe standards, and Kazakhstan’s position and role in the context of Russia’s war against Ukraine. The objective is to provide concrete recommendations to reinforce PACE’s effective engagement in promoting democratic reforms in Kazakhstan and ensure that both the report and PACE resolution advance meaningful democratic change in Kazakhstan.

SUMMARY

Human rights defenders observe that, despite the Kazakhstani authorities’ constant assurances of sweeping reforms, political liberalisation, and respect for human rights, the country continues to witness large-scale political repression. There are **at least 39 political prisoners** in Kazakhstan: 38 have been convicted in politically motivated criminal cases and are serving prison sentences, while 1 more person is being held in pre-trial detention facilities and could be sentenced in the near future. The authorities imprison people for years for participating in peaceful rallies, supporting peaceful opposition movements, disseminating information on human rights violations, **collecting donations or providing material assistance to political prisoners**. Financial repression is also a tool used against critics of the regime – they are deprived of financial and insurance services and have their employment opportunities restricted. A detailed list of political prisoners is attached to this report in Appendix 1.

Political repression has long since spread beyond Kazakhstan's borders. The lack of accountability for gross human rights violations within the country has encouraged the Kazakhstani authorities to escalate the transnational repressions. Kazakhstan systematically abuses agreements on mutual legal assistance between states, legislation in the field of cybersecurity, and anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing. The authoritarian regime even resorts to measures of physical elimination of its critics in other countries. Not only human rights defenders and dissidents in exile are persecuted, but also their relatives.

Kazakhstan extensively exploits “**injustice laundering**” – the practice of dishonest use of its own fully controlled judicial system to fabricate trials that are then transferred to Western judicial bodies. This method makes it possible to inject into Western judicial systems politically motivated allegations fabricated by Kazakhstan’s controlled law enforcement bodies and its justice system. “Injustice laundering”, as a method of transnational repression, can take the form of politically motivated Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) requests or abusive civil and criminal complaints based on proceedings initiated in Kazakhstan.

Unfortunately, **the Kazakhstani authorities have learned to use even PACE mechanisms** to persecute their critics. Starting in 2022, several letters were sent to the PACE President demanding that representatives of the Open Dialogue Foundation not be allowed to participate in PACE activities. The letters repeated false slanderous accusations against the Open Dialogue Foundation and its President Lyudmyla Kozlovska that are used by Kazakhstani propaganda. There are grounds to believe that Claude Moniquet, head of the private intelligence and lobbying company European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre (ESISC), who cooperates with the Kazakhstani authorities, was involved in sending the

¹ https://pace.coe.int/en/files/34535/html# TOC_d79e35

letters. In 2017–18, ESISC and Claude Monique were the targets of an investigation by an independent investigative body into allegations of corruption within PACE in connection with possible lobbying of Azerbaijan's interests (so-called “caviar diplomacy”).² One has to admit that a person who has already been involved in a corruption scandal once continues to influence the work of PACE.

The examples of political persecution cited in this report are not exhaustive, as the Kazakhstani authorities restrict access to information for human rights defenders and persecute everyone who speaks publicly about human rights violations i.e. human rights defenders, lawyers, victims of torture and their relatives.

Transnational repression

- Kazakhstan's special services orchestrated the **murder of prominent journalist and political refugee Aidos Sadykov** in Ukraine, who had criticised the Kazakhstani authorities and repeatedly publicly declared cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia to circumvent international sanctions. The journalist's killers managed to return to Kazakhstan, but the Kazakhstani Prosecutor General's Office refuses to question them, citing a “lack of evidence”. In fact, Kazakhstani law enforcement agencies are sabotaging the investigation into the journalist's murder.³ Natalya Sadykova, the wife of the murdered journalist, who lives in Ukraine, said that she had repeatedly noticed that she was being followed by the Kazakhstani special services.⁴

- **Since 2014, there have been a number of failed assassination attempts on opposition politician Mukhtar Ablyazov in France.**^{5, 6, 7} In June 2020, Ablyazov filed a complaint with the Paris Judicial Court in relation to “preparatory acts of kidnapping”. He reported that he was under 24-hour surveillance by unknown persons and feared an imminent armed attack.⁸ Unfortunately, Ablyazov was not granted police protection (although the French courts have acknowledged the direct danger), nor was he notified on any investigation into the reported facts, what may be regarded as a gross dereliction of duty by the French police.

- **Attorney and human rights defender Bota Jardemalie and members of her family were subjected to unlawful surveillance** in Belgium since 2017. The surveillance was conducted at the request of Kazakhstan by a private British company. A criminal case was opened in Belgium on the fact of illegal surveillance. In February 2025, the Brussels Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced a former British marine to six months imprisonment for harassment and espionage.⁹

- **The Open Dialogue Foundation has faced SLAPP and transnational financial repression as a direct consequence of its active reporting on human rights abuses in Kazakhstan.**¹⁰ In 2022, a collective criminal complaint was filed in Belgium by a group of officers from the anti-terrorism unit of Kazakhstan's National Security Committee (KNB) and their minor children against Lyudmyla Kozlovskaya and the Open Dialogue Foundation. The claimants accused the ODF and its president of “harassment, defamation, and

² <https://assembly.coe.int/Communication/IBAC/IBAC-GIAC-Report-EN.pdf>

³ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/genprokuratura-kazahstana-otkazalas-doprashivat-podozrevaemyh-v-ubiystve-aydosa-sadykova-soslavshis-na-nehvatku-dokazatelstv-/33418923.html>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/sadykovanatalya/posts/pfbid02TLdiqA7aW2615jZCM6RHopS2KmX5gPS9oACRcQj6Vat5jgpmYHm6dgVy51epHaRTI>

⁵ <https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/living-in-fear-in-london-the-exiled-kazakh-banker-accused-of-2-billion-fraud-6506705.html>

⁶ <https://www.businessinsider.com/mukhtar-ablyazov-bta-bank-2010-8>

⁷ <https://www.ft.com/content/23571482-e584-11e2-ad1a-00144feabdc0>

⁸ https://www.lepoint.fr/video/barbouzerie-kidnapping-piratage-l-incroyable-histoire-de-l-homme-le-plus-traque-d-europe-16-11-2021-2452243_738.php

⁹ <https://www.lalibre.be/belgique/judiciaire/2025/02/05/lopposante-au-regime-kazakh-botagoz-jardemalie-a-bel-et-bien-ete-harcelee-et-espionnee-en-belgique-pendant-des-annees-GMPSE7HLFH67CDTH25FO2TDLE/>

¹⁰ <https://en.odfoundation.eu/a/727264,slapp-transnational-financial-repression-across-belgium-eu-and-the-united-states-the-case-against-lyudmyla-kozlovskaya-and-the-open-dialogue-foundation/>

cyberbullying of minor children”. They demanded the removal from social media of publications which are, in fact, eyewitness testimonies and materials documenting the involvement of secret service officers in political repression, torture, and killings in Kazakhstan. Eventually, the Belgian court dismissed all claims brought under the collective complaint, ruling that Belgium had no jurisdiction over the alleged crimes. It is important to note that the Kazakhstani officers of special services attempted to use the collective complaint to obtain a wide range of data against Lyudmyla Kozlovska and the Open Dialogue Foundation (information on movements/travel data, such as stays at airports and hotels, as well as data from internet providers and cloud services concerning communications and financial transactions within the European Union and the United States). The Belgian investigating judge explicitly noted “the use of Belgian justice to gather as much personal and private data about Kozlovska as possible for purposes other than simply uncovering the truth in this case”. It is noteworthy that the criminal complaint was filed with the participation of Claude Monique, former intelligence officer of France and current head of the private intelligence and lobbying company European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre (ESISC). In 2017–18, ESISC and Claude Monique were the targets of an investigation by an independent investigative body into allegations of corruption within PACE in connection with possible lobbying of Azerbaijan's interests (so-called “caviar diplomacy”)¹¹. In 2023 and 2024, the Open Dialogue Foundation lodged complaints with the President of the PACE (Tiny Cox and then Theodoros Rousopoulos) regarding the actions of Mr. Claude Monique, who supplied internal PACE correspondence to the lawyers of Kazakh secret service agents for the politically motivated criminal case they initiated in Belgium against the ODF and Kozlovska. Files from the criminal case show that Monique's involvement facilitated those extensive requests for data collection and assisted in launching a large-scale smear campaign aimed at undermining the human rights work of the ODF and its president, Lyudmyla Kozlovska, in the PACE, Belgium/EU, and the US. The legal actions coordinated by Monique were also strategically designed to shield Kazakhstani security agents and law enforcement officials from international scrutiny regarding human rights abuses while simultaneously gathering intelligence on human rights defenders operating in Western democracies. In the 13 December 2023 court decision, the Belgian investigating judge specifically noted that some investigative actions requested by the “victims” appeared intended to “instrumentalize Belgian justice” for purposes beyond establishing relevant facts. As of the date of publication of this report, the ODF had not received any response to its request for an investigation into these actions from the President of the PACE (Tini Cox, and subsequently Theodoros Rusopoulos).

- For many years, the Kazakhstani authorities have been persecuting businessman and human rights defender **Barlyk Mendygazyev**. This persecution is linked to his work as president of the Freedom Kazakhstan Human Rights Foundation and as a member of the peaceful opposition movement Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan. Mendygazyev provided material and financial assistance to victims of political repression in Kazakhstan. His brother, Bekizhan Mendygazyev, was imprisoned in 2021 on a fabricated criminal case and was recognised as a political prisoner. In fact, he was held hostage in order to exert pressure on Barlyk. On 29 August 2025, Bekizhan Mendygazyev was released after serving his full sentence. Even after his release from prison, Bekizhan continues to face financial and administrative restrictions. His bank accounts remain blocked. In addition, a private lawsuit has been filed against Bekizhan Mendygazyev by the Halyk Bank of Kazakhstan, where Bekizhan has a bank account. The bank is attempting to prove through the court that Bekizhan Mendygazyev owes the bank 21.4 million tenge (about USD 39,000). This "debt" arose because, during the state's confiscation of funds from Bekizhan's bank account, Halyk Bank of Kazakhstan mistakenly transferred funds from Bekizhan's account to the state twice. However, instead of demanding the return of the money from the state, the bank is trying to force this debt on Bekizhan. This is yet another example of how the Kazakhstani authorities abuse financial

¹¹ <https://assembly.coe.int/Communication/IBAC/IBAC-GIAC-Report-EN.pdf>

mechanisms to put pressure on the Mendygazyiev family. Mendygazyiev's colleagues Natalia Dauletiarova and Rinat Batkayev were also sentenced to prison terms.

In early 2023, the property and equipment of Karachaganak Support Services (KSS) in Kazakhstan, a company founded by Barlyk Mendygazyiev, was seized in a raider seizure with the participation of the global energy corporation Chevron Corporation. The raider seizure was carried out to the benefit of West Dala (ISKER GROUP), owned by Tolegen Balgimbayev, the son of Kazakhstan's former Prime Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev.

In 2024, the law enforcement authorities of Kazakhstan reopened a criminal investigation against Barlyk Mendygazyiev in a case that had been first initiated against him back in 2020. The investigating authorities added a charge of "money laundering" (Article 218 of the Criminal Code) to the previously brought charges of "creating an organised criminal group" (Article 262 of the Criminal Code) and "tax evasion" (Article 245 of the Criminal Code). The "money laundering" charge was added to create the grounds for prosecuting Mendygazyiev in the United States by abusing the FATF's anti-money laundering mechanisms under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty between the United States and Kazakhstan. According to the criminal case file, the "money laundering" allegedly entailed Mendygazyiev transferring money from KSS to his bank accounts, as well as to the accounts of his wife and daughters. He argues, however, that these were his personal investments in the company, which he chose to withdraw only after government authorities began exerting pressure on his business with the aim of raiding his assets and cutting off his financial resources. The money was transferred openly to American banks. False testimony from KSS executives, given in exchange for the termination of criminal cases against them and their release from prison, was used to fabricate a criminal case against Mendygazyiev. On 24 July 2025, Barlyk Mendygazyiev was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment with confiscation of property. It is noteworthy that Mendygazyiev was tried as a citizen of Kazakhstan, although in 2020, Kazakhstan issued a default judgment stripping him of his Kazakh citizenship.

On 5 February 2025, PACE deputies condemned multiple cases of transnational repression committed by the authorities of Kazakhstan and called on the Parliamentary Assembly to conduct an investigation into these facts, including the participation of the international energy company Chevron Corporation in the raider seizure of Barlyk Mendygazyiev's business.¹²

- In June 2025, Lyudmyla Kozlovskaya, president of the Open Dialogue Foundation, presented evidence to the US Congress on how authoritarian regimes abuse legal mechanisms to carry out transnational repression against their critics. Examples included the SLAPP lawsuit filed against the Open Dialogue Foundation in Belgium and the fabrication of a criminal case against Barlyk Mendygazyiev.¹³ On 8 August 2025, based on evidence provided by Lyudmyla Kozlovskaya, James P. McGovern, Co-Chair of the U.S. Congress Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, appealed to the U.S. Attorney General, the Secretary of State, and the FBI Director to develop measures to protect American investors and philanthropists such as Barlyk Mendygazyiev. He also called for measures to be taken to hold individuals personally accountable for transnational financial repression, including the imposition of personal sanctions against high-ranking Kazakhstani officials.

¹² <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/34167/html>

¹³ https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/humanrightscommission.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/posted-fin_tlhrc_lyudmyla_kozlovskaya_written_testimony_open_dialogue_foundation.pdf

Facilitating Russia's war against Ukraine

One of the reasons why the Kazakhstani authorities are persecuting their critics around the world is to conceal the cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia aimed at circumventing international sanctions imposed on Russia. As a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan is one of Russia's closest allies in the international arena. With Kazakhstan's help, Russia has been able to establish supplies of sanctioned goods and dual-use goods. Kazakhstan also participates in joint transport, logistics, industrial and manufacturing projects with Russia, provides access to the international financial system and supports Russian companies relocating to Kazakhstan. The Open Dialogue Foundation, together with its partners, has prepared a series of reports on the facts of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia with the aim of circumventing sanctions.^{14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21}

To avoid secondary sanctions, the Kazakhstani authorities launched a propaganda campaign claiming compliance with the sanctions imposed on Russia. One of the main mouthpieces of this campaign was former Deputy Foreign Minister **Roman Vasilenko**. Holding a high diplomatic position, Vasilenko has repeatedly stated^{22, 23} that Kazakhstan “complies and will continue to comply with the sanctions regime”, although this is not true. In July 2025, Vasilenko was appointed Kazakhstan's ambassador to the EU and NATO. The new ambassador's main task will likely be to continue to disinform Western countries that Kazakhstan is “strictly adhering to the sanctions imposed on Russia”.

Elections and political pluralism

The authorities of Kazakhstan do not allow any political competition in the country. Kazakhstan held extraordinary presidential elections in November 2022 and extraordinary parliamentary elections in March 2023. The presidential and parliamentary elections were held in a non-competitive environment, accompanied by massive violations and falsifications. No opposition candidates were allowed to participate in the presidential election. Kasym-Jomart Tokayev was re-elected for another term, which, according to amendments to the Constitution, is seven years. During the 2023 extraordinary parliamentary elections a lot of civil activists, journalists and public figures declared their intention to participate in the elections in single-seat districts. However, many of them were not allowed to participate in the elections under various pretexts.

Today there are only seven officially registered political parties in Kazakhstan. None of the parties is in real opposition to the country's authorities. The process of registration of new political parties in Kazakhstan is complicated. The state has a wide range of tools to refuse registration.

Unprecedented in the modern history of Kazakhstan, political repression is associated with the banning of the peaceful opposition movements **Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK)** and **Koshe Partiyasy**. The activities of the DCK and Koshe Partiyasy were banned in Kazakhstan. Thousands of DCK and Koshe

¹⁴ <https://en.odfoundation.eu/a/494919,kremlins-secret-ally-how-tokayev-is-helping-putin-circumvent-sanctions/>

¹⁵ <https://en.odfoundation.eu/a/508247,the-secret-of-tokayev-and-putin-how-to-circumvent-the-oil-embargo/>

¹⁶ <https://en.odfoundation.eu/a/570712,everything-for-the-front-everything-for-victory-how-tokayev-helps-putin-while-fooling-ukraine-and-the-west/>

¹⁷ <https://en.odfoundation.eu/a/624385,the-beneficiaries-of-russias-war-against-ukraine-how-the-nazarbayev-tokayev-regime-is-helping-putin/>

¹⁸ <https://ru.odfoundation.eu/a/677216,desjatiletnjaia-vojna-rossii-protiv-ukrainy-kak-uskorit-pobedu-ukrainy/>

¹⁹ <https://ru.odfoundation.eu/a/719688,usilenie-osi-zla-diktatury-protiv-ukrainy/>

²⁰ <https://ru.odfoundation.eu/a/719546,brillianty-ne-navsegda-analiz-neeftivnosti-almaznogo-embargo-dlja-nanesenija-ushcherba-rossijskoj-ekonomike/>

²¹ <https://en.odfoundation.eu/a/726989,the-price-of-exposing-sanctions-violations-bakai-banks-legal-attack-on-the-open-dialogue-foundation/>

²² <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5925155>

²³ <https://arab.com.ua/rus/news/kazahstan-otkazyaetsya-pomogat-rossii-obhodit-172988878.html>

Partiyasy supporters across Kazakhstan have been persecuted. The European Parliament, in its resolutions^{24, 25, 26} has repeatedly recognised the peaceful nature of the activities of DCK and Koshe Partiyasy.

The Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan has **officially refused 25 times to register the opposition party Alga Kazakhstan**. Party leader **Marat Zhylanbayev** was sentenced to 7 years in prison on trumped-up charges. Party activists Asylbek Zhamuratov and Asanali Suyubayev were convicted on political grounds to 7 and 10 years in prison respectively. The authorities' efforts to restrict political pluralism are evident in the repeated exclusion of opposition candidates from electoral processes, the imposition of onerous barriers to the registration of new political parties, and the criminalisation of fundraising attempts for opposition campaigns.

Freedom of speech and censorship

Kazakhstan has dropped eight positions in the World Press Freedom Index prepared by the international organisation Reporters Without Borders,²⁷ ranking 142nd out of 179 countries. Those few independent media outlets in Kazakhstan constantly face pressure and various restrictions. For example, in 2025, the Foreign Ministry of Kazakhstan denied accreditation to 16 employees of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, claiming that they had been engaged in journalistic activities while their accreditation applications were being reviewed.²⁸

The authorities in Kazakhstan are seeking to establish total control over sources of information on the Internet. It was reported that since 2020, Kazakhstan has been cooperating with the Chinese company Geedge Networks, which provides Internet censorship and surveillance services designed to mirror the Great Firewall of China. The Geedge Networks system can block "undesirable" content and also supports cyberattacks.²⁹ As noted in Freedom House's *Freedom on the Net 2024* report³⁰ the country ranks among the states with an unfree Internet. Observers note instances of deliberate Internet slowdowns on certain days, as well as repeated cyberattacks against bloggers and online media outlets. International observers also report instances of slowed access to certain media websites, such as Radio Azattyq (Radio Liberty).³¹

Kazakhstani journalists are victims of criminal and administrative prosecution on various charges, including "spreading deliberately false information" and "defamation". Journalist **Duman Mukhametkarim** was sentenced to seven years in prison for interviewing Mukhtar Ablyazov, leader of the opposition movement Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK). Information Minister Darkhan Kydyrali stated that the journalist was being persecuted because of his political views.³² In 2024, journalist **Daniyar Adilbekov** was sentenced to 4.5 years in prison on charges of "spreading deliberately false information" and "deliberately false denunciation".³³

Cases of **criminal prosecution of citizens for posts and comments on social media and messaging apps** are becoming increasingly common in Kazakhstan. As a rule, the authorities use Article 174 of the Criminal Code ('inciting social, national, ethnic, racial, class or religious discord') for this purpose. In such cases, the principle of proportionality of punishment is often violated, with penalties failing to correspond to the

²⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0056_EN.html

²⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0203_EN.html

²⁶ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0012_EN.html

²⁷ <https://www.rfi.fr/en/>

²⁸ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/v-iske-otkazano-sud-v-astane-priznal-zakonny-nepredostavlenie-akkreditatsiy-zhurnalistam-azattyka/33508456.html>

²⁹ <https://kz.kursiv.media/2025-09-15/zhki-kitayskaya-kompaniya-tayno-prodaet-sistemy-cenzury-v-kazahstan/amp/>

³⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2024/struggle-trust-online>

³¹ <https://ooni.org/post/2023-throttling-kz-elections/>

³² <https://ulymedia.kz/news/17010-dumana-mukhametkarima-presleduiut-za-ego-politicheskie-vzgliady-kydyrali/>

³³ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/33163754.html>

severity of the “offence.” For example, in June 2025, a pregnant woman, **Zhansula Darkhambayeva**, was sentenced to two years in prison in Kazakhstan for posting a video on TikTok calling on Russian President Putin to return land leased from Kazakhstan.³⁴ Shortly after the verdict, she gave birth to a child and received a deferral of her sentence. Among those sentenced to actual prison terms over social media activity are **Aibass Konkayev**³⁵ (six years imprisonment for posting content in support of Palestine), **Zhandarbek Bashanov** – seven years for criticism of the Kazakhstani government, and **Zhaslan Kopeyev** – three and a half years for criticising Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine. A criminal case was brought against historian and popular YouTube blogger (with over 260,000 subscribers) **Aibek Abdurakhmanov**.³⁶ A criminal case was brought against historian and popular YouTube blogger (with over 260,000 subscribers) **Aibek Abdurakhmanov**. Popular blogger **Temirlan Yensibek**, the creator of the satirical Instagram account QazNews24, which published fictional satirical news stories about Kazakhstan's leadership and events in the country, was sentenced to five years' restriction of liberty and banned from public and political activity.³⁷ After the verdict, the account ceased to operate.

Freedom of peaceful assembly

The Kazakhstani authorities claim to have liberalised **legislation on peaceful assemblies**, moving from a permit-based system to a notification-based system for holding rallies.³⁸ However, in reality, representatives of civil society systematically receive refusals under various pretexts after submitting notifications to hold peaceful assemblies. Since 2020, there have been at least 703 refusals to hold peaceful protests, marches and single-person pickets (in 22 cities and towns). Of the 702 refusals, 16 of them were documented in 2025.

Participants of “unauthorised” rallies are punished with heavy fines and arrests. They also become victims of criminal prosecution. In September 2024, 12 activists who opposed the construction of a nuclear power plant in Kazakhstan were detained in Almaty and the Almaty region.³⁹ Five of those detained (Nurlan Zhaulibayev, Zhanat Kazakbay, Fazylzhan Syzdykov, Nurlan Temirgaliyev and Aidar Mubarakov) were charged with attempting to “organise mass riots” (Article 272 of the Criminal Code). Four of them are elderly people over the age of 60. They were held in custody for almost a year and in August 2025 were each sentenced to four years of restriction of liberty.⁴⁰

Torture and ill treatment

Torture and ill treatment, – and impunity for its use – remain a systemic phenomenon in Kazakhstan. The court acquitted the prison officers who brutally tortured activist Timur Danebayev.⁴¹ The act of torture was recorded on video and made public. Thanks to public outcry, the acquittal was overturned, and in April 2025, the case was sent back to court for retrial⁴².

Political prisoner **Marat Zhylanbayev is systematically subjected to ill-treatment** in the penal institution where he is serving his sentence (Institution No. 4, Stepnogorsk). Zhylanbayev has gone on hunger strike

³⁴ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/beremennuyu-zhenschinu-prigovorili-k-tyurme-po-delu-o-razzhigani-rozni/33434529.html>

³⁵ <https://bureau.kz/novosti/boi-bez-pravil-s-uchastiem-ekspertov/>

³⁶ <https://www.the-village-kz.com/village/city/news-city/41109-avtora-kanala-glazami-istorii-aybeka-abdrahmanova-obvinili-v-razzhigani-rozni>

³⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/pyat-let-ogranicheniya-svobody-i-massa-zapretov-kak-sudili-avtora-satiricheskogo-pabluka-temirlana-ensebeka/33382984.html>

³⁸ <https://kazpravda.kz/n/novaya-politicheskaya-kultura-slyshashchego-gosudarstva/>

³⁹ <https://mediazona.ca/news/2024/10/02/six-aes>

⁴⁰ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/po-chetyre-goda-ogranicheniya-svobody-dali-zaderzhannym-nakanune-referenduma-po-aes-v-kazahstane/33513221.html>

⁴¹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/znaete-kakovo-eto-kogda-byut-dubinkov-eks-sotrudnikov-kolonii-opravdali-po-delu-o-pytkah/33313580.html>

⁴² <https://tirik.info/48415-2/>

several times to protest against the harsh conditions of his detention and the repressive actions taken against him by the prison administration. At the end of March 2025, Zhylanbayev **sewed his lips shut** and went on hunger strike after prison authorities forbade him from running⁴³ and confiscated all of his creative tools. In August 2025, human rights defenders and activists began to publicly express concern about Marat Zhylanbayev's health and conditions of detention. His weight has dropped to 45 kg. He is experiencing pain in his pancreas and upper abdomen. He is being held in a small cell measuring 1.5 by 3 metres in unsanitary conditions – rats and mice run around everywhere, and his bed is infested with fleas. The cell is also constantly damp and cold, which negatively affects Zhylanbayev's health.⁴⁴ His lawyers repeatedly encounter obstructions in their attempts to visit Marat, ranging from being denied entry to having case files confiscated.

The Kazakhstani authorities denied reports that Zhylanbayev's health had deteriorated and began persecuting activists and human rights defenders for allegedly spreading false information on the situation with the political prisoner. Ombudsman Artur Lastayev stated that the conditions of Marat Zhylanbayev's detention comply with the norms and called the information about harsh conditions “hype”.⁴⁵ The secretary of the Coordination Council under the Ombudsman, Raisa Sher, visited Zhylanbayev in the penal institution, after which she reported that “he feels well, has no complaints about his health” and is **starving himself to train his body**.⁴⁶ Marat Zhylanbayev said the statements made by Sher were untrue and wrote a complaint to the Ombudsman and the Prosecutor's Office, but prison staff confiscated the complaint from his lawyer.⁴⁷ The Committee of the Penal System of Kazakhstan stated that the prisoner is under constant supervision by medical staff and that no complaints have been received from him. The Committee also reminded of the responsibility for spreading false information.⁴⁸

The authorities have persecuted those who spoke out in defence of Marat Zhylanbayev:

- On 7 August 2025, member of the Alga Kazakhstan party organizing committee **Bibigul Imangaliyeva** was arrested for 10 days for an administrative offence (“illegal rally”) that she allegedly committed back in April 2025. Imangaliyeva was arrested the next day after she took part in a press conference on the condition of Marat Zhylanbayev.⁴⁹
- Another participant of that press conference, human rights defender **Bakhytzhhan Toregozhina**, was fined 78,000 tenge (about USD 145) on 31 July 2025 for allegedly “spreading false information” after she published a post on social media about Marat Zhylanbayev's health.⁵⁰ On 17 August 2025, the day of the rally in support of Marat Zhylanbayev, Toregozhina was detained by the police, although she did not intend to take part in the rally. Toregozhina was taken to the police department and questioned as a witness in a criminal case under Article 405 of the Criminal Code (“participation in the activities of an organisation after it has been recognised as extremist”).⁵¹ The international human rights organisation Human Rights Watch condemned the persecution of Bakhytzhhan Toregozhina, stating that the Kazakhstani authorities had launched a witch hunt

⁴³ <https://ulymedia.kz/news/49476-osuzhdennyi-marafonets-zhylanbaev-zashil-sebe-rot-i-snova-nachal-golodovku/>

⁴⁴ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/chto-govoryat-o-sostoyanii-marata-zhylanbaeva-seychas/33496063.html>

⁴⁵ https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/ombudsmen-nazval-haypom-soobscheniya-kriticheskoy-sostoyanii-576608/

⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/sher.raisa.2025/posts/pfbid0okXZ2drgmCvRtFLqishHFkn7CwCKAfayvgyFQn2AFkfhBiZkQvNDcbtVWtuj1AaI>

⁴⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/chto-govoryat-o-sostoyanii-marata-zhylanbaeva-seychas/33496063.html>

⁴⁸ https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/kuis-otvetil-zayavleniyu-ob-morochnom-sostoyanii-marata-576436/

⁴⁹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/v-almaty-na-10-sutok-arestovali-aktivistku-vystupavshuyu-v-podderzhku-marata-zhylanbaeva/33497903.html>

⁵⁰ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/pravozaschitnitsu-toregozhinu-oshtrafovali-za-rasprostraneniye-lozhnoy-informatsii-za-post-o-zdorove-politizaklyuchyonnogo-zhylanbaeva/33490689.html>

⁵¹ https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=24706255008960418&id=100000077838810&mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=3hFmzLRe9TcnGG21

against the human rights defender, who exposes human rights violations instead of addressing the exposed problems.⁵²

- In addition to Toregozhina, other activists who participated or intended to participate in the race in support of Marat Zhylyanbayev were detained in various regions of Kazakhstan.⁵³

Additional punishments for victims of political repression

Kazakhstani political prisoners continue to face pressure and various restrictions even after their release. On 2 September 2025, well-known activist **Timur Danebayev** was released from prison after serving a three-year sentence. On the same day, another trial was held against Danebayev, resulting in a decision to place him under probation supervision for six months. During this period, he must regularly report his whereabouts to the police. Probation was imposed on Danebayev on the grounds that he had been convicted on ‘extremist’ charges (Article 174 of the Criminal Code – “inciting social discord”).

This is not the only restriction Danebayev may face after his release. In Kazakhstan, political prisoners who have been convicted under “terrorist” and “extremist” articles of the Criminal Code may be included in the ‘List of organisations and individuals associated with the financing of terrorism and extremism’. Persons included in the ‘List’ are subject to a number of restrictions related to the disposal of money and property (freezing of bank accounts, restrictions on the use of postal, notary and insurance services). These measures entail other restrictions on rights and freedoms – the inability to find official employment, register a private enterprise, and even the deprivation of the right to drive a car (due to the inability to conclude an insurance contract) – and are in fact a continuation of political repression. The freezing of bank accounts and restrictions on access to financial services mean that those on the list and their families are left without any means of subsistence. This results in double punishment for a single “crime”, with the second punishment being indefinite, which contradicts the fundamental legal principle of *non bis in idem* (“inadmissibility of double punishment”). By applying financial and administrative restrictions to victims of political repression, Kazakhstan is misusing anti-money laundering and anti-extremism/terrorism legislation. Many former political prisoners have been forced to leave Kazakhstan because of the restrictions imposed on them.

⁵² https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/08/20/kazakhstan-tries-to-shoot-the-messenger?fbclid=IwY2xjawMTAatleHRuA2FibQixMQBicmlkETFsR2VjeGQ5ZXIYMDZGMjhNAR4eQiwHQ_6voQdlfEG0m5ONsoe-aJNmMGjpK186Q7RCypCILJGqghsegxjsg_aem_KzXcu-ZmNv2KWvOxaAReew

⁵³ https://bureau.kz/novosti/zavavleniya_i_obrazeniya/otkrytoe-obrazeniye-v-svyazi-s-zaderzhaniami/

THE LIST OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Criteria for inclusion on the list of political prisoners

While preparing the list of political prisoners, the PACE criteria were used.⁵⁴ Although Kazakhstan is not a member of the Council of Europe, it has ratified four Council of Europe conventions and signed a declaration expanding cooperation with the organisation. Kazakhstan has been an observer in the Council of Europe bodies at various times. Since March 2012, Kazakhstan has been a member of the Venice Commission and joined the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in 2020.

A person is considered a political prisoner if:

- Detention violates fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association.
- The detention is imposed for purely political reasons.
- Due to political motives, the length of the detention or its conditions are clearly out of proportion to the offence.
- Due to political motives, he or she is detained in a discriminatory manner as compared to other persons.
- The detention is the result of judicial proceedings that are clearly unfair and connected with the political motives of authorities.

In accordance with the above-mentioned criteria, in this report we provide information on persons who are subjected to politically motivated persecution and on those who remain in prisons or pre-trial detention facilities – i.e. about political prisoners.

In Kazakhstan, persons are politically prosecuted under both general criminal articles and “political” articles of the Criminal Code. The latter include charges of “inciting social discord” (Article 174 of the Criminal Code), “participation in the activities of the organisation after its recognition as extremist” (Article 405 of the Criminal Code), “financing of extremist activities and other aiding and abetting of extremism” (Article 258 of the Criminal Code), “disseminating of deliberately false information” (Article 274 of the Criminal Code), “propaganda or public calls for seizure or retention of power” (Article 179 of the Criminal Code), “organisation and participation in mass riots” (Article 272 of the Criminal Code) and “propaganda of terrorism or public calls to commit an act of terrorism” (Article 256 of the Criminal Code). Kazakhstan refuses to implement the recommendation of the European Parliament resolution⁵⁵ regarding the abolition of politicised and textually ambiguous Articles 174 and 274 of the Criminal Code. By using these allegations for political purposes, Kazakhstan is abusing the legislation on countering terrorism and extremism, as well as anti-money laundering legislation. **In this regard, the authors of the report share the recommendation of Human Rights Watch on the need to downgrade Kazakhstan's status in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).**⁵⁶

⁵⁴ <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=19150&lang=en>

⁵⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0203_EN.html

⁵⁶ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/politicheskie-presledovaniya-ekonomicheskaya-blokada-hrw-ob-ogranicheniyah-dlya-lits-v-spiske-finansiruyuschih-ekstremizm/33093091.html>

CONVICTED

In cases related to the January 2022 peaceful protests

- 1 **Zhaksylyk ABDULLAYEV** – 5 years' imprisonment under Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation and participation in mass riots”). Abdullayev did not accept the charges; his relatives said that he was slandered.⁵⁷
- 2 **Rinat ALIYEV** – 6.5 years' imprisonment under Article 256 of the Criminal Code for alleged “propaganda of terrorism”. He has been in detention since 14 January 2022 and has been subjected to torture. Aliyev was initially detained on suspicion of “participation in mass riots” (Article 272 of the Criminal Code). Aliyev did not go to the protests. After the investigation failed to prove his participation in mass riots, Aliyev was charged with propaganda of terrorism.
- 3 **Chingiz ALPIYEV** – 9 years' imprisonment under Article 256 of the Criminal Code for alleged “propaganda of terrorism”. He has been kept in detention since 14 January 2022 and been subjected to torture. Alpiyev was initially detained on suspicion of participation in mass riots (Article 272 of the Criminal Code). Alpiyev did not go to the protests. After the investigation failed to prove Alpiyev's participation in mass riots, he was charged with propaganda of terrorism.
- 4 **Nurlan DALIBAYEV** – 8 years' imprisonment under Article 200 of the Criminal Code (“illegal occupation of a vehicle”), Article 269 of the Criminal Code (“attacks on buildings”) and Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“participation in mass riots”). Dalibayev was convicted in the case of “seizure of Almaty airport” during the January protests.



⁵⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32384250.html>

5 **Yerbol ZHUMANOV** – 16 years' imprisonment under Article 287 of the Criminal Code (“illegal possession of firearms”) and Article 380 of the Criminal Code (“use of violence against a representative of the authorities”). According to the prosecution, Zhumanov allegedly shot and killed the head of the Anti-Terrorist Centre of the Department of NSC of Zhambyl region during the protests in Taraz. In court, Zhumanov admitted that he picked up the weapon on the street, but claimed he did not kill anyone. According to CCTV footage, Zhumanov came to the town square when the NSC officer had already been shot dead. However, these video recordings were not presented at the trial.⁵⁸



6 **Nursultan ISAYEV** – 15 years' imprisonment under Article 380-1 of the Criminal Code for allegedly running over servicemen in Aktobe during protests. The servicemen were slightly injured. According to Isayev, his car was shelled, so he ducked down and did not see where he was going.⁵⁹ Convicted on 1 February 2023.



7 **Darkhan KAMI** – 4 years' imprisonment under Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“participation in mass riots”). Convicted on 1 February 2023. After consideration of the case in the court of appeal, Kami's sentence was made harsher and he was transferred from a general regime colony to a strict regime colony.⁶⁰



⁵⁸ <https://respublika.kz.media/archives/87392>

⁵⁹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32361008.html>

⁶⁰ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32361008.html>

- 8 **Zhan-Aidar KARMENOV** – 8 years' imprisonment under Article 269 of the Criminal Code (“attacks on buildings”) and Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“participation in mass riots”). Karmenov was convicted in the case of “seizure of Almaty airport” during the January protests. Karmenov did not plead guilty to the charges.



- 9 **Kazybek KUDAIBERGENOV** – 17 years' imprisonment under Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“participation in mass riots”) and Article 380 of the Criminal Code (“attempt on the life of a serviceman”). According to the investigation, Kudaibergenov seized a “KamAZ” lorry and directed it at a group of servicemen, killing one of them. The indictment states that Kudaibergenov is associated with the movement *Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan* (DCK). Kazybek Kudaibergenov did not participate in the January protests. On 5 January 2022 he received a gunshot wound in the leg while he was in the city centre. A few days later, Kudaibergenov was detained. He was subjected to severe torture – beaten with truncheons, tortured with stun guns and threatened with rape. A forensic medical examination confirmed that Kudaibergenov had been subjected to violent acts. Under the influence of torture, Kazybek Kudaibergenov was forced to incriminate himself and sign false testimony on the charges.



Kazybek Kudaibergenov's wife reported that due to the preparation of an appeal to the Supreme Court against the verdict, their family began to be pressurised by employees of the Akimat (local executive body), the Prosecutor's Office and the colony where Kazybek is serving his sentence. Kazybek is being threatened with torture and with being sent to a punishment cell.⁶¹

⁶¹ https://www.facebook.com/groups/2333831603602776/?multi_permalinks=3568268363492421&hoisted_section_header_type=recently_seen

- 10 **Nurakhan MAKHATOV** – 6 years' imprisonment under Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation and participation in mass riots”) for the events that took place during the protests in Taraz. Makhatov is 64 years old and has not pleaded guilty to the charges. According to Makhatov's relatives, he went to the square during the protests to “calm the youth”. However, he was eventually accused of organising mass riots.⁶² Criminal mastermind Bashirov, who was detained for looting during the January protests, testified against Makhatov in court.⁶³ Along with Nurakhan Makhatov, his 35-year-old son Kanat Nurakhanuly was convicted, but he was amnestied.



- 11 **Kalas NURPEISOV** – 8 years' imprisonment under Article 191 of the Criminal Code (“robbery”), Article 200 of the Criminal Code (“unlawful seizure of a vehicle”) and Article 269 (“attack on buildings”). Kalas Nurpeisov was convicted in the case of “seizure of Almaty airport” during the January protests. According to the materials of the criminal case, Nurpeisov organised mass riots at Almaty airport, and also “did not limit himself to participation in mass riots at the airport and, in order to prevent the arrival of troops of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), tried to seize the office of *Kazaeronavigatsiya*, which provides electricity for system equipment and air traffic safety”.⁶⁴ Shortly after the suppression of the January protests, Kasym-Jomart Tokayev said in an interview that bandits and terrorists attacked the Almaty airport in order to seize it and ensure the arrival of “militants from a Central Asian city”.⁶⁵ According to Tokayev, these “bandits and terrorists” turned out to be civil activists Kalas Nurpeisov and Aigerim Tleuzhan, who were labelled as the organisers of the airport seizure.



⁶² <https://masa.media/ru/site/prokurory-zaprosili-dlitelnye-tyuremnye-sroki-dlya-obvinyaemykh-po-delu-o-yanvarskikh-sobytyakh-v-taraze>

⁶³ <https://respublika.kz.media/archives/87392>

⁶⁴ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-bloody-january-almaty-airport-attack-case/32343040.html?fbclid=IwAR2-r4jRcUTuL5See7XzIshXfXtrnsf26UWzvdvQe0iNLE9XBI3rapgRPreE>

⁶⁵ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31677395.html>

- 12 **Aibol SAGINTAY** – 5 years' imprisonment under Article 272 (“organisation and participation in mass riots”). Sagintay does not deny that he went to the protests in Taraz but claims that he did not violate the law. On the contrary, Sagintay urged the protesters to calm down. In the pre-trial detention facility, Aibol was offered to be released in exchange for incriminating against persons whom the police would point out. Aibol refused and was told: “Then you will serve time.”⁶⁶



- 13 **Aigerim TLEUZHAN** – 4 years' imprisonment under Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation of mass riots”) in the case of “seizure of Almaty airport” during the January protests. According to the prosecution's version, she, together with Kalas Nurpeisov, was the organiser of mass riots at the airport and blocked the movement of aircrafts. Tleuzhan pleaded not guilty. At the trial Nurpeisov and Tleuzhan did not deny that on 5 January 2022 they arrived at the airport when she learnt that CSTO troops were preparing to enter Kazakhstan but stayed there only about half an hour.⁶⁷ Tleuzhan is a civil activist and journalist from Almaty.



- 14 **Yermuhamet SHILIBAEV** – 8 years in prison under Article 269 of the Criminal Code (“attacks on buildings”) and Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“participation in mass riots”). Shilibayev was convicted in the case of “seizure of Almaty airport” during the January protests. Shilibayev pleaded not guilty.



⁶⁶ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32413457.html>

⁶⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/pozor-kak-vynosili-prigovor-obvinyaemym-v-zahvate-aeroporta-vo-vremya-vanvarskih-sobytyj/32498793.html>

Prosecuted for fighting against corruption

- 15 **Makhambet ABZHAN** – 9 years' imprisonment under Article 194 of the Criminal Code (“extortion”) and Article 274 of the Criminal Code (“dissemination of knowingly false information”) for allegedly extorting about 50 million tenge (USD ~11,100) under the threat of spreading “defamatory information” in the media. Convicted on 3 February 2023. He has been under arrest since 5 July 2022. Abzhan worked as a journalist and published information about the alleged assets of President Kasym-Jomart Tokayev's nephew.⁶⁸



- 16 **Shaden KARIBAYEV** – 7 years in prison under Article 189 of the Criminal Code (“misappropriation or embezzlement of entrusted property”) for allegedly embezzling funds from the “Sputnik” Holiday House, where he worked as director in 2015–17. Karibayev was criminally prosecuted for uncovering numerous embezzlements and corruption in the Public Association “Kazakh Society for the Blind”, which includes the “Sputnik” Holiday House”.⁶⁹ According to some reports, the corruption schemes uncovered by Karibayev were in favour of firms linked to Nursultan Nazarbayev's daughter, Dariga. Therefore, law enforcement agencies ignored the facts of corruption Karibayev pointed out and fabricated a criminal case against him.^{70, 71} Convicted on 21 June 2022. Karibayev is visually impaired and is at an advanced age (70), so being in detention conditions is dangerous to his life.



- 17 **Yerulan AMIROV** – 7 years' imprisonment under Article 174 of the Criminal Code (“incitement of social discord”), Article 256 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda of terrorism”) and Article 405 of the Criminal Code (“participation in the activities of an extremist organisation”). He was sentenced on 16 May 2022. Amirov was prosecuted because he recorded a video and posted it on Facebook. In the video Amirov stated “the best jihad is the spoken word before an unjust tyrant ruler”. Amirov emphasised not to take up arms. However, it was enough for the investigating authorities that Amirov used the word



⁶⁸ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32254069.html>

⁶⁹ https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3321529461499647/?comment_id=3327236894262237

⁷⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3351489391836987/>

⁷¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3321712491481344/>

“jihad”, and a criminal case was initiated against him.⁷² Amirov claims that before that they wanted to fabricate a criminal case against him on charges of supporting *Koshe Partiyasy*.⁷³ Amirov is a victim of punitive psychiatry. On 10 June 2021 he was placed in a psychiatric hospital. Due to constant psychological pressure in December 2021 Amirov made a suicide attempt while in the pre-trial detention facility.⁷⁴

- 18 **Karasay ASHIRBEKOV** – 6.5 years' imprisonment under Article 120 of the Criminal Code (“rape”). Sentenced on 10.02.2023. The term is calculated from the date of arrest – 18 May 2022. The trial against Ashirbekov was held in a closed session. Ashirbekov is a civil activist from Kyzylorda region, chairman of the public association “Committee for the Elimination of Corruption”. He has been repeatedly persecuted by law enforcement agencies in connection with his public activities. Ashirbekov claims that the rape case against him is fabricated.⁷⁵ On 7 June 2025, the court denied Ashirbekov's request for parole.



Political hostages in the case of human rights defender and philanthropist Barlyk Mendygazyev

Barlyk Mendygazyev is an entrepreneur, philanthropist and human rights activist currently residing in the United States. The Kazakhstani authorities have subjected Barlyk Mendygazyev to politically motivated criminal prosecution because of his opposition and human rights activities. To put pressure on Mendygazyev, the authorities have effectively taken hostage his family members and employees of the company he founded, KSS – against whom they have also opened politically motivated criminal cases and whom they have sentenced to long prison terms (coercion-by-proxy). A criminal case was fabricated against his brother, Bekizhan Mendygazyev, and he was sentenced to five years in prison. He was released on 29 August 2025. Even after his release from prison, Bekizhan continues to face financial and administrative restrictions. His bank accounts remain blocked. In addition, a private lawsuit has been filed against Bekizhan Mendygazyev by the Halyk Bank of Kazakhstan, where Bekizhan has a bank account. The bank is attempting to prove through the court that Bekizhan Mendygazyev owes 21.4 million tenge (about USD 39,000). This is yet another example of how the Kazakhstani authorities abuse financial mechanisms to put pressure on the Mendygazyev family. Another brother of Mendygazyev, Kalyk Mendygazyev, who had a serious illness, died in March 2023 as a result of pressure from the security services and endless interrogations.

⁷² <http://tirik.info/rasshirenie-spiski-polituznikov-21-07-2021-goda/>

⁷³ https://mediazona.ca/article/2021/08/03/psychiatry?fbclid=IwAR2QRlw-Fq_faaVtCP3pPquQoaTWZ3EbJGEq6r_xyF-qS8UokH7Gw_VaXn0

⁷⁴ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/31631082.html>

⁷⁵ <http://tirik.info/kak-vlasti-podstavlyayut-aktivistov-s-zhenshinami/>

- 19 **Rinat BATKAYEV** – 5 years' imprisonment under Article 262 of the Criminal Code (“participation in an organised criminal group”) and Article 216 of the Criminal Code (“issuing an invoice without performing actual work”). Convicted on 26 July 2021. Initially, the court sentenced Batkayev to restriction of liberty, but the court of appeal replaced the punishment with imprisonment.



The “Group of Seven” case (“Tractor” case)

“Group of Seven” is a term used to refer to the criminal prosecution of seven civil activists from Almaty and Almaty region who allegedly prepared “mass riots” and “seizure of power” in Kazakhstan on the day of the snap presidential election. The activists were detained on 17 November 2022 – a few days before the elections. According to the investigation, they “favoured” opposition politician Mukhtar Ablyazov, “had similar views to Ablyazov”, and were members of the DCK and *Koshe Partiyasy* movements.⁷⁶ The video clip of the detention of the activists was used for propaganda purposes to demonstrate the authorities' fight against “extremists who tried to disrupt the elections”. The authorities did not provide evidence of the guilt of the detained activists. In June 2023, Aidos Ilipbayev, one of those arrested in the case, was released from the pre-trial detention facility and placed under house arrest. He admitted his guilt.

On 7 August 2024 the verdict on the case of “Group of Seven” was passed. All defendants, except Aydos Ilipbayev, were sentenced to prison terms. Ilipbayev received a suspended sentence.⁷⁷ On 15 August 2024, the Court of Appeal left the verdict unchanged.⁷⁸

- 20 **Bagdagul ANDREYEVA** – 6 years of imprisonment under Article 182 of the Criminal Code (“creation and management of an extremist group”), Article 179 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda or public calls for seizure of power”), Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation of mass riots”). Andreyeva has been repeatedly prosecuted for participation in peaceful protests. In January 2022, she was arrested for 15 days for participation in a rally.



⁷⁶ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-early-presidential-elections-persecution-of-activists/32137228.html>

⁷⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32852111.html>

⁷⁸ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/33080127.html>

- 21 **Akylzhan KIYSYMBAYEV** – 5 years of imprisonment under Article 182 of the Criminal Code (“creation and management of an extremist group”), Article 179 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda or public calls for seizure of power”), Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation of mass riots”), Article 287 of the Criminal Code (“illegal possession of firearms”). Kiysymbayev sustained a gunshot wound during the shooting of protestors. He was detained and subjected to torture by the police.⁷⁹ On 19 June 2025, the court denied Kiysymbayev’s request for parole.



- 22 **Olzhas KULZHAKHANOV** – 6 years of imprisonment under Article 182 of the Criminal Code (“creation and management of an extremist group”), Article 179 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda or public calls for seizure of power”), Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation of mass riots”), Article 287 of the Criminal Code (“illegal possession of firearms”).



- 23 **Sagyngkul KONAR** – 5 years of imprisonment under Article 182 of the Criminal Code (“creation and management of an extremist group”), Article 179 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda or public calls for seizure of power”), Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation of mass riots”).



- 24 **Tenilik NURLANOV** – 5 years of imprisonment under Article 182 of the Criminal Code (“creation and management of an extremist group”), Article 179 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda or public calls for seizure of power”), Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation of mass riots”), Article 287 of the Criminal Code (“illegal possession of firearms”).



⁷⁹ <https://vlast.kz/obsshestvo/50302-perezit-anvar.html>

- 25 **Yerzhan TOREKULOV** – 6 years of imprisonment under Article 182 of the Criminal Code (“creation and management of an extremist group”), Article 179 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda or public calls for seizure of power”), Article 272 of the Criminal Code (“organisation of mass riots”), Article 287 of the Criminal Code (“illegal possession of firearms”).



Activists, charged for participation in the unregistered Alga Kazakhstan party

- 26 **Marat ZHYLANBAYEV** – 7 years of imprisonment under Article 258 of the Criminal Code (“financing of terrorist or extremist activities”) and Article 405 of the Criminal Code (“participation in the activities of an extremist organisation”). Zhylanbayev is a world-renowned ultramarathoner. He is chairman of the organising committee of the unregistered Alga Kazakhstan party. Convicted on 29 November 2023.



According to the materials of the criminal case, “financing of extremism” implies that, in February 2023, Zhylanbayev transferred 500,000 tenge (USD ~1,100) to activist Zhanna Sarsenova and 707,000 tenge (USD ~1,500) to activist Bibigul Imangaliyeva. According to investigators, the money was allegedly intended for the needs of the “extremist organization” DCK. In fact, Zhylanbayev made the transfers ahead of the parliamentary elections so that Sarsenova and Imangaliyeva could make an electoral deposit and stand as a candidate for the Mazhilis of Parliament.⁸⁰ Zhylanbayev had also intended to run in the election. However, his candidacy was withdrawn after he announced a fundraiser among his associates to run for election. Zhylanbayev was accused of premature campaigning. It is worth noting that there is no court decision that would recognise Sarsenova or Imangaliyeva as an extremist or a member of the DCK, so the transfer of

⁸⁰ <https://otvzar.kz/2023/02/vybory-2023-kto-izyavil-zhelanie-podat-zayavlenie-v-shymkente/>

money to them cannot be regarded as “financing extremism”. **Zhylyanbayev's case shows that, in Kazakhstan, law enforcement agencies, in violation of the right to bank secrecy, have access to the monetary transactions of citizens and illegally monitor them.**

Also according to the investigation, Zhylyanbayev's criminal activity consists in his allegedly having organised protests of the DCK. The investigation came to this conclusion on the basis of the fact that the leader of DCK Mukhtar Ablyazov reported on social networks about the planned peaceful protests announced by Zhylyanbayev. Thus, the investigation blamed Zhylyanbayev for the actions of another person. Zhylyanbayev was also allegedly a member of a chatroom on the social network of the organisers and participants of the DCK.⁸¹

According to the conclusions of political science research (which is not on the list of forensic examinations according to the legislation of Kazakhstan), Zhylyanbayev's actions and statements contain signs of “discrediting the authorities”. Using the example of systematic refusals to register the Alga Kazakhstan party, he criticised Tokayev's statement that Kazakhstan had “simplified the procedure for registering political parties”. Zhylyanbayev also called Tokayev a “dictator” on social media and blamed him for the tragic consequences of the events of January 2022 in Kazakhstan.⁸²

On 23 May 2023, Marat Zhylyanbayev's house was searched, his phones and personal correspondence were examined.⁸³ In early May 2023, Zhylyanbayev was arrested for 20 days for holding a peaceful rally near the building of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Kazakhstan in Astana demanding the release of political prisoners and sanctions against the Kazakhstani authorities for helping Russia circumvent sanctions. After serving the administrative arrest, Zhylyanbayev was not released, but was arrested in connection with a criminal case.

On 30 October 2023, the trial against Marat Zhylyanbayev started in the Specialised inter-district Criminal Court of Astana city. Based on the motion of two anonymous witnesses, the judge decided to close the trial to the public. In fact, Marat Zhylyanbayev's right to an open and fair trial

⁸¹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/kazakhstan-opposition-activist-marat-zhylyanbayev/32427878.html>

⁸² <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ActivistsNotExtremists/posts/3573171686335422/>

⁸³ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32423896.html>

was violated. In protest against this, Marat Zhylanbayev sewed up his mouth and went on hunger strike.⁸⁴

In April 2025, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found Kazakhstan guilty of violating numerous human rights obligations in connection with the case of Marat Zhylanbayev and called for his immediate release.⁸⁵

Political prisoner **Marat Zhylanbayev is systematically subjected to ill-treatment** in the penal institution where he is serving his sentence (Institution No. 4, Stepnogorsk). Zhylanbayev has gone on hunger strike several times to protest against the harsh conditions of his detention and the repressive measures taken against him by the prison administration. Over the past year, he has spent more than 200 days on hunger strike. As a result, his health has deteriorated significantly – his blood pressure has dropped to 69/42 mm Hg and his pulse to 37 beats per minute. The Kazakhstani authorities (the Ombudsman and the Committee of the Penal System of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) have refuted reports of Zhylanbayev's deteriorating health and stated that he is in good health.⁸⁶

- 27 **Askar SEMBAY** – 6 years of imprisonment under Article 405 of the Criminal Code (“participation in the activities of an extremist organisation”) and Article 179 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda or public calls for seizure of power”) for publications on social media constituting “criticism of the authorities” of Kazakhstan, which he made in November 2022. Convicted on 19 December 2023. According to the materials of the criminal case, Sembay “published video messages on Facebook about organising rallies”, “shared information about DCK programmes” and called for “building a parliamentary republic in Kazakhstan”. During the investigation stage, since 13 May 2023 was kept in a pre-trial detention facility. Since the beginning of 2019, Sembay took part in protests organised by the DCK and Koshe Partiyasy. He has repeatedly been brought to administrative responsibility.



⁸⁴ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32667513.html>

⁸⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/100063617377218/posts/1324313189699248/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v>

⁸⁶ https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/ombudsmen-nazval-haypom-soobscheniya-kriticheskoy-sostoyanii-576608/

28 **Asanali SUYUBAEV** – 10 years’ imprisonment under Article 297 of the Criminal Code (“Illegal possession of narcotic substances”).⁸⁷ Detained on 16 May 2024.⁸⁸ Suyubayev is an activist of the unregistered party Alga Kazakhstan. He has been subjected to compulsory psychiatric treatment in the past. He has a group II disability. On 3 September 2024, a trial against him began.⁸⁹ Convicted on 11 September 2024.



29 **Aidar SYZDYKOV** – sentenced to 5 years’ imprisonment under Article 297 of the Criminal Code (“Illegal possession of narcotic substances”). Detained on the same day with Asanali Suyubayev on 16 May 2024. Sentenced on 27 September 2024.⁹⁰ In 2021, Syzdykov was sentenced to 3 years of restriction of liberty on charges of “participation in an extremist organisation” for supporting the DCK.⁹¹ Syzdykov is engaged in human rights activities. He has been repeatedly subjected to administrative arrests for participating in peaceful protests in defence of Kazakhstani political prisoners. Aidar Syzdykov's wife reports that he is not being provided the necessary medical care in the pre-trial detention facility. On 17 September 2024, the trial began, which was open to the public. The criminal case was fabricated based on the testimony of an anonymous witness. During the questioning of this witness in court, the judge decided to close the hearing to the public, not even allowing Aidar Syzdykov to participate.



Syzdykov's wife, civil activist **Aigul Tokpayeva**, was also subjected to criminal prosecution. A criminal case was brought against her on charges of “using violence against a representative of the authorities” (Part 3, Article 380 of the Criminal Code) for an incident that occurred during the trial of her husband. Tokpayeva came to the trial with a small child, but they were refused entry to the courtroom, after which, according to the version of events presented by the investigation, Tokpayeva “caused bodily harm” to a police officer. On 30 July 2025, Tokpayeva was sentenced to two years' restriction of liberty.⁹²

⁸⁷ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/33115998.html>

⁸⁸ <https://tirik.info/v-astane-zaderzhan-suyubaev-asanali/>

⁸⁹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/33088574.html>

⁹⁰ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/33137797.html>

⁹¹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32960514.html>

⁹² <https://t.me/NotExtremists/14059>

On 14 August 2025, the court granted Aydar Syzdykov's request for amnesty and reduced his prison sentence by one third – 1 year and 2 months of his remaining sentence.⁹³

Convicted on charges of having ties with opposition politician Mukhtar Ablyazov

30 **Asylbek ZHAMURATOV** – 7 years' imprisonment under Article 258 of the Criminal Code ("financing of terrorist or extremist activities") and Article 405 of the Criminal Code ("participation in the activities of an extremist organisation"). Convicted on 16 August 2024. He was kept in custody since 30 November 2023. The trial against Zhamuratov was closed to the public at the request of a secret witness. Zhamuratov is a private entrepreneur and has provided financial support to civil activists in Kazakhstan. He was also an active member of the unregistered Alga Kazakhstan party and was involved in the process of submitting an application for registration of the party. Zhamuratov was accused of allegedly sending money transfers to Mukhtar Ablyazov's foreign accounts. Zhamuratov's wife, Svetlana Zhamuratova, reported in June 2024 that a criminal case under Article 405 of the Criminal Code had also been initiated against her.⁹⁴



31 **Duman MUKHAMETKARIM** – 7 years' imprisonment under Article 258 of the Criminal Code ("financing of terrorist or extremist activities") and Article 405 of the Criminal Code ("participation in the activities of an extremist organisation"). Convicted on 2 August 2024.⁹⁵ The criminal case against Mukhametkarim was initiated in connection with an interview he gave to opposition politician Mukhtar Ablyazov. He was accused of co-operating with Ablyazov. He has been under arrest since 22 June 2023. While in detention, Mukhametkarim repeatedly went on hunger strike due to unfair trial and violation of his rights. He also cut himself as a sign of protest. In detention, Mukhametkarim's health deteriorated severely.⁹⁶



⁹³ <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/kazakhstan-syzdykov/33503828.html>

⁹⁴ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32978355.html>

⁹⁵ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/33060717.html>

⁹⁶ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/zhurnalista-dumana-muhammedkarima-etapirovali-v-kyzylordu/33246621.html>

- 32 **Zhanarbek BASHANOV** – 7 years' imprisonment on charges of “inciting inter-ethnic hatred” (Article 174 of the Criminal Code) and “propaganda of terrorism” (Article 256 of the Criminal Code) for public statements and posts on social media criticising the Kazakhstani authorities. He was detained on 21 March 2025 and subsequently placed in a pre-trial detention facility. He was convicted on 11 August 2025⁹⁷. Bashanov is a civil activist from Uralsk who has been repeatedly persecuted for his critical statements about the Kazakhstani authorities. In 2023, Bashanov was criminally prosecuted on charges of “participating in the activities of an extremist organisation” (Article 405 of the Criminal Code). He was accused of publishing videos in support of the opposition movements DCK and “Koshe Partiyasy”, participating in protests, and publicly criticising President Tokayev.⁹⁸



Other political prisoners

- 33 **Yerzhan YELSHIBAYEV** – 5 years' imprisonment under Article 106 of the Criminal Code (“infliction of bodily harm”) plus 7 years' imprisonment under Article 428 of the Criminal Code (“disobedience to the lawful demands of the colony administration”). First convicted in 2019 for allegedly participating in a street fight that took place in 2017. At the trial, the victim stated that he had no claims against Yelshibayev. Yelshibayev lived in Zhanaozen and was an activist of the unemployed movement, related to which he raised unemployment issues in the city. Because of this, he was subjected to pressure from the police.⁹⁹



Yelshibayev received his second sentence in September 2022. The administration of penal colony ZK-169/5, where Yelshibayev is serving his sentence, filed a complaint against him for disobedience and inciting other convicts to disobedience after he attempted suicide. Yelshibayev claims that he was protesting against the illegal actions of the colony administration – ill treatment and pressure.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ <https://tirik.info/zhandarbek-bashanov-byi-zaderzhan-politsiya-siloi-i-nahoditsya-v-sizo/>

⁹⁸ <https://bureau.kz/novosti/na-vse-odin-otvet-sem-let/>

⁹⁹ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/30222769.html>

¹⁰⁰ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32057693.html>

34 **Dauren MAKIN** – 7 years' imprisonment under Article 265 of the Criminal Code (“propaganda of terrorism”) for allegedly calling civil servants “kafirs” (non-believers) in a private conversation and urging them to oppose the authorities.¹⁰¹ Makin is a well-known Kazakhstani artist. He pleaded not guilty and claimed that he was the victim of provocation. He was detained in April 2022. He has been detained in pre-trial detention facility since 5 May 2022.¹⁰² Convicted on 27 April 2023.¹⁰³



35 **Aslan UTEPOV** – 7 years' imprisonment under Article 190 of the Criminal Code (“fraud”) and Article 367 of the Criminal Code (“incitement to bribery”). Head of the association “People against Corruption” from Uralsk. On 31 December 2022 arrested and placed in a pre-trial detention facility. Utepov stated that he was a victim of provocation because of his public and anti-corruption activities. In March 2023 the trial started.¹⁰⁴ Convicted on 23 May 2023.¹⁰⁵ In conclusion, Utepov faced what he considers to be unfair disciplinary measures imposed by the prison administration (Institution No. 27, Uralsk). Utepov believes that this is an attempt to prevent him from being released on parole. He filed a lawsuit against the prison administration.¹⁰⁶



36 **Malik AHMETKALIYEV** – sentenced to 4.5 years in prison under Article 296 of the Criminal Code (“Illegal handling of narcotic substances”). Akhmetkaliyev is an activist from Kokshetau who publicly criticised the local authorities. During a search, a package containing narcotic substances was allegedly found in his jacket. On 21 June 2023 Akhmetkaliyev was detained and has been under arrest ever since. He was convicted on 21 May 2024.¹⁰⁷



¹⁰¹ <https://mediazona.ca/article/2022/06/20/makin>

¹⁰² <https://www.facebook.com/toregozhina/posts/pfbid0zFznondHDMXmYDYdKp5j3C6QwH163AnYXWTGFvosrUpTG4SG5rdhBGtyifZJyA4YI>

¹⁰³ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32381537.html>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.uralskweek.kz/2023/03/13/strong-advokat-aktivista-aslana-utepova-poprosil-sud-otpustit-obshhestvennika-pod-domashnij-arest-video-strong/>

¹⁰⁵ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/32424645.html>

¹⁰⁶ https://hronika.kz/kaitevk-endy/v-zko-politzaklyuchennyi-aslan-utepov-suditsya-s-administraczej-tyurmy-iz-za-nezakonnyh-vzyskanij/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwMTlpRjbGNrAxOWSmV4dG4DYVWtAjExAAEeW2zFj2VRmJ_vZh3n4EJUK6ETFaTtVS7sSCA8wH4qpi3QTI0u6UI727Hp3lc_aem_RK6XDORmFknoWfgN589cQw

¹⁰⁷ <https://tirik.info/ahmetkaliyeva-malika-aktivista-iz-kokshetau-osudili-za-narkotiki/>

37 **Daniyar ADILBEKOV** – sentenced to 4.5 years in prison under Article 419 of the Criminal Code (“knowingly false denunciation”) and Article 274 of the Criminal Code (“dissemination of knowingly false information”). Adilbekov is a journalist from Astana who ran his own news channel on Telegram, where, among other things, he raised issues of corruption. The charges were brought in connection with his publications on his Telegram channel.¹⁰⁸ Convicted on 18 October 2024.



38 **Zhaslan KOPEYEV** – sentenced to 3.5 years' imprisonment on charges of “inciting ethnic hatred” (Article 174 of the Criminal Code). Kopeyev is a civil activist and blogger from Petropavlovsk. He was detained in November 2024 for posts on social media criticising Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. He has been held in custody since November 2024.¹⁰⁹ He was convicted on 1 July 2025.



UNDER ARREST IN A PRE-TRIAL DETENTION FACILITY

1 **Bakytzhan ZHANSEITOV** – a criminal case has been opened on charges of “organising mass riots” (Part 1, Article 272 of the Criminal Code) for participating in a gathering of supporters of the opposition movement DCK. Zhansaitov was detained on 30 June 2025. He was then arrested and placed in a pre-trial detention facility for the duration of the pre-trial investigation. Bakytzhan Zhansaitov is the father of Rakhimzhan Zhansaitov, who was killed in 2019 in Karaganda. Rakhimzhan's murder sparked mass protests in the city.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/33163754.html>

¹⁰⁹ <https://qaz-media.kz/gromkoe-delo-blogera-o-razzhiganii-mezhnacionalnoj-rozni-rassmatrivayut-v-petropavlovsk/>

¹¹⁰ <https://kz.kursiv.media/2020-11-26/sbezhavshemu-uchastniku-draki-u-drevnego-rima-vynesli-prigovor/>