



OPEN DIALOG FOUNDATION

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Emergency announcement: Further oppression in *Zhanaozen*: *arrests made*

Reference:

- *Ajzhangul Ersaynovna Amirova (Ajzhangul Amirova), was born 18.08.1972 in Zhanaozen to a large family, incomplete higher education, the head of the Almaty city branch of the "Alga!" People's party, a member of the Central Council of the People's Movement "Halyk Maidan" (National Front). Ajzhangul Amirova is the granddaughter of academician Shalabaev Amirovich Salamat, co-founder of the city of Zhanaozen and organiser of oil production development in the 1960s in the Mangistau region. The current elite of the zhanaozen oil sector are his disciples; ergo Ajzhangul is respected and well known in Zhanaozen. Ajzhangul Amirova and was one of the links between the strikers and the outside world. Through her, people who wanted to express their views to the media were always able to establish contact with journalists and international NGOs.*

06/01/2012, 9:30 am local time at the airport in Aktau the head of the "Popular Front" of the Mangistau region, Ajzhangul Amirova, was arrested.

Ajzhangul was to arrive and collect her luggage at the airport in Aktau. However, she did not appear at the arrivals hall. An hour later, after extensive attempts to call her relatives, A. Amirova briefly reported that law enforcement agencies had arrested and charged her with article 164 of the Penal Code, "incitement to social discord." It is under the very same article that Natalia Sokolova, a lawyer of striking oil workers in the Mangistau region, was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment.

At the present time, the office of the Popular Front in Aktau is being searched. According to the latest data, the activist is present. Relatives conveyed that there was a break-in at apartments at Zhanaozen, 5th District, Building 62, Apartment 15 and 16 and an illegal search was conducted without the presence of the owners of A. Amirova's or her brother Elmurat Amirov's. Elmurat Amirov reported that the apartment door was damaged and his belongings were scattered all over the apartment, but only his private laptop, printer and documents were taken.

According to the statements of A. Amirova's colleagues, the authorities who indicted Ajzhangul for allegedly inciting social discord intend to blame Halyk Maidana ("Popular Front") for the tragic events of December 16, 2011 and attach responsibility to them for their seven-month-long disregard of the problems of the oil workers. Ajzhangul was with the strikers for the entirety of the last seven months and on behalf of the "Popular Front" has provided humanitarian help, legal support and contributed to the dissemination of information on the peaceful protest of the oil workers. Recently, on behalf of the "Popular Front", she sought and obtained legal representation for the detained oil workers and supported their families.

In addition, on **08.10.2011** at around 10.00pm in Zhanaozen, Ajzhangul Amirova and Zhanar Saktaganova were attacked. The incident occurred near Ajzhangul Amirova's home as they were approaching the entrance, at Zhanaozen, microdistrict 5 (Orken), 62: in the dark, a young man with a slim build, aged 18-20 years, Asian, ran towards them from behind. With the words "bitch ..." (the

rest was inaudible but the tone was clearly threatening), he fired a firearm in their direction, thus wounding Zhanar Saktaganova. According to the medical evidence, she sustained 'a gunshot wound to the lumbar region, in close proximity to the left kidney.'

Both activists directly associate this crime with the ongoing strike of oil workers in Mangistau, as well as with their declaration made on 30.09.2011 that under the law of the Kazakh President and Chairman of the Board of "National Wealth Foundation " Samruk-Kazyna"¹ joint-stock company", Timur Kulibayev, who illegally dismissed thousands of people for trying to protect their labor rights, should be prosecuted for incitement to social discord².

A. Amirova's fate largely depends now on the reaction of the international community. Recent history has shown that the Kazakh authorities will not stop and will try to exclude A. Amirova from any further social activity: at any cost. We therefore call for an immediate response and conduct of enquiries in order to determine the reasons behind the detention of A. Amirova and for her release.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ "National Welfare Foundation Samruk-Kazyna" JSC, - Holding for Management of State Assets of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which is under government control. "Ozenmunaygaz" and "Karazhanbasmunai" are subsidiaries of the "KazMunayGas" company, which, in turn, is part of the "Samruk-Kazyna Foundation

² 29.09.2011 at a meeting of the "Expert" discussion club in Astana, the President of the National Welfare Foundation Samruk-Kazyna" JSC, Timur Kulibayev stated that the instigators of the oil workers' strike which began in May 2011 in western Kazakhstan are Kazakhs who moved there from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan: "Speaking of leaders, those who come from Almaty have no leaders at all. They have their own informal leaders, who together came from Karakalpakstan," - said Kulibayev. "The arrival of people from there should have been restricted long ago. Because of its social infrastructure, the city is not ready to receive so many people"- the Tengrinys Agency relayed T. Kulibayev's statement.