



## PEOPLE'S DEPUTY OF UKRAINE

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**Manuel Valls**  
**Prime Minister of France**

*Dear Sir!*

The French government will have to decide upon whether to extradite Mukhtar Ablyazov, the leader of Kazakh opposition, to Russia or Ukraine, or not.

I am standing up for Ablyazov, asking that the politically motivated criminal case against him be closed and the Ukrainian extradition request against him be withdrawn.

Gross violations that took place during the pre-trial investigation, as well as Kazakhstan's influence on the Ukrainian investigation, discredit the possibility of administering justice in Ablyazov's case in Ukraine. Human rights organisations and European MPs have repeatedly stated that, according to the evidence published in the media, Ukrainian investigators were acting on the orders of Kazakhstan. Criminal proceedings have been started today against the investigator who was in charge of Ablyazov's case; he is being charged with abuse of power. The General Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine confirmed that in the year of 2014, there were several non-public meetings with Kazakh delegations concerning Ablyazov's case.

After Ukraine's Revolution of Honour, the problems of reforming the law-enforcement system and the judiciary became even more aggravated. In some branches, reforms are being sabotaged. The bodies with the lowest rates of lustration and the most serious obstacles to the fight against corruption are the police, public prosecution offices and courts. The Council of Europe has been harshly critical of the work of the Ukrainian judiciary. More and more judges have been charged with failure of justice.

The humanitarian crisis caused by Russia's actions in the territories of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions, worsened the already poor conditions in detention facilities. In December 2014, the UN Committee Against Torture stated that the health conditions in the Ukrainian detention facilities had become worse, especially as far as the spread of tuberculosis was concerned. At the same time, human rights organisations remarked that there are no guarantees of receiving medical assistance from health care workers from outside the penal colony, and that the mortality and suicide rates in penal colonies are high. The Association of Ukrainian Human Rights Monitors on Law Enforcement regularly points out the fact that the conditions of the premises and personal hygiene facilities, as well as the light conditions in the detention centres, do not meet the standards.

It is also alarming that, despite the fact that being in Russia would put Ablyazov's life in grave danger, this country was given priority in the extradition ruling.

One cannot believe the Russian General Prosecutor's Office when it promises to ensure justice for Ablyazov, to respect his civil rights and, most importantly, to safeguard him during the investigation and (in case he is convicted) in the detention facility.

One cannot believe this, since we all know that one of the leaders of Russian opposition, Boris Nemtsov, was murdered several metres from the Kremlin, another leader was convicted on a fabricated charge of theft of public funds. The persecution of dissidents and the restriction of civil rights and political freedoms of foreigners as well as Russian citizens have become standard practices in Russia, an example of which is Nadiya Savchenko's case. The annexation of Crimea and provision of military support to combatants in the Donbass region are demonstrations of Russia's absolute disregard for international law and its own obligations.

Ablyazov became the head of the Kazakh opposition in 2001, long before the situation with Mikhail Khodorkovsky had arisen in Russia. When Putin put Khodorkovsky in prison, for a long time, the West considered him to be an oligarch who had become a target of the Russian dictator for economic reasons. It was only much later that the West realised that Khodorkovsky had been convicted for political reasons, for having fought against the authoritarian regime.

Ablyazov, who openly confronted the Kazakh dictator Nursultan Nazarbayev, was convicted on a fabricated criminal charge in 2002 and sentenced to six years in prison; all the leading human rights organisations of the world recognised him as a political prisoner, and he was released a year later thanks to an extensive international campaign of support.

In 2009, Nazarbayev took BTA Bank from Ablyazov and started persecuting him, charging him with theft. This was a repetition of what had happened to Mikhail Khodorkovsky in Russia. Nazarbayev personally asked Putin to help him, whereupon the Russian authorities took part in the persecution of Ablyazov.

This is why I am asking you not to help two Eurasian dictators do away with their political opponent; I implore you not to hand over Mukhtar Ablyazov to them, not to subject him to torture and death.

**Yours faithfully,  
People's Deputy of Ukraine**

**Vitaliy Kupriy**