



Warsaw, 22 August 2018

POLITICAL PRISONER MURATBEK TUNGISHBAYEV GOES BLIND IN ONE EYE. HE IS IN NEED OF URGENT MEDICAL HELP

Due to the failure to provide necessary and timely medical assistance, Kazakhstani political prisoner Muratbek Tungishbayev has lost vision in one eye. He needs urgent hospitalisation. Tungishbayev's relatives and human rights activists have repeatedly warned the public about the threat to his eyesight, but the Kazakhstani authorities ignored the appeals. Now, the authorities of Kazakhstan bear full responsibility for the state of the prisoner's health.

On 22 August 2018, Muratbek Tungishbayev's wife, Mira Kaliyeva, reported that he had gone blind in his left eye. According to Kaliyeva, Tungishbayev was taken from the detention facility to an Almaty ophthalmological clinic. **Medical doctors at the clinic claim that Tungishbayev needs urgent surgery, as well as inpatient treatment. There is also a risk of loss of vision in the right eye.**¹ After the medical examination, Muratbek Tungishbayev was transferred back to the pre-trial detention centre.

Previously, Muratbek Tungishbayev's relatives and human rights activists repeatedly stated that he may lose his vision in one eye, as he hasn't been provided with essential medical assistance while in custody. In particular, on 10 August 2018, Mira Kaliyeva reported that Muratbek Tungishbayev's eyesight had deteriorated in one eye and there was a risk that he might go blind. Due to the spasm of blood vessels, he suffered constant pain in the eye, as well as a headache. According to Kaliyeva, the Eye Diseases Institute reported that Tungishbayev needs inpatient treatment under the supervision of medical doctors. Tungishbayev's relatives appealed to Investigator Almat Kantarbayev in order to obtain his permission to transfer Tungishbayev to the clinic. However, they are still yet to receive a response.²

Murtabek Tungishbayev is a Kazakhstani civil society activist and blogger. The authorities of Kazakhstan have accused Tungishbayev of "*providing information services to a criminal group*" of DCK (Article 266 of the Criminal Code) and "*participating in the activities of an organisation after its recognition as extremist*" (Article 405 of the Criminal Code). On 10 May 2018, he was detained in Kyrgyzstan at the request of Kazakhstan.

On 10 May, 2018, a few hours before the detention, Tungishbayev received an operation on his left eye. The doctors diagnosed him with a central vein thrombosis of the retina due to excessive blood pressure. Tungishbayev needed special post-operative care and treatment, which was not carried out, as a result of his detention.

On 27 June 2018, it became known that Tungishbayev had been transferred to law enforcement bodies in Kazakhstan.³ However, in Kazakhstan, he was not provided with the necessary medical assistance.

¹ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=159016511642043&id=100026010850080

² https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=154780518732309&id=100026010850080

³ <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/29323380.html>

The authorities of Kazakhstan bear full responsibility for the state of health of Muratbek Tungishbayev, as well as the possible serious consequences in connection with the failure to provide him with the necessary medical care. According to the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, "sick prisoners who need specialist services should be transferred to special institutions or to civilian hospitals" (Article 22, paragraph 2).

The Open Dialog Foundation hereby calls on the administration of detention centre No. 18 of Almaty where Muratbek Tungishbayev is being held in custody, as well as the competent authorities of Kazakhstan, to make every effort to provide him with qualified medical assistance. Muratbek Tungishbayev should be subjected to inpatient treatment in an ophthalmic clinic and undergo a full course of treatment.

We hereby call on Members of the European Parliament and representatives of other EU bodies, the UN and PACE to urgently appeal to the authorities of Kazakhstan with the demand that Muratbek Tungishbayev be provided with the necessary medical assistance.

All those willing to support our demands are requested to address the following persons and addresses:

- Head of the Institution LA-155/18 Ruslan Dzhunusov – 050045, Almaty, ul. Krasnogorskaya 73, e-mail: la_155_18@mail.ru;
- Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Kazakhstan Askar Shakirov – 010000, Astana, Left Bank, House of Ministries, e-mail: ombudsman-kz@mail.ru, npm_ombudsman@mail.ru;
- Minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan Kalmukhanbet Kasymov – 010000, Astana city, Prospekt Teuelsizdik 1, e-mail: Kense@mvd.kz;
- General Prosecutor of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kairat Kozhamzharov – 010000, Astana, Prospekt Mangilik El 14, e-mail: Gp-rk@prokuror.kz, procuror@nursat.kz.

For more detailed information, please address:

Lyudmyla Kozlovska – lyudmylakozlovska@odfoundation.eu