

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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House arrest

27 October 1992

TURKMENISTAN: Akhmukhamed VEL SAPAR
Khudayberdi KHALI
Nurberdi NURMAMEDOV
Yarmammed KLYCH

(in cyrillic

_____)

Akhmukhamed VEL SAPAR, Khudayberdi KHALI, Nurberdi NURMAMEDOV and Yarmammed KLYCH were placed under house arrest at their homes in Ashgabat (formerly Ashkhabad), the capital of Turkmenistan, during the weekend of 24-25 October 1992. The homes of Akhmukhamed Velsapar and Khudayberdi Khali were ransacked by police, who threatened the young children of one of the men. All four men are senior members of the opposition Agzybirlik political movement. They were placed under house arrest within hours of making contact with representatives of Amnesty International who were visiting Ashgabat and who were later expelled from the country.

Sources have suggested that the four men were placed under house arrest because of their contacts with Amnesty International representatives and because the authorities wished to prevent any possible disruption by the opposition to official celebrations on 26-27 October 1992 of the first anniversary of the declaration of Turkmenistan's independence from the USSR.

Amnesty International believes that the arrest of Akhmukhamed VEL SAPAR, Khudayberdi KHALI, Nurberdi NURMAMEDOV and Yarmammed KLYCH is in direct violation of their fundamental human right to freedom of association. Amnesty International is calling on the Turkmen authorities to release these four men immediately and unconditionally from house arrest.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkmenistan is led by President Saparmurad Niyazov. There are two registered political parties, the Democratic Party (the renamed Communist Party, of which Saparmurad Niyazov is chairman) and the Peasants' Party for Justice, which also supports the President. A rival Democratic Party and the Agzybirlik movement are not officially registered. In presidential elections in June 1992 Saparmurad Niyazov ran unopposed and was returned to office with 95.5 per cent of the vote. In September 1992 he told a visiting official US delegation to Turkmenistan that there was "no opposition to the current government".

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Russian or in your own language:

- urging the immediate and unconditional release of Akhmukhamed VELSAPAR, Khudayberdi KHALI, Nurberdi NURMAMEDOV and Yarmammed KLYCH from house arrest.

APPEALS TO:

1. President of Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan

g. Ashgabat

Prezidentu Turkmenistana

NIYAZOVU S.A.

Telegrams: Turkmenistan, g. Ashgabat, Prezidentu Niyazovu S.A.

Salutation: Dear President Niyazov

2. The Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan

g. Ashgabat

Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del Turkmenistana

Ministru CHARYYAROVU S.

Telegrams: Turkmenistan, g. Ashgabat, Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del, Ministru

Charyyarovu S.

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan:

Turkmenistan

g. Ashgabat

Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Turkmenistana

Ministru

Faxes: +7 3632 25 14 63

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkmenistan accredited to your country (these are usually to be found at the Embassy of the Russian Federation, the former Soviet Embassy).

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 November 1992.