

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 61/06/97

EXTRA 83/97

Fear of imminent execution/
Possible prisoner of conscience

10 June 1997

TURKMENISTAN Ashirgeldy SADYYEV, born 1962

(_____ in cyrillic)

Ashirgeldy Sadyev, a taxi driver from Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, was sentenced to death on 21 May 1997 by the Ashgabat City Court. He was convicted of drug trafficking. Amnesty International has gathered evidence from unofficial sources that in Turkmenistan a death sentence can be carried out in some cases very quickly after the court decision, with only the most perfunctory appeal and clemency process. Therefore, Amnesty International fears that Ashirgeldy Sadyev is at risk of imminent execution.

Amnesty International's concerns in this case are heightened by allegations that the charge against Ashirgeldy Sadyev was fabricated, and that the quantity of opium found in his possession prior to his arrest on 18 March 1997 was planted there. Ashirgeldy Sadyev is related to a prominent dissident now in exile from Turkmenistan, and security services in Turkmenistan are believed to have monitored telephone calls between this man and Ashirgeldy Sadyev and other relatives in which they discussed the situation in Turkmenistan. It has been alleged that the charge against Ashirgeldy Sadyev has been brought both to punish him and to attack his exiled relative.

If it is established that the charge against Ashirgeldy Sadyev has indeed been fabricated to punish him because of a family relationship and continuing contact with a government opponent, Amnesty International will regard Ashirgeldy Sadyev as a prisoner of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To Amnesty International's knowledge, the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan retains the death penalty for 18 peacetime offences. Information about its application is meagre in the absence of any published official statistics, although a Turkmen government publication *Isker* (Warrior) early in 1997 wrote that, according to official statistics in the second half of 1996, 59 people were executed, most for drug trafficking. In another media report published in Kyrgyzstan it was reported that 123 people had been executed in Turkmenistan during 1996 for the offence of drug trafficking. This figure was attributed to official sources in Turkmenistan. Statistics for executions for other offences were not known.

Amnesty International wrote to the authorities in Turkmenistan to seek further information on these figures, but has not had a reply to date. Execution is by shooting.

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

- calling for the death sentence passed on Ashirgeldy Sadyev to be commuted;
- expressing grave concern about allegations that Ashirgeldy Sadyev is innocent of the criminal charge of drug trafficking, and that the charge against him has been fabricated;
- calling for a full judicial review of the case to be carried out, with a stay of execution put in place pending the outcome of such a review.

APPEALS TO:

President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurad Atayevich Niyazov

Turkmenistan
744000 g. Ashgabat
Apparat Prezidenta
Prezidentu Turkmenistana
NIYAZOVU S.A.,
Faxes: +993 1 25 51 12
Telegrams: Prezident Niyazov, 744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
Salutation: Dear President Niyazov

Procurator General of Turkmenistan, name unknown
Turkmenistan
g. Ashgabat
ul. Seidi, 4
Prokuratura Turkmenistana
Gen. Prokuroru
Faxes: +993 1 35 44 82
Telegrams: Gen. Prokuroru, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Chairman of the Supreme Court of Turkmenistan, Ysa Rakhmanov
Turkmenistan
744000 Ashgabat
prospekt Saparmurad Turkmenbashi, 18
Verkhovny Sud Turkmenistana
Predsedatelyu RAKHMANOVU Y.
Telegrams: Predsedatelyu Rakhmanovu, Verkhovny Sud, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
Salutation: Dear Chairman

COPIES TO:

Chairman of the Turkmen Committee for National Security (KNB), Saparmurad Seidov
Turkmenistan
g. Ashgabat
pr. Magtymguly, 91
KNB
Predsedatelyu Seidovu S.

Director of the Turkmen National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights
Vladimir Kadyrov
Turkmenistan
744000 g. Ashgabat
ul. Karla Liebnechta, 47
Turkmensky natsionalny institut demokratii i prav cheloveka
Direktoru KADYROVU V.
Fax. +993 1 35 06 76

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Boris Shikhmyradov
Turkmenistan
744000 g. Ashgabat
pr. Magtymguly, 83
Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Turkmenistana
Ministru SHIKHMYRADOVU B.
Tel: (993 1) 25 49 19; 35 16 66
Fax: (993 1) 51 14 30
Telex: 116338 ULKE SU

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkmenistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 July 1997.