

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 61/006/2004

01 July 2004

Further Information on UA 208/04 (EUR 61/004/2004, 24 June 2004) Fear for safety/incommunicado detention/medical concern

TURKMENISTAN

Khalmurad GYLYCHDURDYEV (m), aged 64

New name: Zhenet GYLYCHDURDYEVA (f), his daughter

Khalmurad Gylychdurdyev was returned to his family by officers of the Ministry of National Security (MNS) on the night of 26 June. He said that Amnesty International's involvement had helped secure his release.

During interrogation he was pressured to stop giving interviews to US station Radio Liberty. He told Amnesty International on 1 July: "They wanted me to sign a letter to the President they had prepared in my name. I was supposed to apologise for passing on lies and secret information about the economy and other issues to Radio Liberty. How would I know any secret information? I have no access to such information. I am a pensioner, that's all." He said he did not sign the letter, although one of his interrogators threatened that "we can take away your home and then we'll send you and your family into the desert. See how you get on there." He added, "I think they released me because you got involved in the case and, maybe, because they just couldn't find anything criminal in what I have done." He was apparently interrogated three or four times every day by the three MNS officers, who had picked him up from the hospital on 23 June. Reportedly, no charges have been brought against him.

Khalmurad Gylychdurdyev said that while no physical pressure was exerted on him, he did not receive any medical treatment, although he had been recovering from an eye operation when he was detained on 23 June. As a result he had to undergo a second eye operation after his release.

On 25 June Khalmurad Gylychdurdyev's daughter Zhenet Gylychdurdyeva was dismissed from her work as a senior inspector at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where she had worked since 1989. A Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs reportedly told her: "If you open your mouth, you'll sit next to your father in prison." She was told that she had been dismissed because she had failed to tell the Ministry that her father had been arrested. She said that she would have told them about his detention, but as he was held incommunicado she did not have any confirmed information about his arrest and his whereabouts. The Deputy Minister reportedly also indicated that she was actually dismissed on the instructions of the MNS.

Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. If possible, please send a final round of appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Turkmen or your own language:

- asking the authorities to guarantee that Khalmurad Gylychdurdyev will not be arbitrarily detained again;
- urging the authorities to ensure that he is not punished for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- expressing concern at reports that Khalmurad Gylychdurdyev's daughter Zhenet Gylychdurdyeva was dismissed from her job as a senior inspector at the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 25 June, solely because of her family relationship with him;
- urging the authorities to investigate the legality of Khalmurad Gylychdurdyev's detention in the Ministry of National Security from 23 to 26 June and to bring to justice anybody found responsible for arbitrarily detaining him.

APPEALS TO: (Please note that it can be difficult getting through to fax numbers in Turkmenistan. If a voice answers, repeat 'fax' until you hear the signal. Fax machines may be switched off outside office hours – five hours ahead of GMT. If you can't fax it, please send your letter by post.)

President Saparmurad NIYAZOV

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Salutation: Dear President

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Salutation: Dear Minister

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 12 August 2004.