

EXTRA 48/98

Fear of imminent execution / Legal concern

24 July 1998

TURKMENISTAN Anton Yuryevich CHERNOV (in Russian, _____), aged
20

Anton Yuryevich CHERNOV is believed to be in imminent danger of execution.

Amnesty International recently learnt that Anton Chernov was sentenced to death by Lebap Regional Court on 24 November 1997 for aggravated murder (articles 101, 230 and 231 of the new Criminal Code), a sentence confirmed by the Supreme Court on 18 February 1998. On 25 March his mother addressed an appeal for clemency to the President of Turkmenistan via the Presidential Clemency Commission but has since had no news of his fate.

Anton Chernov was sentenced to death after being found guilty of inciting a group of younger boys to rob and beat to death an acquaintance, and of having struck the final blow himself. He was 18 years old at the time of the alleged crime with no previous criminal record. Though he was unemployed at the time, reportedly following an illness, he had previously worked at a local school as an organiser for extra-curricular activities. Testimonies of his good character have been provided by the director of the school, and by 33 residents of the apartment block in the town of Chardzhev where he lived with his parents.

At his trial Anton Chernov alleged that during pre-trial detention he had been forced to make a false confession. This was rejected by the court, however, on the grounds that he had made no such complaint previously and could not name the individual who had exerted pressure upon him. It is alleged that following his arrest, Anton Chernov did not see his lawyer for nine days, by which time he had already signed a confession, and that even then the lawyer was only permitted to talk to his client via a small window.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and without reservation, on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Amnesty International is appealing to the President of Turkmenistan to exercise his constitutional authority to commute this death sentence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A new Criminal Code approved by the *Majlis* (parliament) in June 1997 provided for the death penalty for 17 offences. These include murder, genocide and various anti-state and drug-related crimes. Although no official statistics for use of the death penalty in Turkmenistan are available, it is thought to be widely applied.

An amnesty decree issued by the President in June 1997 reportedly benefited 222 prisoners under sentence of death. This was the first official indication that the number of people on death row was as high as that stated by unofficial sources. Such sources informed Amnesty International that, during 1997, several women were also sentenced to death for drug-related offences (see Extra 01/98, EUR 61/01/98, 7 January 1998). According to one source, as many as 50 prisoners may be awaiting execution in Chardzhev prison alone.

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

- urging the President to use his constitutional authority and commute the death sentence passed on Anton Chernov, as well as all other death sentences that come before him;
- urging that a moratorium be imposed on death sentences and executions pending a comprehensive review of the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurad Atayevich Niyazov
744000 g. Ashgabat
Apparat Prezidenta
Prezidentu Turkmenistana NIYAZOVU S.A.
TURKMENISTAN

Telegrams: Prezidentu Niyazovu, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Faxes: + 993 1 or 7 3632 followed by 35 51 12 (it can be difficult to get a connection) or at the Presidential press service + 993 1 or 7 3632 followed by 35 55 71

Salutation: Dear President Niyazov

Procurator General of Turkmenistan, Gurbanbibi Atajanova (Ms)
g. Ashgabat
ul. Seidi, 4
Prokuratura Turkmenistana
Generalnomu prokuroru ATAJANOVY G B.
TURKMENISTAN

Telegrams: Gen. prokuroru, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Faxes: + 993 1 or 7 3632 followed by 35 44 82

Salutation: Dear Procurator General

Chairman of the Clemency Commission of the Turkmenistan Majlis (parliament), (name not known)

g. Ashgabat
Komissiya po voprosam pomilovaniya Majlisa Turkmenistana
Predsedatelyu
TURKMENISTAN

Telegrams: Komissii pomilovaniya, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Salutation: Dear Chairman

COPIES TO:

Chairman of the Supreme Court, Ysa Rakhmonov
744000 g. Ashgabat
prospekt Saparmurad Turkmenbashi, 18
Verkhovny Sud Turkmenistana
Predsedatelyu RAKHMANOVU Y.
TURKMENISTAN

Director of the Turkmen National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights Vladimir Kadyrov

744000 g. Ashgabat
ul. Karla Liebnehta, 47
Turkmensky natsionalny institut demokratii i prav cheloveka
Direktoru KADYROVU V.
TURKMENISTAN

Faxes: + 993 1 or 7 3632 followed by 35 06 76 (it can be difficult to get a connection)

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Boris Shikhmyradov

744000 g. Ashgabat
pr. Magtymguly, 83
Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Turkmenistana
Ministru SHIKHMYRADOVU B.
TURKMENISTAN

Faxes: + 993 1 or 7 3632 followed by 51 14 30 or 25 37 27 (it can be difficult to get a connection)

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkmenistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.