

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 61/02/97

UA 53/97 Fear for safety / Possible prisoner of conscience 19 February 1997

**TURKMENISTAN** Gulgeldy ANNANIYAZOV, aged 36  
( \_\_\_\_\_ in cyrillic)

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, who is in the second year of a 15-year prison sentence imposed after he was involved in an anti-government demonstration on 12 July 1995. Central Asian human rights monitors allege that he is being held at the maximum security prison in Ashgabat, the capital, alongside violent criminals, deliberately to put him at risk of physical assault. There are unsubstantiated allegations that authorities in Turkmenistan have even incited Gulgeldy Annaniyazov's fellow prisoners to harm him.

The authorities in Turkmenistan have never fully disclosed what happened to those detained in connection with the 1995 demonstration (see UA 173/95, EUR 61/04/95, 14 July 1995), but unofficial sources have stated that in late December 1995 or early January 1996, 27 were convicted of various crimes, mostly involving hooliganism or drug abuse but some involving more serious offences. Twenty of these people were released under an amnesty shortly afterwards. Precise information about the seven people who remained in prison has been scarce. Gulgeldy Annaniyazov is reported to have been convicted of plotting to commit murder, assault, incitement to hooliganism, illegal possession of a weapon, drugs offences, and illegal currency dealing. The basis for the charges is not known. Amnesty International has received no reports of violence on the part of the demonstrators.

During the period when there were large numbers of prisoners of conscience in the Soviet Union, Amnesty International learned of numerous instances when prisoners of conscience were subjected to physical attack by criminal prisoners, acting with the connivance or protection of the authorities. The organization fears that in the case of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov a similar practice has persisted in Turkmenistan. Gulgeldy Annaniyazov has reportedly made repeated protests against his conviction, and unofficial sources have alleged that the authorities have incited his fellow prisoners to violence against him in order to punish him for this and silence him.

Amnesty International is seeking clarification from the authorities about the exact basis for the criminal charges against Gulgeldy Annaniyazov. The organization is currently making appeals in other cases in Turkmenistan where people have been convicted on apparently false or fabricated charges involving preparation of violent acts. It has also received frequent allegations that fabricated charges involving narcotics have been used to punish people for exercising their right to free expression. Given the circumstances of the arrest of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, Amnesty International is concerned that the charges against him may also be without legitimate foundation, and that he may be a prisoner of conscience.

Amnesty International is also seeking full disclosure from the authorities about the fate of people arrested after the 12 July 1995 demonstration.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since becoming independent in 1991, Turkmenistan has developed a political climate which stifles fundamental human rights. The government makes no secret of its disrespect for international human rights norms, arguing that certain

individual rights and freedoms are expendable because they threaten the implementation of policies intended to resolve all of the country's social and economic problems within the first decade of independence. Amnesty International has monitored: the sentencing of government opponents to long prison terms following conviction of apparently fabricated criminal offences; the arrest and ill-treatment of people involved in organized or spontaneous anti-government protests; apparently unwarranted incarceration of opposition activists in psychiatric hospitals; ill-treatment by police and in the prisons; and extensive use of the death penalty.

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

- expressing concern for the physical safety and well-being of Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, and urging the authorities to ensure that he is not subjected to any ill-treatment;
- requesting clarification of the exact basis for the criminal charges against Gulgeldy Annaniyazov, noting that Amnesty International has monitored cases in Turkmenistan where fabricated criminal charges have apparently been brought against people to punish non-violent political opposition to the government, and who may be prisoners of conscience;

**if possible also:**

- request that the authorities make a full disclosure of the fate of all persons arrested following the 12 July 1995 demonstration in Ashgabat, including the charges brought against each individual, the sentences passed on them, whether they benefitted from an amnesty, and the current whereabouts of all those who have not been amnestied.

**APPEALS TO:**

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

**Faxes + 7 3632 or + 993 1 followed by 25 51 12 (it can be difficult to get a connection)**

**Telegrams: Turkmenistan, 744000 Ashgabat, Prezidentu Niyazovu**

**Salutation: Dear President Niyazov**

2. Procurator General of Turkmenistan, Bayrammurad Ashirliyev  
Turkmenistan

g. Ashgabat  
ul. Seidi, 4  
Prokuratura Turkmenistana  
Generalnomu prokuroru  
ASHIRLIYEVU B.

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

**Telegrams: Turkmenistan, Ashgabat, Prokuratura, Gen. prokuroru Ashirliyevu**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator General**

3. Chairman of the Supreme Court, Ysa Rakhmonov

Turkmenistan  
744000 Ashgabat  
prospekt Saparmurad Turkmenbashi, 18  
Verkhovny Sud Turkmenistana

Predsedatelyu RAKHMANOVU Y.

**Telegrams: Turkmenistan, 744000 Ashgabat, Verkhovny sud, Presedatelyu Rakhmonov Y.**

**Salutation: Dear Chairman**

**COPIES TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Boris Shikhmyradov

Turkmenistan

744000 g. Ashgabat

pr. Magtymguly, 83

MID Turkmenistana

Ministru SHIKHMYRADOVU B.

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

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 5 April 1997.