



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TURKMENISTAN: APPEAL CASES

30 June 2005; AI Index: EUR 61/006/2005; public

Mukhametkuli Aymuradov and Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev: calling for prompt release (Further information on EUR 61/008/2004, 26 November 2004 and EUR 61/007/2004, 20 August 2004)

The longstanding possible prisoner of conscience Mukhametkuli Aymuradov is still serving in the maximum-security prison in Turkmenbashi (formerly Krasnovodsk) and prisoner of conscience Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev is still being confined in a psychiatric hospital.

Possible prisoner of conscience Mukhametkuli Aymuradov

Mukhametkuli Aymuradov, aged 59, was convicted in 1995 of anti-state crimes, including "attempted terrorism", and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment after a reportedly unfair trial. There were reports that the case against Mukhametkuli Aymuradov and his co-defendant Khoshali Garaev was fabricated solely to punish them for their association with exiled opponents of the government. In December 1998 both men were sentenced to an additional term of 18 years' imprisonment in connection with an alleged prison escape attempt. Khoshali Garaev died in September 1999 in Turkmenbashi maximum-security prison under suspicious circumstances.

His wife is now permitted to visit him for some 30 minutes four times a year. When she last saw him on 16 April, he was reportedly suffering from heart and kidney disease, as well as disability, details of which are not known to Amnesty International. The organization is seriously concerned about Mukhametkuli Aymuradov's health. He has not been receiving appropriate medical attention for health problems which have included a gastric ulcer, cholecystitis, a heart attack and recurring inflammation of the kidneys and the bladder.

Amnesty International is calling for the release of possible prisoner of conscience Mukhametkuli Aymuradov because of his deteriorating health and on the grounds that repeated calls for a fair retrial have gone unheeded, and that there does not appear to be a prospect of Mukhametkuli Aymuradov being given a fair trial.

Prisoner of conscience Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev

On 3 January 2004 Gurbandurdy Durdykuliyeu sent a letter to President Saparmurad Niyazov and the governor of the Balkan region, urging them to authorize a two-day demonstration. He wrote: "We want to carry out a peaceful demonstration... to express our disagreement with the policies of the President ...".

On 13 February 2004 Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev was taken from his house in the village of Suvchy in the Balkan region of western Turkmenistan to a psychiatric hospital in the town of Balkanabad (formerly Nebitdag), where he was forcibly confined. Shortly after his hospitalization he was transferred across the country to a psychiatric hospital located in Garashsyzyk district in the eastern Lebap region.

The authorities had attempted to prevent information about Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev from reaching international media and human rights organizations. The authorities disconnected his family's telephone line several times in the past. Reportedly, his wife was told by a doctor who has referred to instructions received from the authorities, that if she passed on information about her husband's case to media outlets abroad she would not be

allowed to visit him again. During the period of his confinement, his wife regularly traveled to see Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev but was frequently denied access to see him. The last reported time of meeting with him was in February 2005 and lasted for 10 minutes. In March and in June, she was again denied access to see him. Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev's wife stayed near the psychiatric hospital between 18 and 25 June to pass on clothes, medication and daily lunches for him; she was told that Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev's legs were aching on the top of his pre-existing heart condition and gastritis.

Amnesty International adopted Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev as a prisoner of conscience because it believes that he was forcibly confined to a psychiatric hospital in February 2004 solely to punish him for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and therefore the organization calls for his prompt and unconditional release.

Political background:

The human rights situation in Turkmenistan has been appalling for years. It deteriorated even further following an alleged assassination attempt on President Niyazov on 25 November 2002, which triggered a new wave of repression across Turkmenistan.

The regime is extremely intolerant of dissent, and it has severely limited civil and political liberties. No independent political parties or human rights groups can operate openly in the country, and opponents of the government and civil society activists have been forced into exile or faced imprisonment and persecution.

In violation of their international obligations, the authorities of Turkmenistan have subjected political opponents to several waves of repression since the country became independent in 1991. Many political opponents have been forced into exile; many have faced house arrest, arbitrary detention, imprisonment following unfair trials, and torture and ill-treatment by police and officers of the Ministry of National Security. Thousands of dissidents and their relatives are included in a "black list" of people banned from leaving the country.

The authorities have failed to implement recommendations aimed at improving Turkmenistan's human rights record made by intergovernmental bodies, including the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the UN General Assembly.

Recommended actions:

Please send courteous letters in English, Russian, Turkmen or your own language (if you write in Russian it would be good to apologize for not writing in Turkmen, explaining that you do not know the language). If a voice answers on a fax number during office hours, repeat 'fax' until connected; fax machines are often switched off outside office hours - five hours ahead of GMT. If the fax does not work, please send your letter by post.

For Mukhametkuli Aymuradov:

- Expressing your concern that Mukhametkuli Aymuradov is being kept in particularly harsh conditions in the maximum-security prison in Turkmenbashi despite his extremely poor state of health;
- urging the authorities to ensure that he receives appropriate medical treatment and urging them to release him on humanitarian grounds;
- expressing your concern at reports that criminal charges against Mukhametkuli Aymuradov have been used solely as a pretext to punish him for his association with exiled opponents of the government of Turkmenistan. Such practice would be in violation of Articles 19 ('freedom of expression') and 22 ('freedom of association') of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Turkmenistan is a party;

- expressing your concern at allegations that Mukhametkuli Aymuradov was imprisoned following an unfair trial and that repeated calls by human rights organizations for a fair retrial have gone unheeded;
- Urging his release as calls for retrial for retrial have gone unheeded.

On Gurbandurdy Durdykulyev:

- expressing concern that Gurbandurdy Durdykulyev has been forcibly confined in a psychiatric hospital to punish him for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- stating that Amnesty International regards Gurbandurdy Durdykulyev as a prisoner of conscience, and urges his immediate and unconditional release;
- expressing your concern that Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev is in a poor state of health, and urging the authorities to ensure that he receives appropriate medical treatment.

Please address your appeals to:

President Saparmurad Niyazov:

744000 g. Ashgabat, Apparat Prezidenta , **Prezidentu Turkmenistana, NIYAZOVU S.A. ,**
 TURKMENISTAN, Faxes: + 993 12 35 51 12
 Salutation: ‘Dear President’

Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov:

744000 g. Ashgabat, pr. Magtymguly, 83, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Meredovu Rashidu,
 TURKMENISTAN, Fax: +993 12 35 42 41, +993 12 39 28 50, E-mail: mfatm@online.tm
 Salutation: ‘Dear Minister’

You may send copies to diplomatic representatives of Turkmenistan accredited to your country.

Optional:

You may also write (in Russian or Turkmen) to the **Director of the Prison** where Mukhametkuli Aymuradov is now held:

745000 Turkmenbashi
 Uchrezhdeniye BL-T5
 Director of the Prison
 TURKMENISTAN

745000 г. Туркменбаши
 Учреждение БЛ-Т5
 Начальнику тюрьмы
 ТУРКМЕНИСТАН

You can also send a letter to **Mukhametkuli Aymuradov** to give him moral support. Important: You may mention Amnesty International in your letters to him, but please be aware that correspondence from abroad will be subject to very strict control by the authorities, so do not raise any political issues. Write to:

745000 g. Turkmenbashi
 Uchrezhdeniye 25/2
 Zaklyuchennomu Aymuradovu,
 Mukhametkuli
 TURKMENISTAN

745000 г. Туркменбаши
 Учреждение 25/2
 Заключенному Аймурадову,
 Мухаметкули
 ТУРКМЕНИСТАН

You may also write (in Russian or Turkmen) to the **Director of the psychiatric hospital** where Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev is being confined:

Director of the psychiatric hospital
 Poselok Boynyuzyn
 Garashsyzlyk district

Директору психиатрической больницы
 Поселок Бойныузын
 район Гарашсызлык

Lebap region
TURKMENISTAN

Лебапский велят
ТУРКМЕНИСТАН

You can also send a letter to Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev to give him moral support. Important: You may mention Amnesty International in your letters to them, but please be aware that correspondence from abroad will be subject to very strict control by the authorities, so do not raise any political issues. Write to:

Gurbandurdy Durdykuliev
Psychiatric hospital
Poselok Boynyuzyn
Garashsyzlyk district
Lebap region
TURKMENISTAN

Гурбандурды Дурдыкулиев
Психиатрическая больница
Поселок Бойныузын
район Гарашсызлык
Лебапский велят
ТУРКМЕНИСТАН