

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 05/07 (EUR 61/001/2007, 5 January 2007) - Fear for safety/possible prisoner of conscience

TURKMENISTAN

Andrei Zatoka (m), aged 50, environmental activist

On 31 January, Dashoguz city court sentenced the environmental activist Andrei Zatoka to a suspended sentence of three years' imprisonment and ordered his immediate release. He and his supporters are grateful for the appeals sent by the UA network on his behalf.

Andrey Zatoka's wife Yevgenia Zatoka wrote: "We won! Andrei is free!"

Farid Tukhbatullin, the director of the human rights group Turkmenistan Initiative for Human Rights, who worked with Andrei Zatoka for many years in the Dashoguz Ecological Club, told Amnesty International: "We are grateful to all, who took part in the campaign for Andrei's defence, all who were sympathetic and helped."

Andrei Zatoka had been detained on 17 December 2006 by local police at the airport in his home city of Dashoguz, close to the border with Uzbekistan. There were allegations that he was targeted to punish him for his peaceful work as an environmental activist. On 27 January Amnesty International learnt that he faced four charges, including unlawful acquisition or possession of weapons or explosives, and unlawful circulation of potent or poisonous substances. The four charges carried a maximum penalty of 19 years' imprisonment.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is required.
