



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TURKMENISTAN: APPEAL CASES

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Prisoner of conscience Kakabay Tedzhenov continues to be forcibly confined in psychiatric hospital

Kakabay Tedzhenov is believed to have been forcibly confined in incommunicado detention in a psychiatric hospital since January 2006. The 69-year old dissident was targeted solely to punish him for exercising his right to freedom of expression, in particular, for protesting government policies. Amnesty International regards him as a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his prompt and unconditional release.

On 4 January 2006 **Kakabay Tedzhenov** was reportedly taken to a psychiatric hospital in the city of Turkmenabad (formerly Chardzhou) in the eastern Lebap region. Later he was transferred to the psychiatric hospital in Garashsyzlyk district (formerly Boyunuzyn) in the same region.

Following public appeals by non-governmental organizations on behalf of Kakabay Tedzhenov, the delegation of Turkmenistan to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) claimed in a statement sent to all OSCE participating states on 24 February that Kakabay Tedzhenov *“has never been detained and he is not confined in any medical institution”*.

However, according to a trusted source, Kakabay Tedzhenov was confined in a state-run psychiatric hospital in Garashsyzlyk district from at least the beginning of March 2006. He was initially placed in a cell together with people convicted of serious crimes, including murder, for a week. At the end of February or the beginning of March he was transferred to a special section of the hospital for patients without relatives to care for them or whose relatives have disowned them. Throughout Kakabay Tedzhenov's incommunicado confinement, his daughter Olga Tedzhenova, who lives in Russia, tried to establish his whereabouts, including by asking the authorities in Dzheykhun district. She told Amnesty International on 8 June: *“I called the police in my father's town many times but nobody gave me any definite information about his situation. I cannot ask relatives or friends to inquire about him because I don't want to put them at risk.”* AI believes that Kakabay Tedzhenov continues to be confined in the hospital as he has been unable to return to his home since then.

In recent years Kakabay Tedzhenov had repeatedly sent complaints to the authorities of Turkmenistan including the administration of his home town and of Lebap region regarding concerns about communal services in his district. On 7 June 2005 he sent telegrams to the President and the Procurator General of Turkmenistan protesting government policies. In September 2005 he sent to contacts abroad his *Statement about human rights violations in Turkmenistan* which includes calls on the authorities of Turkmenistan to allow freedom of expression including free media and calls on the international community to impose sanctions against Turkmenistan. In the statement he criticizes President Saparmurat Niyazov for his neglect of issues of vital interest to the citizens of Turkmenistan such as *“mass unemployment and the low standard of living [noting that] heads of city and regional administrations build monuments in honour of the President in huge quantities while in Dzheykhun district people have lived in unheated apartments for twenty years.”*

Background information

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the widespread abuse of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights in Turkmenistan.

The authorities have engaged in a clampdown on dissent for many years. Dissidents have in scores of cases been forced into exile, put under house arrest, arbitrarily detained, imprisoned following unfair trials, subjected to torture or other ill-treatment or forcibly confined to a psychiatric hospital. Often relatives of dissidents have been targeted as well, including by subjecting them to human rights violations such as harassment, arbitrary detention, torture or other ill-treatment, and imprisonment after unfair trials.

Recommended actions:

Please send courteous letters in English, Russian, Turkmen or your own language (if you can not write in Turkmen, it would be good to apologize for writing your letter in a foreign language, explaining that you do not know the Turkmen 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.

- Express concern that Kakabay Tedzhenov has been forcibly confined in a psychiatric hospital to punish him for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Such practice violates Articles 19 ('freedom of expression') of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Turkmenistan is a party;
- Express concern that the forcible removal of Kakabay Tedzhenov from his home and his confinement in the psychiatric hospital by the Turkmenistani authorities constitute a violation of Article 9 ('no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention') and Article 12 ('liberty of movement and freedom to choose residence') of ICCPR.
- State that Amnesty International regards him as a prisoner of conscience and urges his immediate and unconditional release.

Please address your appeals to:

President Saparmurad Niyazov; Presidential Palace; 744000 Ashgabat; Turkmenistan

Fax: +993 12 35 51 12

Salutation: Dear President Niyazov

Rashit Meredov; Minister of Foreign Affairs; Magtymguly avenue, 83; 744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Fax: +993 12 35 42 41; **e-mail:** mfatm@online.tm

Salutation: Dear Minister

You can also send a card or a letter to Kakabay Tedzhenov to give him moral support. Note that his 70th birthday will be on 10 September. **Important:** You may mention that you are a supporter of Amnesty International, 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:

Kakabay Tedzhenov
Psychiatric hospital
Poselok Boynyuzyn
Garashsyzyk district
Lebap region
TURKMENISTAN

Какабай Тедженов
Психиатрическая больница
Поселок Бойныузын
этрап Гарашсызлык
Лебапский велят
ТУРКМЕНИСТАН

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

PLEASE SEND ANY REPLIES FROM THE AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. (Europe and Central Asia Program; Eurasia team, Amnesty International; 1 Easton Street; London WC1X 0DW; United Kingdom)