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Exhibitions tell about families campaigning to end impunity for torture and other ill-treatment in Central Asia

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Amnesty International and its partners are launching series of exhibitions that will take place in the cities across the world throughout the summer 2013.

Amnesty International is proud to join NGOs in the Central Asia region in showing their support for the individuals and families portrayed in these exhibitions which will start in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan on 26 June and will continue to other countries in the world.

The exhibitions tell the courageous stories of different families in Central Asia who have lost their loved ones to torture and other ill-treatment, injustice or an unfair trial.

Throughout Central Asia police forces continue to use torture and other ill-treatment against individuals. In violation of national and international law, ordinary people in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan continue to be arbitrarily detained by officers of the law enforcement services, held incommunicado and forced to write false confessions.

Torture and other ill-treatment is frequently used so police can meet performance targets for solving crimes or to extract bribes.

While in detention, people may face torture and other ill-treatment and can be left with long-term physical and psychological injuries or end up in prison after an unfair trial. Some of them even die as a result. Even when signs of torture are clearly visible at trial, too often judges lack the independence or courage to order investigations into the detainee's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment.

Many of the families put their faith in their local criminal justice system and appealed against their treatment. However, some face harassment by the authorities for speaking out. They are also left without bread-winners and the children without their fathers. However, they continue to fight for investigations into the torture allegations and hope that one day justice will prevail.

Amnesty International calls upon the authorities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to take urgent measures to end impunity for torture and other ill-treatment, including through the following:

- Places of detention are monitored by independent experts;
- All detainees are presumed innocent until found guilty in fair proceedings;
- All individual cases of torture and other ill-treatment are thoroughly investigated promptly and impartially;
- Torture victims have access to redress and compensation;
- Torture victims and their families are able to live without fear of reprisal for speaking out.

For latest information on torture and other ill-treatment in Central Asia, please consult the following documents:

Kazakhstan, country entry from the *Amnesty International Annual Report 2013, The State of the world's human rights*, www.amnesty.org/en/region/kazakhstan/report-2013

Kyrgyzstan: *Will there ever be justice? Kyrgyzstan's failure to investigate June 2010 violence and its aftermath*, EUR 58/001/2013, www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR58/001/2013/en

Tajikistan: a joint submission by Amnesty International and Coalition against Torture of Tajikistan, *Torture and other ill-treatment of people deprived of their liberty and deaths in custody*, EUR 60/005/2013, www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR60/005/2013/en

Turkmenistan, Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, *Turkmenistan: Human rights violations continue as recommendations made during previous review go unheeded*, EUR 61/006/2013, www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR61/006/2012/en

Uzbekistan, *Believing the rhetoric: How the international community is failing to hold Uzbekistan to account over its human rights obligations*, EUR 62/003/2013, www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR62/003/2013/en.

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