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Kazakhstan's failure to find truth about violent clashes

Many questions remain unanswered about violent clashes between security officers and protesters that left 15 dead and dozens injured in Kazakhstan in December 2011.

Now, three months on, Amnesty International is demanding transparency in the wake of an unsatisfactory probe into the use of force and firearms by security officers in the south western oil city of Zhanaozen.

On 16 December 2011, as the city prepared to celebrate 20 years of independence oil workers on strike since May 2011 over pay and working conditions, and a group of young men, tore down festive displays in the town's central square and reportedly attacked police and local town officials.

Amateur footage show the security forces responding, taking aim and shooting their weapons at retreating protesters who included women and children. The video then shows those lying injured on the ground being beaten.

A number of opposition political activists and representatives of striking oil industry workers were arrested and charged with instigating the events. There is a strong indication that their right to a fair trial will be prejudiced.

Amnesty International is writing to the Kazakhstani authorities to pose a number of questions it believes have not been fully answered or addressed by the investigations to date into the use of lethal force by security forces and the widespread reports of beatings and torture of those detained by security forces.

"Despite official declarations they are committed to upholding their international human rights obligations, the Kazakhstani authorities have a very poor record of investigating and prosecuting their own security forces for human rights violations," said John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director.

"The investigations must be conducted in accordance with international standards in the most thorough, impartial, transparent and credible manner in order to establish the truth about the December events and responsibility for the deaths and injuries during the protest and the torturing of detainees that followed it. This is the only way to prevent similar events in future."

For more information please see:

[KAZAKHSTAN: PROGRESS AND NATURE OF OFFICIAL INVESTIGATIONS CALLED INTO QUESTION 100 DAYS AFTER VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN POLICE AND PROTESTERS IN ZHANAQZEN](#)

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