

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 61/006/2008

13 October 2008

Further Information on UA 99/08 (EUR 51/002/2008, 16 April 2008) and follow-up (EUR 61/003/2008, 4 June 2008) - Health concern/Possible prisoner of conscience

TURKMENISTAN Valeri Pal (m), aged 60

Concerns regarding the health of possible prisoner of conscience Valeri Pal have been heightened following reports that he had a heart attack on 24 September.

Valeri Pal has been sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for stealing property from his workplace at an oil-refinery in the Caspian port city of Turkmenbashi. Valeri Pal's supporters believe the case against him was fabricated to punish him for his social activism and contacts with human rights defenders abroad and that his trial fell short of international standards for fairness.

Valeri Pal suffered a stroke in 2004, causing partial paralysis down the left side of his body, for which he requires regular medical treatment and exercise. He also suffers from chronic prostatitis, a prolonged inflammation of the prostate gland. Following previous expressions of international concern about his state of health, he is believed to have received some treatment in the prison hospital.

At the beginning of September, the prison administrators told Valeri Pal that he was due to be released under the terms of a presidential amnesty. However, on 24 September, he was reportedly told that he was not included on the list of those to be released. According to his family, soon after he received this news, Valeri Pal had a heart attack. His wife was due to visit him that evening, but she was not able to see him. She was able to talk to him for the first time only a week and a half later, and reported that he had great difficulty speaking. Amnesty International believes that he needs urgent and adequate treatment for his suspected heart attack.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Turkmen or your own language:

- urging the authorities to ensure that Valeri Pal receives access to appropriate medical treatment without delay;
- expressing concern at allegations his trial was not conducted in line with international fair trial standards;
- pointing out that if Valeri Pal was targeted to punish him for his peaceful work as a social activist, Amnesty International would adopt him as a prisoner of conscience, and would call for his prompt and unconditional release.

APPEALS TO:

(If a voice answers on a fax number during office hours, repeat 'fax' until connected; fax machines are often switched off outside office hours.)

President

President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov
Presidential Palace
744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Fax: +993 12 35 51 12

Salutation: Dear President Berdymukhamedov

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Rashit Meredov17/07/01

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Magtymguly avenue, 83

744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Fax: +993 12 35 42 41

E-mail: mfatm@online.tm

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Turkmenistan accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 November 2008.