Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Kazakhstan: cease political prosecution of opposition and independent media

Written declaration No. 630

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

Almost six years after the Zhanaozen tragedy, the Kazakhstani authorities are suppressing freedom of speech and assembly by arresting and sentencing critics and opponents of Nazarbayev's regime. The European Parliament, the OSCE, the United Nations condemned Nazarbayev's repressive policy and called for the release of political prisoners

In 2016, Talgat Ayan and Maks Bokayev, "land-reform" protesters, were sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for attending a peaceful rally, and a blogger Sanat Dosov was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for his criticism of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. In 2017, leaders of oil workers Amin Eleusinov and Nurbek Qushaqbaev were arrested for protesting against the closure of a confederation of independent labour unions.

Nazarbayev is pursuing former top managers and employees of the BTA Bank's Tatiana Paraskevich, Zhaksylyk Zharimbetov and Anatoliy Pogorelov, to obtain their testimonies against his main opponent, Mukhtar Ablyazov. In January 2017, Kazakhstani security services kidnapped refugee Zharimbetov. Based on his testimony, Zhanbolat Mamay, an editor of the opposition newspaper *Tribuna*, was arrested. Human rights organisations, including 29 IFEX members, pointed to the political nature of Mamay's criminal prosecution.

We hereby express grave concern over the deterioration of democracy and human rights, and urge Kazakhstan to cease the reprisals.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

ZELIENKOVÁ Kristýna, Czech Republic, ALDE
CEPEDA José, Spain, SOC
CRUCHTEN Yves, Luxembourg, SOC
GATTI Marco, San Marino, EPP/CD
GUTIÉRREZ Antonio, Spain, SOC
HANŽEK Matjaž, Slovenia, UEL
HUNKO Andrej, Germany, UEL
KANDELAKI Giorgi, Georgia, EPP/CD
KIRAL Serhii, Ukraine, EC
KROSS Eerik-Niiles, Estonia, ALDE
LOUCAIDES George, Cyprus, UEL
LUNDGREN Kerstin, Sweden, ALDE
MULLEN Rónán, Ireland, EPP/CD
NICOLETTI Michele, Italy, SOC
NICOLINI Marco, San Marino, UEL
OBREMSKI Jarosław, Poland, EC
OVERBEEK Henk, Netherlands, UEL
ÖZSOY Hişyar, Turkey, UEL
RIGONI Andrea, Italy, ALDE
SCHENNACH Stefan, Austria, SOC
SCHWABE Frank, Germany, SOC
VAREIKIS Egidijus, Lithuania, EPP/CD
WURM Gisela, Austria, SOC
ZAVOLI Roger, San Marino, ALDE
ZINGERIS Emanuelis, Lithuania, EPP/CD

Total = 25

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC: European Conservatives Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left