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Kazakhstan must respect the freedom of speech, the freedom of peaceful assembly, and stop blocking social media sites

Written declaration No. 655

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.

Ongoing attacks on civil liberties in Kazakhstan evoke serious concern. In March 2018, the opposition movement Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan was labeled “an extremist organization”, while its numerous supporters were interrogated or arrested, sometimes just for reading opposition websites.

We hereby call for cessation of blocking social media and release of imprisoned bloggers as Sanat Dosov, Ruslan Ginatullin and Ardak Ashim who was forcibly taken to a mental hospital for her critical comments on social networks. Exerting pressure on journalists Radio Azattyq is also inadmissible.

While we welcome the decision to release political prisoner Talgat Ayan, still at least 38 cases of politically motivated criminal prosecution have been registered and recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee have not been implemented by Kazakhstan.

We regret to learn that Mukhtar Dzhakishev, Iskander Yerimbetov, Max Bokayev, Kenzhebek Abishev whose health condition has deteriorated, were not released or the measure of restraint has not been changed to one unrelated to detention including for Almat Zhumagulov. The latest decision to uphold the closure of the investigation on torture of Iskander Yerimbetov is deeply unacceptable.

Such practices negatively affect the co-operation between the country and international organisations. Kazakhstan must fulfill its international obligations.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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ÅBERG Boriana, Sweden, EPP/CD
BENEŠIK Ondřej, Czech Republic, EPP/CD
CILEVIČS Boriss, Latvia, SOC
COAKER Vernon, United Kingdom, SOC
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FIALA Doris, Switzerland, ALDE
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TRISSE Nicole, France, NR
VAREIKIS Egidijus, Lithuania, EPP/CD
WILSON Phil, United Kingdom, SOC

Total = 29

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC: European Conservatives Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group