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To: President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

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As Members of the European Parliament, we hereby express our deepest concern over the current situation of human rights and the ongoing use of torture in the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to the data provided by human rights organisations, there are more than 35 people convicted or prosecuted on politically motivated charges in Kazakhstan¹.

¹ More information on individual cases of political prisoners detained by Kazakhstani authorities can be found in ODF's report: <http://en.odfoundation.eu/a/8423,the-list-of-kazakhstani-political-prisoners-and-persons-subjected-to-politically-motivated-prosecution-by-kazakhstan>

Here, we specifically address the most recent case of **Mr Iskander Yerimbetov**². Mr Yerimbetov is a prominent Kazakhstani businessman who was arrested in November 2017 on fabricated criminal charges of fraud. Since then, he has been held in the detention centre of the National Security Committee, where he was **subjected to torture** with the use of psychotropic or other drugs in order to punish him or to compel him to give forced confessions, as stated by his counsel in the complaint filed with the Head of the Interdepartmental Investigative and Operational Group and uttered by his parents at the press-conference in Almaty. According to the available information, as a result of torture and constant pressure, Mr Yerimbetov is in severe health condition; during his last meeting on 22 November 2017, with his counsel, he fainted repeatedly and was unable to speak coherently.

Mr Yerimbetov is the brother of **Ms Botagoz Jardemalie**, a former managing director of BTA Bank and lawyer, who used to work in defence of Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov and Kazakh citizens who fell victim of abusive extradition requests and arbitrary detention. Ms Jardemalie currently resides in Belgium, where she has been granted the status of political refugee. As for many other defendants in the case of BTA Bank, her name was removed from INTERPOL's wanted list due to the political overtones of the criminal charges.

The investigative bodies claim that, in 2005 and 2013, Mr Yerimbetov carried out activities with the use of 'Ablyazov's money' 'embezzled from BTA Bank', despite the fact that Mr Yerimbetov never worked or was linked to Mr Ablyazov.

It is apparent, therefore, that the detention and mistreatment of Mr Yerimbetov, is likely to be linked to his family relations and the connections with the politically motivated prosecution of Mr Ablyazov by Kazakhstani authorities. We are deeply concerned about the conditions in which Mr Yerimbetov is being held and we strongly condemn any form of detention or criminal persecution on political grounds. Such abuse represents a grave violation of the international obligations on the part of Kazakhstan in the field of human rights.

Others that are being held in conditions similar to those of Mr Yerimbetov are civil society activist, **Mr Max Bokayev**³, and prominent businessman, **Mr Mukhtar Dzhakishev**⁴, two illustrative examples of such people.

² More information on the case of Mr Yerimbetov can be found in ODF's report: <http://en.odfoundation.eu/a/8467.iskander-yerimbetov-one-of-the-defendants-in-the-case-of-ablyazov-is-being-subjected-to-torture-in-the-detention-centre>

³ More information on the case of Mr Bokayev can be found in ODF's report: <http://en.odfoundation.eu/a/7980.kazakhstan-maks-bokayev-and-talgat-ayan-sentenced-to-five-years-in-prison-for-their-participation-in-a-peaceful-rally>

⁴ More information on the case of Mr Dzhakishev can be found in ODF's report and in UN Human Rights Committee document <http://en.odfoundation.eu/a/8357.kazakhstan-the-life-of-political-prisoner-mukhtar-dzhakishev-is-in-danger> and

We hereby urge Kazakhstani authorities to provide Mr Yerimbetov with medical assistance and carry out an objective investigation into the incidents of his mistreatment, as well as cease intimidation of Ms Botagoz Jardemalie and other family members.

We reiterate the condemnation of politically motivated prosecution and call on the authorities to release political hostages and **respect the human rights** of its citizens, which is a preliminary condition to the implementation of the **Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement** negotiations between the EU and of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the European Parliament

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