



President of Kazakhstan
Nursultan Nazarbayev
Office of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Akorda building, Left bank of the Ishim River,
Astana, 010000, Kazakhstan

Brussels, 05 December 2014

Mr President Nazarbayev,

We are addressing you in order to draw your attention to the case of Mrs Zinaida Mukhortova, Kazakh lawyer and human rights defender. As reported by a number of international human rights organisations and lawyers' associations, Mrs Mukhortova has been regularly placed under forced psychiatric treatment over the last few years, recently in July 2014, notably since she first denounced a case of corruption involving two Kazakh parliamentarians.

Mrs Mukhortova is currently undergoing forced psychiatric treatment, during which – as reported by media and international NGOs – she was being injected with unknown substances, resulting in a sharp deterioration of her health conditions.

Links between the dates of Mrs Mukhortova's forcible detention in psychiatric hospitals and her activity in fighting corruption, as well as scarce information on her conditions and lack of direct access for independent observers, lead to suspicions that her persecution is politically motivated and can be directly related to her anti-corruption activity.

In October 2013, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the impact of corruption on human rights. This resolution emphasized the valuable role of whistleblowers in exposing corruption, fraud, mismanagement and human rights abuses, despite high personal risk, and the need for their protection against retaliation.

No individual should face persecution because of their activity in denouncing acts of corruption and illegal activities. Lawyers, in particular, should be protected from any form of repression related to their professional activity. On the contrary, whistleblowers' claims should be duly followed-up.

We herewith urge you, thus, to order an independent investigation of the case of Mrs Mukhortova and the real motivations behind her forced psychiatric treatment.

We ask you furthermore to ensure that Mrs Mukhortova is immediately released and that all those responsible for her harassment and forced treatment are brought to justice.

Best regards,

Ana Gomes (S&D)

Barbara Lochbihler (Greens/EFA)

Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA)

Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D)