



Европейски парламент Parlamento Europeo Evropský parlament Europa-Parlamentet Europäisches Parlament
Euroopa Parlament Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο European Parliament Parlement européen Parlaimint na hEorpa
Europski parlament Parlamento europeo Eiropas Parlaments Europos Parlamentas Európai Parlament
Parlament Ewropew Europees Parlement Parlament Europejski Parlamento Europeu Parlamentul European
Európsky parlament Evropski parlament Euroopan parlamentti Europaparlamentet

H.E. Mr Sven-Olov Carlsson
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan
Kosmonavtov st. 62, 7th floor
Z05E9E1, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

Brussels, 15 May 2019

Dear Ambassador,

As a Member of the European Parliament engaged in the promotion of human rights worldwide, including in Kazakhstan, I acknowledge the importance of the daily work of the European Union and, in particular, of its Delegation on the ground to monitor the implementation of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA). Throughout my mandate, I have been regularly informed by Human Rights Defenders and relatives of prisoners about developments concerning the human rights record in the country, on individual cases of political prisoners as well as of victims of torture and ill-treatment in detention facilities. I was also one of the MEPs of the European Parliament's delegation who paid a visit to the country on 17-19 September 2018.

I am writing to you, this time, because I am very concerned about the troubling events that took place between the 23 and 25 April 2019¹, in the prison facility in Zarechny (Institution LA 155/14), in the region of Almaty.

On 23 April 2019, Special Forces and National Guard troops by direct order of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan went to the prison of Zarechny for morning inspection of prisoners. According to the testimonies collected by lawyers and relatives of the prisoners², detainees were severely beaten, their heads sunk in tubs with contaminated water, forced to stand under the sun, to march and shout humiliating slogans until they lose consciousness. As a consequence, all convicts were injured and denied medical care. On 25 April, 10 prisoners cut their veins and abdomens in sign of protest and were punished with solitary confinement. Most of the prisoners' belongings were confiscated, visits to relatives restricted and phone network disconnected.

Furthermore, I am deeply concerned with the fate of political prisoners Aset Abishev and Iskander Yerimbetov, currently kept in the Zarechny correctional facility. As you know, their cases have been identified in the latest European Parliament Urgency Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in Kazakhstan, dated 14 March 2019³, which addressed *inter alia* serious problems regarding the use of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in the Kazakhstani prison system. Eventually, thanks to the intervention of human rights defenders which promptly rendered public the complaint about the unjust treatment to which Aset Abishev was subjected⁴, he was moved to a prison hospital. However, other

¹ <https://www.rferl.org/a/troops-enter-kazakh-prison-treatment-inmates/29900582.html>

² <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=429137351205501&set=a.157389241713648&type=3&theater>

³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0203_EN.html?redirect

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/100023277185705/posts/429410891178147?s=1306505387&v=i&sfns=mo>



Европейски парламент Parlamento Europeo Evropský parlament Europa-Parlamentet Europäisches Parlament
Euroopa Parlament Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο European Parliament Parlement européen Parlaimint na hEorpa
Europski parlament Parlamento europeo Eitropas Parlaments Europos Parlamentas Európai Parlament
Parlament Ewropew Europees Parlement Parliament Europejski Parlamento Europeu Parlamentul European
Európsky parlament Ěvropski parlament Euroopan parlamentti Europaparlamentet

detainees like Iskander Yerimbetov and Dmitry Pestov⁵, whose cases have been highlighted by human rights groups and activists, still need to be addressed.

In light of these worrying circumstances, I am confident that you will welcome my request to organise visits to the prisoners, possibly jointly with other Member States missions and embassies present in the country, in order to ensure that all injured prisoners benefit from medical care and that the incidents of torture be properly tackled.

Best regards,

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament (S&D, Portugal)

CC:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Beibit Atamkulov
Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Turgumbayev Yerlan Zamanbekovich

Prosecutor General of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Kairat Kozhamzharov
Ombudsman in the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Askar Shakirov

⁵ <https://www.nhc.no/en/kazakhstan-must-release-iskander-yerimbetov-and-co-defendants/>

Ana Gomes
European Parliament
Bât. Altiero Spinelli, 14G201, rue Wiertz 60, B-1047 Brussels, Belgium
Tel. : +32 (0)2 284 58 24 Fax : +32 (0)2 284 98 24
anamaria.gomes@ep.europa.eu