

letterprizewinner2013

Take action on behalf of human rights defender **Vadim Kuramshin**.

Copy the enclosed letter and send it to the address provided.

Thank you for taking action.

Target addresses:

President Nursultan Nazarbayev
Office of the President
Akorda Building
Left Bank of the Ishim River
010000 Astana
Kazakhstan

To the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev:

[Your Name Here]

Your Excellency,

*Meeting in Geneva Law Courts on June 20th, 2013, the Jury of 29 European lawyers awarded the 18th Ludovic-Trarieux International Human Rights Prize to lawyer from Kazakhstan, **Vadim Kuramshin**.*

Vadim Kuramshin is a prominent lawyer and human rights defender, currently sentenced to 12 years in prison, well known for his defense of victims of those serving sentences and suffering beatings in prison and for his investigations into the murder of prisoners.

Vadim Kuramshin was arrested right after coming back from an OSCE conference in Warsaw in September 2012, during which he presented a speech denouncing human rights abuses in Kazakhstan. On 31 October 2012, the appeals panel of Zhambyl court annulled the previous jury verdict due to alleged 'significant procedural violations' during the earlier court sessions.

Vadim Kuramshin was re-arrested on 31 October 2012 in the city of Petropavlovsk, northern Kazakhstan. He was reportedly beaten during the arrest and while in detention in the detention facility in Petropavlovsk. Protesting against harassment and threats received in pre-trial detention, including threats of sexual violence, Vadim Kuramshin cut his veins. He was consequently placed in solitary confinement due to "violation of the conditions of his detention". On 3 November 2012, he was transported from Petropavlovsk to the detention facility in Taraz.

He was sentenced to 12 years in prison on December 7, 2012 on charges of blackmailing the assistant of the district attorney. The verdict was upheld by the Court of Taraz on 14th February 2013. In addition to the court ordered the

confiscation of his property. The defendant was represented by a State lawyer who remained silent throughout the proceedings. According to detailed information received on numerous violations, the court procedure did not meet the international minimum standards for a fair trial.

In March 2013, Vadim Kuramshin was transferred to prison colony EC 164/4, a prison infamous for human rights violations, which increases fears for his safety.

The Jury believes that the long prison term to which Vadim Kuramshin has been sentenced is the result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights activities. As a human rights defender who has always denounced human rights abuses committed in Kazakh penitential institutions, Vadim Kuramshin is now at significant risk of facing particularly harsh prison conditions as a reprisal.

We urge the authorities in Kazakhstan to:

1. Drop all charges against Vadim Kuramshin, and subsequently release him, as it is believed he is being held solely on account of her peaceful and legitimate work in defense of human rights;

2. Ensure that the treatment of Vadim Kuramshin, whilst in detention, adheres to all those conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment' adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Kazakhstan are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Your Faithfully,

[Signature]