

CRUDE ACCOUNTABILITY

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Minister Rashid Meredov
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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October 22, 2009

Dear Minister Meredov:

On October 20, 2009, Mr. Andrey Zatoka, an internationally renowned environmental expert, was arrested in his hometown of Dashovuz, Turkmenistan and is being detained in prison on charges of inflicting bodily harm. Medical records show that Mr. Zatoka himself is suffering from a concussion and a broken hand.

Mr. Zatoka is a well respected environmentalist who has contributed enormously to the Turkmen, Central Asian and international environmental movements. He is a founding member of the International Socio-Ecological Union, founder of the Dashovuz Ecology Club, and has worked with many international environmental organizations including the United Nations. He is a biologist who graduated from Ural State University, and who has worked in Turkmenistan protecting the environment for over 20 years.

Mr. Zatoka's arrest has raised the concerns of the international community, which is closely monitoring Turkmenistan's observance of international human rights obligations. I respectfully urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Andrey Zatoka, allowing him to return to his family.

His detainment causes great anxiety and concern among his friends and colleagues around the globe and creates a negative image of Turkmenistan in the eyes of the world. We are concerned for his safety and urge you to ensure his safety and immediate release.

Thank you for attention to this matter—we request that it be resolved immediately.

Sincerely,



Kate Watters
Executive Director