

An Open Letter to the Leaders of the U.S. and its Civil Society

About the Abuses by Kazakhstan's Dictatorship and its Ruler Nursultan Nazarbayev

The Magnitsky Act or a similar bill would bring to justice those responsible for the Zhanaozen Massacre

On December 16, 2011, a terrible massacre happened in Kazakhstan.

State police fired on civilians in the small town of Zhanaozen in the western part of our country. **According to official numbers, 16 people were killed and 100 were injured. Independent sources stated that more than 70 were killed and more than 500 to 800 were wounded.** This was the bloody end of a seven-month conflict between oil and gas workers—protesting for better working conditions—and Nursultan Nazarbayev, the dictator who has ruled our country with an iron fist since 1991.

The Zhanaozen massacre marked the beginning of a new era in Kazakhstan of unprecedented political oppression. Striking workers have been convicted and sentenced to long-term imprisonment, while trials linger for the civil society activists and politicians who aided the workers. One such leader, Vladimir Kozlov, was convicted last week on trumped up charges and sentenced to seven-and-a-half years in prison and forfeiture of all his assets. State authorities have also targeted the independent media. Journalists who covered the incidents are now facing charges of coup-plotting. Meanwhile, the security forces who fired on civilians have not been punished. Nazarbayev refuses to consent to an international investigation, because he knows the results would expose the real face of his regime.

As representatives of the civil society of Kazakhstan, we fear for our colleagues. Our attempts to stop Nazarbayev's tyranny have been futile, since all parts of the justice system, including prosecutors and courts, operate under his orders. His system of oppression has been well documented by international human rights organizations like Freedom House, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. The New York-based Human Rights Foundation has also recently announced a new initiative to expose Kazakhstan's regime and is sponsoring publication of this open letter.

We respectfully ask US legislators to help us. In the past, thanks to the intervention of European politicians, civil society activists like Bolat Atabayev, Zhanbolat Mamay, Natalia Sokolova, and Igor Vinyavskiy have been released. We are confident that the proposed law known as the Magnitsky Act, currently under consideration in the House of Representatives (and held-up by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen), or a separate Zhanaozen Act with similar goals, would compel Nazarbayev to allow space for dissent—a vital first step toward democracy. With the imprisonment of Kozlov last week, Kazakh civil society has lost the most vocal critic to the Nazarbayev regime and his unregistered political party, Alga!

On the next page we copy the names of the Kazakh officials, police officers, judges, and security agents involved in the Zhanaozen massacre and the subsequent oppression of civil society and the media. We also ask the U.S. to consider adopting a document threatening a travel and finance ban for these individuals and we alert civil society, financial institutions, and public policy groups.

Nazarbayev has been aided in Washington by public relations machinery including BGR Public Relations, Qorvis Communications, Global Options Group, APCO Worldwide, Policy Impact Communications, as well as Kazakhstan insiders such as billionaire Alex Mashkevich and Bulgarian fixer Alexander Mirtchev. They have all enriched themselves while serving a ruthless tyrant that ordered oil workers killed. They have peddled the lie that Kazakhstan is the story of a “young democracy” with “stability”—rather than a totalitarian police state with a leader who wins elections with 95% of the vote and passed a law allowing him to be elected president indefinitely.

Nazarbayev, like **Putin** in Russia, and **Lukashenko** in Belarus is yet another tyrant interested only in looting the treasury and ruling for life.

Please help us.

Bolat Atabaev, Kazakhstan theatre director, screenwriter, winner of the Goethe Medal, activist of the “Halyk Majdany” (“Popular front”) oppositional movement, member of “Alga”, unregistered opposition People's Party;

Lukpan Ahmedjarov, journalist and correspondent of the “Ural Week” newspaper, winner of the Peter Mackler Award;

Bahytzhan Toregozhina, leader of “Ar. Rukh. Khak” Public Foundation;

Igor Vinyavskiy, editor-in-chief the “Vzglyad” newspaper;

Irina Petrushova, founder and editor-in-chief of the “Respublika” newspaper;

Marat Zhanuzakov, head of “Alga” People's Party, Akmolinsky Oblast branch;

Michael Sizov, vice-president of “Alga” People's Party Coordination Committee;

Sagat Zhusip, member of “Alga” People's Party Coordination Committee;

Asel Nurgaziyeva, human right activist, “Zanan:”;

Zauresh Battalova, the Foundation of the Parliamentary Development in Kazakhstan;

Bahyt Tumenova, president of “Aman-Saulyk” Public Foundation, doctor, public health services organizer, member of National Social Council of the Health Ministry of the Republic Kazakhstan, member of International Initiative on Safety and Protection of the patients rights;

Rozlana Taukina, chair of the human rights organization “Journalist in Danger”;

Kasym Amanzhol, journalist of “Janaozen.net”;

Ainur Kurmanov, leader of “Social Resistance Movement”;

Galym Ageleuov, human rights activist, “Liberty”

Officials, police officers, judges, and security agents involved in the Zhanaozen massacre:

Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Aslan Musin, Head of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Timyr Kulibayev, Chairman of the KAZENERGY Association, Former Chairman of Samruk-Kazyna National Welfare Foundation

Karim Massimov, Head of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Kalmukhanbet Kasymov, Minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Askhat Daulbaev, Attorney General of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Nurtai Abykaev, Chairman of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Bektas Beknazarov, Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Orak Sarbopeyev, Mayor of Zhanaozen

Krymbek Kuserbayev, Deputy of the Prime-Minister of the Republic of Kazakstan, Former mayor of Mangistau Region

Rashid Kulibayev, Head of the Zhanaozen temporary detention facility

Zhenisbek Temirov, Former Head of the Zhanaozen temporary detention facility

Amanzhol Kabylov, Head of Internal Affairs Department of Mangistau Region

Mukhtar Kozhaev, Former Head of Zhanaozen Internal Affairs Directorate

Nurzhan Zhandarbekov, Investigator

Talgat Tolykpaev, Deputy Chief of Investigation Department of the National Security Committee of the Mangistau region

Nurlan Baldairov, Chief of Investigation Department of National Security Committee of the Mangistau Region

Nurlan Mazhilov, Deputy Head of the Department of National Security Committee in Almaty

Marat Tulepbergenov, Investigator

Osken Zhasuzakov, Investigator

Miras Topalov, Investigator

Nazym Shaiken, Investigator

Aralbay Nagashybayev, Judge of the Inter-district Specialized Criminal Court of Mangistau Region

Rinat Tasmambetov, Judge of the Inter-district Specialized Criminal Court of Mangistau Region

Leskhan Baygulov, Judge of the Inter-district Specialized Criminal Court of Mangistau Region

Berdybek Myrzabekov, Judge of Court of Aktau City

Gulmarzhan Adilsultani, Judge of the Inter-district Specialized Criminal Court of Mangistau Region

Talgat Musakhanov, Deputy Chief of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Mangistau Region, police colonel

Maksat Moldabayev, Investigator

Amangeldy Dosakhanov, Head of Internal Affairs Headquarters in Zhanaozen.

Elzhas Onerov, Investigator of the Aktau Investigative Committee.

Ulugbek Myltykov, Head of the Committee of Public Safety in the Internal Affairs Department of Mangistau Region

Policemen who falsely testified on the events in Zhanaozen:

Nurken Zhanalbekov, Erbolat Eschanov, Abdumumin Musaev, Kural Nurbergenov, Mery Sagyndykov, Zhaksylyk Berikov, Marat Batyrkulov, Nurlan Ryskaliev, Adaybay Umbetov, Timur Begimbetov, Mukhtar Tolebayev