

PUBLIC

**AI Index: EUR 61/007/2007
1 February 2007**

UA 24/07

Medical concern

TURKMENISTAN

Geldy Kyarizov (m), aged 56

Geldy Kyarizov is believed to be in extremely poor health and in urgent need of medical treatment. He has been in prison for over five years, following a trial that was not in line with international fair trial standards.

Geldy Kyarizov, former director of the Government Association *Turkmenatlary* (Turkmen Horses) and an internationally renowned breeder of Akhalteke horses, has been detained since 30 January 2002. He has suffered two heart attacks and a stroke in detention and suffered from pneumonia. He has been denied appropriate medical treatment for these conditions, which left him weak and debilitated.

On 29 January 2007, Geldy Kyarizov's wife Yulia Serebryannik visited him in Turkmenabad prison in the eastern Lebap region. After the visit, she told a relative, "He is a skeleton with skin. His weight now [is] 45-50 kilograms. You will never recognize him. He is like a walking dead body." Geldy Kyarizov is reportedly severely malnourished and weak.

Geldy Kyarizov's wife, a doctor, had previously brought him medication in detention. However, his whereabouts were unknown between September 2006 and January 2007, and his health has suffered as he has not received this medication from the authorities. Geldy Kyarizov may be in grave danger if he does not receive adequate treatment immediately.

Geldy Kyarizov was sentenced to six years' imprisonment by Ashgabat city court on 4 April 2002 on charges including "abuse of office" and "negligence". It is alleged that the charges against Geldy Kyarizov were fabricated, and that he may have been charged arbitrarily after falling out of favour with the late President, Saparmurad Niyazov. It is believed that Geldy Kyarizov was caught up in the politically motivated clampdown on senior government officials carried out by the Niyazov regime. As part of the clampdown numerous officials were demoted or dismissed from their workplaces, and scores were imprisoned.

While Geldy Kyarizov was in pre-trial detention, officers of the Ministry of National Security (MNS) reportedly pressurized him to "confess" to the charges. For example, three officers reportedly tortured a detainee in Geldy Kyarizov's presence by giving the detainee electric shocks to his genitals. He was reportedly frequently interrogated during this period for 24 hours without a break.

Geldy Kyarizov "disappeared" in September 2006. He was reportedly transferred to another detention facility but his family was not informed of his whereabouts. On 18 September an official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) reportedly informed Geldy Kyarizov's wife that he was not registered as an inmate in any detention facility run by his Ministry. On 13 December Geldy Kyarizov's family was visited by a man who introduced himself as an MNS official but did not present any identification. He reportedly told them that Geldy Kyarizov had been tortured to death. It was only at the end of January 2007 that his family found out that he was still alive and transferred back to Turkmenabad prison, where he had previously been detained.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the widespread abuse of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights in Turkmenistan.

According to official sources, Saparmurad Niyazov, who led the country for 21 years, first as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan and then, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as President of independent Turkmenistan, died early on 21 December 2006 of a heart attack. On the same day, the State Security Council and the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan appointed Kurbanguly

Berdymukhammedov, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health and Medical Industries, as acting President. According to the Constitution, the powers of the President should have been transferred to the chairperson of the *Mejlis* (Parliament). However, the chairman of the *Mejlis*, Ovezgeldy Atayev, was dismissed on 21 December and criminal charges have reportedly been brought against him.

On 26 December the *Halk Maslahaty* (People's Council) approved the nomination of the acting President and another five candidates for the Presidential election due to take place on 11 February 2007. All are members of the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, the only registered party in the country. The interim government ignored calls by exiled opposition groups to allow opposition leaders to run in the Presidential elections.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Turkmen or your own language (fax machines may only be switched on during office hours, 5 hours ahead of GMT):

- expressing concern for the health of Geldy Kyarizov, the former director of the Government Association *Turkmenatlary*;
- expressing concern that Geldy Kyarizov has not received adequate medical treatment, and urging the authorities to provide Geldy Kyarizov with all necessary treatment immediately;
- urging the authorities to reveal where Geldy Kyarizov was held incommunicado from September 2006 to January 2007, and the reasons for his four-month "disappearance";
- expressing concern at allegations that Geldy Kyarizov was caught up in the clampdown on senior government officials during the regime of Saparmurad Niyazov, and that he may have been arbitrarily detained because he fell out of the late President's favour.

APPEALS TO:

Acting President of Turkmenistan
Kurbanguly Berdymukhammedov
Presidential Palace
744000 Ashgabat
Turkmenistan

Fax: + 993 12 35 51 12

Salutation: Dear Acting President of Turkmenistan

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Rashit Meredov
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Magtymguly Avenue, 83
744000 Ashgabat
Turkmenistan

Fax: + 993 12 35 42 41

E-mail: mfatm@online.tm

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Turkmenistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 March 2007.