

Date:

Dear

Since the EU is taking a marked interest in the Human Rights situation in Turkmenistan, I am writing you in your capacity as one of my MEPs on behalf of the family of Geldy Kyarizov from Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, the victim of serious Human Rights abuses and now the subject of an Amnesty International campaign following his "disappearance".

In 2002 Geldy, who was then Horse Minister for the government of Turkmenistan, and who is a leading world expert on Turkmenistan's rare Akhal-Teke horses, was arrested without a warrant by the secret police and held in their detention. He was initially charged with stealing horses from the President's stables, but an investigation determined that the horses in question were his own property. Then he was charged with mismanaging the duties of his office and convicted to six years imprisonment. Threatened with torture, he appeared on State television admitting his "crimes". During the trial he suffered a heart attack.

He was then transferred to prison, where he has had great difficulty surviving because of a lack of food, denial of medical care, and the lack of sanitation and severe overcrowding. He has suffered another heart attack plus two strokes. His family has brought him food and medicine when able, but at times has been denied access and visiting privileges. The family has been threatened, molested, harassed, denied work and denied permission to leave the country. They were threatened with eviction from their property at the beginning of the summer. Now that threat is being put into practice on direct orders from the KNB (former KGB), and the property is currently being demolished.

Geldy was last seen in Chardzhou Prison, LBK-12, on September 2nd. By September 6th he was not there. He has been missing now for nearly five months, and no one will tell the family where he is or if he is still alive. There has been speculation that he was transferred to the notorious Ovadan Depe prison, allegedly the scene of the massacre of 23 prisoners, according to a report sent to the Turkmen Helsinki Foundation, a Human Rights organisation. (See <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=42170>) Recently a man claiming to be from the KNB visited the family and told them that Geldy had died in Ovadan Depe. However his family have just been told that they may take food and medicine for him to the Department for Execution of Punishment, which suggests he may still be alive.

Due to widespread concern among Geldy's friends in the horse-breeding community in the UK (as well as worldwide) the British Embassy in Ashgabat has been giving the family help and support. They are however unable to determine whether Geldy is still alive.

In October the European Union took a strong stand against Turkmenistan when it vetoed a trade agreement because of the Human Rights situation there. With the former President now dead and a new regime about to be installed, there has never been a better time for the outside world to urge change. So I am writing on behalf of Geldy's many friends and admirers around the world to ask that representations may be made on behalf of the European Parliament to help determine the whereabouts of Geldy Kyarizov. We should all be most grateful for any help that you may be able to give.

For more detailed information, please see our website www.geldy.co.uk.

With thanks for your attention,

Yours sincerely,