

CRUDE ACCOUNTABILITY

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ACTION ALERT for Andrey Zatoka, Turkmen Environmentalist Wrongly Sentenced to Five Years in Prison



Andrey Zatoka, renowned environmentalist and civil society activist from Turkmenistan, was sentenced to five years in prison for assault in a trial held in Dashovuz, Turkmenistan on October 29, 2009. Andrey has said—and all evidence points to the fact—that the charges against him are politically motivated.

Andrey has been harassed by the Turkmen government for his peaceful environmental work for years; his sentencing on October 29 is the culmination of a campaign by the authorities to discredit him. He has committed no crime.

The international environmental and human rights communities—from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to a host of respected organizations around the globe—are rallying in Andrey's defense. It is critical

that we continue to raise Andrey's case on the international level, demonstrating to the government of Turkmenistan that civil society will not allow its members to be silenced.

Join us in telling the Turkmen government, the US government and the Russian government that you believe Andrey Zatoka is innocent and should be immediately and unconditionally released to the safety of his family!

Crude Accountability is launching a letter-writing campaign in defense of Andrey. You can help by writing a letter expressing your concern about his imprisonment. Addresses of key people to write to and sample letters are below. Please let us know if you need assistance or have any questions. And if you have the time to let us know you've written, that would be great, too.

Finally, if you'd like to write to Andrey and let him know he is not forgotten, you can send him a short note at: <http://azatoka.org/release.php?id=38> (and he speaks English!).

Thank you in advance!

Kate Watters and Michelle Kinman
kate@crudeaccountability.org
michelle@crudeaccountability.org

More background and the latest updates are accessible at www.crudeaccountability.org/en/.

Write letters to:

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

US Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520
FAX: 202-647-2283
Attn: Dan Fogarty

Ms. Sylvia Reed Curran
Charge d'Affairs a.i.
United States Embassy
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
Fax: 99312-39-26-14
E-mail: irc-ashgabat@state.gov

SAMPLE LETTER TO SECRETARY CLINTON and Charge de Affairs, Curran:

Dear Ambassador Clinton/Ms. Curran:

I am writing to express my concern about the case of Mr. Andrey Zatoka, imprisoned environmentalist in Turkmenistan. Mr. Zatoka was sentenced to five years in prison on October 29, 2009 in Dashovuz, Turkmenistan in a politically motivated trial that lasted less than one day. He was charged with assault after he was attacked by a known drug addict in the Dashovuz bazaar; when he appealed to the police for assistance, he, himself, was arrested.

Mr. Zatoka has participated in US government funded programs, including those supported by USAID, Counterpart Consortium and the US Embassy in Turkmenistan. A biologist and civil society activist, Mr. Zatoka has been an instrumental part of many of the most successful environmental programs in Central Asia since the 1990s.

Mr. Zatoka is the victim of a three year long campaign against him by the authorities and he has committed no crime. He was arrested in December 2006 and served 46 days in prison on trumped up charges of possession of dangerous substances, until pressure from the international community resulted in his release in January 2007.

I respectfully request that your office inquire into the status of Mr. Zatoka's case with the Turkmen government, send representatives from the US Embassy in Ashgabat to Dashovuz to ensure that his health and safety are protected, request that the Turkmen government allow international observers to visit him in prison, and ask that the Turkmen immediately and unconditionally release him to the safety of his family.

Sincerely,

President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov
Ulitsa K Marksa 24, Ashgabat, 744014
Turkmenistan
Fax: 993-12-355112 or 993012 354534 or 993-12-35-37-12

Mr. Rashid Meredov

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Prospect Makhtumkuli, 83, 744000, Ashgabat
Turkmenistan
FAX: 993-12-35-42-41

Turkmenistan's Ambassador to the United States
Mr. Meret Orazov
Embassy of Turkmenistan
2207 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008
FAX: 202-280-1003
Email: Turkmen@mindspring.com

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKMENISTAN (to be sent to the addresses above):

Dear XXXXXXX,

I am writing to express my concern about the October 29, 2009 sentencing of Andrey Zatoka, internationally renowned and respected environmentalist, to five years in prison on charges of assault. Along with the international community, I am concerned that Mr. Zatoka did not receive a fair trial.

According to independent sources, full evidence was not allowed during the trial, and the judge refused to hear at least eight petitions from the defendant.

I believe that Mr. Zatoka is being imprisoned because of his environmental work and I request that he be immediately and unconditionally released to the safety of his family.

The international community is following Mr. Zatoka's case, and we are concerned for his safety and well-being. We are also concerned about the overall human rights situation in your country and ask that you allow independent human rights monitors to visit Mr. Zatoka in prison.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
119200 Moscow
Smolenskaya/Sennaya Pl. 32/34
Fax: 495-244-3448
Email: ministry@mid.ru

Sample letter to Minister Lavrov:

Dear Minister Lavrov:

I appeal to you to protect the rights of renowned environmentalist, Andrey Zatoka, who was sentenced to five years in prison in Dashovuz, Turkmenistan on politically motivated charges on October 29, 2009.

Mr. Zatoka is a Russian citizen, and I urge you to defend his rights and ask the Turkmen government to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Zatoka to the safety of his family, who are also Russian citizens and living in the Russian Federation.

The international community is concerned for Mr. Zatoka's safety and is counting on the Russian government to demonstrate its commitment to defending human rights, especially those of its own citizens.

Sincerely,