

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 61/005/2006

04 July 2006

Further Information on UA 172/06 (EUR 61/003/2006, 19 June 2006) Arbitrary detention/Fear of torture

TURKMENISTAN **Ogulsapar Muradova (f), aged 58, journalist**
Annakurban Amanklychev (m), aged 35
Sapardurdy Khadzhiiev (m), aged 47

Released: **Sana Muradova (f)]**
Maral Muradova (f)] Children of Ogulsapar Muradova, aged in their 20s/early 30s
Berdy Muradov (m)]
Elena Ovezova (f), aged 41

Human rights defender Elena Ovezova, and Ogulsapar Muradova's daughters Sana and Maral and her son Berdy, were released late on 1 July 2006. Ogulsapar Muradova, Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiiev continue to be detained and at risk of torture or other ill-treatment. Amnesty International also fears that they could be convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment at an unfair trial.

The seven, who are all members, or relatives of members, of the non-governmental human rights organisation Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation (THF), were taken into detention between 16 and 19 June. Since the original Urgent Action on this case was published on 19 June there have been a number of high-level government statements accusing some of the detainees of "treason" and of planning a revolution in Turkmenistan. Treason carries a sentence of up to life imprisonment in Turkmenistan. On 2 July 2006 *Deutsche Welle*, Germany's international broadcasting service, reported that charges have been brought against those detainees that remain in detention including "espionage", and that the case had been forwarded to the General Procuracy for prosecution.

According to the THF, psychotropic drugs have been administered to Annakurban Amanklychev and Ogulsapar Muradova to force them to "confess" to "subversive activities". A law enforcement officer reportedly told the THF under condition of anonymity that Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiiev were subjected to "a serious ordeal". According to the THF, the detainees have been denied access to lawyers. They reportedly receive food only once a day and the relatives of the detainees have not been allowed to pass on food parcels and water to them.

The accusations of treason against the three detainees have come from the highest levels and have been publicized through the media. On 19 June 2006, Turkmenistani Minister of National Security Geldimukhammet Asyrmukhammedov stated in a broadcast on national television of a meeting of law enforcement bodies: "[Annakurban Amanklychev] was trying to collect defamatory information about Turkmenistan and to cause discontent among people on instructions of [...] traitors of the motherland and foreign-based centres of destabilization." The Minister also accused Annakurban Amanklychev of receiving training in Ukraine "to teach him intelligence gathering and sabotage in Turkmenistan, as well as the methods used in the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine". (Annakurban Amanklychev attended human rights training courses organized by the Donetsk group of the human rights organization in Ukraine in 2005). In the context of Annakurban Amanklychev's perceived "subversive activities" the Minister also referred to his attendance at the International Summer School for human rights activists organized by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Warsaw. President Saparmurad Niyazov added at the same meeting: "I don't know why [the detainees] are engaged in such dirty business in Turkmenistan, a peaceful country where justice is ruling and where nobody is disgraced [...] Let people condemn the traitors. The entire

population is proud of their motherland, whereas they are trying to harm it. Go ahead with your fight against such people.”

The state-controlled newspaper *Neutral Turkmenistan* accused Annakurban Amanklychev, Ogulsapar Muradova and Sapardurdy Khadzhiiev of passing "slandorous information" about Turkmenistan to Tadzhiigul Begmedova, the head of the THF in exile in Bulgaria, and her husband, "with the aim of sowing discontent among the population". The Minister of National Security also alleged that when secret service agents and police inspected Annakurban Amanklychev's car they found weapons and ammunition. However, there are strong indications that the authorities planted the "evidence" in order to fabricate a case against the dissident.

The authorities have also accused several European diplomats based in the capital, Ashgabat, including an official of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), of aiding "the traitors". A French Embassy official was accused of having passed on video equipment to Annakurban Amanklychev which, according to the authorities, he used for spying purposes and to "spoil" the image of Turkmenistan abroad. A French Foreign Ministry spokesperson was quoted by the news agency *Agence France Press* as stating that "it is not spying equipment, it is equipment for filming and for making reports about the country, which the Turkmen authorities ought [...] to welcome". In addition, the authorities accused Annakurban Amanklychev of having been "used for aims pursued by secret services abroad and subversive centres". In connection with this perceived aim Annakurban Amanklychev was accused of cooperating with journalists from the French media production company *Galaxie Presse* and a journalist for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The BBC journalist visited Turkmenistan earlier this year to record a programme on human rights and health in Turkmenistan, which was broadcast on the BBC World Service and BBC Radio 4.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Turkmen or your own language:

- expressing concern at the detention of Ogulsapar Muradova, Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhiiev, and that the three have not been guaranteed the rights afforded to detainees under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- expressing concern at credible allegations that they were detained solely to punish them for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- expressing concern at reports that the three were ill-treated in detention, and urging the authorities to investigate these reports fully and impartially and to take appropriate measures to ensure that none of the detainees is subjected to any form of ill-treatment;
- reminding the authorities of their obligation as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to ensure that "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression".

APPEALS TO:

President

President Saparmurad Niyazov
Presidential Palace, 744000 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

Fax: +993 12 35 51 12

Salutation: Dear President Niyazov

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Rashit Meredov
Minister 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 August 2006.