

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 61/007/2008
18 December 2008

Further Information on UA 99/08 (EUR 61/002/2008, 16 April 2008) and follow-ups (EUR 61/003/2008, 4 June 2008; EUR 61/006/2008, 13 October 2008) - Health concern/Possible prisoner of conscience

TURKMENISTAN

Valeri Pal (m), aged 60

Valeri Pal was released on 7 December from the prison in Mary city. He was one of 390 prisoners who were pardoned under a presidential amnesty before a national holiday (Neutrality Day) on 12 November.

Valeri Pal, who worked at an oil refinery in the Caspian port city of Turkmenbashi for most of his professional life, was detained by police in Turkmenbashi on the night of 21 February. The police said they were detaining him on suspicion of theft, in connection with a 2004 incident at his workplace.

On 13 May Turkmenbashi City Court found Valeri Pal guilty of crimes including "misappropriation of property," "abuse of power" and forgery, and sentenced him to 12 years' imprisonment. Valeri Pal's supporters believe the case against him was fabricated to punish him for his peaceful activities as a social activist who had taken part in protests against the renaming of his town, helped fellow citizens with various social problems and supported other activists and human rights defenders with his knowledge of information technology.

Valeri Pal and his family have asked for their thanks to be passed on to everyone who campaigned for his release.

No further action is requested from the UA Network. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals