

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 61/013/2006

14 September 2006

Further Information on UA 172/06 (EUR 61/003/2006, 19 June 2006) and follow-up (EUR 61/005/2006, 4 July 2006; EUR 61/012/2006; 31 August 2006) - Arbitrary detention/Fear of torture/unfair trial New concern: Death in custody

TURKMENISTAN

Ogulsapar Muradova (f), aged 58, journalist
Annakurban Amanklychev (m), aged 35
Sapardurdy Khadzhev (m), aged 47

Early on 14 September, officers from the Ministry of National Security of Turkmenistan informed Ogulsapar Muradova's relatives that she had died in custody. Amnesty International is concerned at allegations that she was subjected to torture and ill-treatment in detention and urges the authorities to conduct a thorough, prompt and independent investigation into her death.

Several officers from the Ministry of National Security came to Ogulsapar Muradova's flat early on 14 September and informed her three adult children, Berdy, Maral and Sona, of her death, before taking the three to the morgue in the capital, Ashgabat, where police officers were reportedly also present. The Ministry of National Security officers reportedly refused to disclose any information about the circumstances of her death, including the date when she died. The Ministry of National Security officers and police officers reportedly urged them to sign her death certificate. However, Berdy, Maral and Sona refused, and demanded to see her body first before signing the paper. Tadzhegul Begmedova, exiled director of the human rights group Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation, told Amnesty International: "The officers shouted at them and said, 'If you don't sign this you will never see her body.'"

Later, when the relatives returned to the morgue accompanied by a foreign diplomat, they were allowed to see Ogulsapar Muradova's body. Tadzhegul Begmedova told Amnesty International: "They saw a huge wound on her forehead and marks on her neck."

Despite persistent attempts by the relatives of Ogulsapar Muradova, Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhev to visit them in detention they have not been able to see them since their arrest in June. Ogulsapar Muradova's death heightens Amnesty International's concerns for the safety of Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhev.

Ogulsapar Muradova, Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhev were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in an unfair trial on 25 August. There are strong indications that the charges brought against them were fabricated to punish them for their human rights activities.

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

- expressing deep concern about the death in custody of Ogulsapar Muradova;
- urging the authorities to conduct a thorough, prompt, and independent investigation into the cause of her death; to keep Ogulsapar Muradova's relatives informed of all steps of the investigation and to make the results public;
- stating that Amnesty International adopted Ogulsapar Muradova, Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhev as prisoners of conscience, detained for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression in defence of human rights, and has called for their prompt and unconditional release;
- urging the authorities to give Annakurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Khadzhev immediate access to their relatives.

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 26 October 2006.