

**PUBLIC**

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**19 December 2003**

**Further Information on UA 148/02 (EUR 57/001/2002, 17 May 2002) and follow-ups (EUR 57/004/2002, 11 November 2002; EUR 57/001/2003, 21 February 2003; EUR 57/002/2003, 27 November 2003) - Death penalty/torture/ill-treatment**

**KAZAKSTAN**

**Mikhail Vershinin (m) aged 28  
Evgeniy Turochkin (m) aged 27  
Sergey Kopay (m) aged 36**

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On 18 December, the one-year reprieve on the death sentences of Mikhail Vershinin, Evgeniy Turochkin and Sergey Kopay expired, leading to concerns that they could be executed at any time. However, on the same day, it was announced that the President of Kazakhstan had signed a moratorium on executions the previous evening. The moratorium is due to come into force on 19 December

When Mikhail Vershinin's father, Sergey, heard the news, he wrote to Amnesty International, "Today the event that we have all been waiting for yet feared might never happen took place. I can hardly take it in. But it has happened. Mikhail's life has been saved!"

The President decreed that the moratorium on executions will be in place until legislation to enshrine the full abolition of the death penalty is introduced in 2004. The General Procuracy has been instructed to review all existing death sentences.

Appeals written by members of the UA network on behalf of the three men alerted the European Union (EU) to the imminent danger of their execution. On 11 December, the EU issued an official statement expressing concern at alleged executions in Kazakhstan in October and November and calling on the Kazak President to institute a moratorium on executions.

Mikhail Vershinin's family, who had placed their only hopes of stopping his execution in the intervention of the international community and Amnesty International, expressed their gratitude to all those who had written appeals: "Thank you enormously for all your efforts. We send you our most heartfelt words of thanks and wish you happiness."

**Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is required.**