

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 61/017/2007

26 July 2007

Further Information on UA 174/07 (EUR 61/015/2007, 05 July 2007) and follow-up (EUR 61/016/2007, 23 July 2007) – Prisoners of conscience

TURKMENISTAN

**Bayram Ashirgeldiev (m), aged 20
Nuryagdy Gairov (m), aged 27
Aleksandr Zuev (m), aged 27**

New name: Suleiman Udaev (m)

Nuryagdy Gairov was released on 23 July. Suleiman Udaev has reportedly been charged with "evasion of call-up to military service" and is awaiting trial on 3 August. The situation of Bayram Ashirgeldiev and Aleksandr Zuev is believed to be unchanged.

The prosecution had reportedly appealed against Nuryagdy Gairov's prison sentence on the grounds that it was "too harsh". On 23 July Ashgabat city court reportedly changed his 18-month prison sentence to a suspended sentence of one year. He was released that evening from Yashlyk prison, some 40km southeast of the capital, Ashgabat.

A Jehovah's Witnesses spokesman told Amnesty International on 26 July: "Members of Amnesty International acted promptly to draw international attention to the plight of Nuryagdy Gairov and Jehovah's Witnesses are grateful that such swift action has helped to bring about his freedom."

Amnesty International learnt on 26 July that Suleiman Udaev was charged with "evasion of call-up to military service" after refusing to serve in the army on conscientious grounds. Reportedly, he will stand trial on 3 August. He faces up to two years' imprisonment.

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

- expressing concern that Suleiman Udaev has been charged with "evasion of call-up to military service";
- pointing out that Amnesty International considers anyone detained or imprisoned solely because they have refused to serve in the army on conscientious grounds to be a prisoner of conscience and calls for their prompt and unconditional release;
- stating that Amnesty International calls for the suspended sentences handed down to conscientious objectors Nuryagdy Gairov, Bayram Ashirgeldiev and Aleksandr Zuev to be revoked;
- calling on the authorities to introduce legislation to ensure that a civilian alternative of non-punitive length is available to all those whose conscientiously held beliefs preclude them from performing military service.

APPEALS TO:

Kurbanguly Berdymuhammedov
President of Turkmenistan
Presidential Administration
744000 Ashgabat
TURKMENISTAN

Fax: +993 12 355112

Salutation: Dear President Berdymuhammedov

Rashid Meredov
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Magtymkuli ave., 85
744000 Ashgabat
TURKMENISTAN

Fax: +993 12 39 28 50
Email: mfatm@online.tm
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Shirin Akhmedova
Director of the Turkmen National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights
ul. Navoi 86
744000 Ashgabat
TURKMENISTAN
Email: nidhr@online.tm

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 September 2007.