



## PRESS-RELEASE

### EU-Supported Regional Conference on Torture Prevention Almaty, 27-29 May 2014

**Dushanbe, 27 May 2014** – At a conference on “The Role of Civil Society Institutions in the Prevention of Torture: Experience of the NGO Coalitions Against Torture in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan”, to be held in Almaty from 27 to 29 May 2014, an informal network of regional NGOs from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will be established to jointly combat torture.

The conference will bring together over 60 Central Asian NGO activists, representatives of international human rights groups and donor organizations. Foreign diplomats with an interest in strengthening torture prevention in Central Asia will also be among the conference participants.

The conference provides a platform for NGO activists and experts to share experience and know-how during panel discussions on topics including monitoring and documenting torture cases, providing legal aid to torture survivors, the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (“Istanbul Protocol”), and strategic advocacy and media work.

In addition, conference participants will set up working groups on topics of mutual interest such as an analytical working group to coordinate the monitoring of various aspects of freedom from torture and develop analytical materials at the regional level; a legal aid working group to exchange information on the practical aspects of the defense of torture victims; and an advocacy working group for joint advocacy activities at the national, regional and international levels. These working groups are envisaged to become an integral part of the coalitions’ future anti-torture work as they will become focal points on their respective topics of expertise and provide other coalition members with information and know-how.

The conference is being organized within the EU-funded project “Action for freedom from torture in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan”, which is being implemented by NGO coalitions against torture in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan together with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland) and the International Partnership for Human Rights (Belgium). Co-sponsors contributing to the Almaty conference are the Open Society Foundations and the National Endowment for Democracy.

It is planned to hold a second regional NGO conference on torture prevention in 2016 in Tajikistan.

**For further information, please contact:** Lenur Kerymov, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland), Project Coordinator, Mob. +48504080257, email: [L.Kerymov@hfhrpol.waw.pl](mailto:L.Kerymov@hfhrpol.waw.pl)

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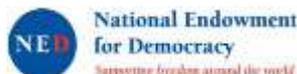
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The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders. To this end the EU is active in Tajikistan since 1992 and provides approximately EUR 25 million annually in development assistance.

**Co-sponsors of the project:**



**NGO organizers of the conference:**

