



Briefing on the protection of fundamental rights in Kazakhstan for EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue, November 2015

Freedom of expression and the media

Repression of media pluralism

The situation with respect to media pluralism remains of serious concern in Kazakhstan. In the past year, there have been new cases of forced media closures.

The *ADAM bol* magazine, well-known for its frank coverage of corruption, human rights and other politically sensitive issues, was closed down by court in December 2014 over an article deemed to contain elements of “war propaganda”. This article featured an interview with a Kiev-based Kazakhstani opposition figure who called for supporting the Ukrainian authorities in their struggle against separatist forces during the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine. The month before this decision was handed down, the court ordered the publication of the weekly to be suspended – as a preventive measure. The decision was upheld on appeal.¹

Following the closure of *ADAM bol*, its journalists initiated a new magazine, *ADAM*. This magazine was also soon subjected to repressive measures. In September 2015, the publication of *ADAM* was suspended by court for three months because the first editions of the magazine were issued only in Russian, although it had indicated both Russian and Kazakh as languages of publication when registering in March 2015. In order not to lose its readers, *ADAM* continued to post information on its Facebook page after the suspension. This prompted further measures from prosecutors, who requested that the previously closed *ADAM bol*, *ADAM*, as well as *ADAM*'s Facebook page be deemed a “unified media outlet”, as well as that *ADAM*'s license be revoked and a ban imposed on *ADAM* to publish its materials in any form off- or online. This request was upheld by court on 22 October 2015 and *ADAM* was closed down.²

It is also of major concern that punitive defamation suits continue to be brought against media outlets and journalists by public actors who demand excessive sums in compensation for alleged damages to their reputation.



In June 2015, the owner of the **Nakanune.kz** domain was ordered by court to pay 20 million Tenge (about 75 000 EUR) in compensation to *Kazkommertsbank*, Kazakhstan's largest private bank, over an article published in October 2014 that was found defamatory. This article referred to allegations made in a letter received by the editors of the portal about corruption relating to construction projects commissioned by Almaty authorities, as well as the possible role of *Kazkommertsbank* in such schemes. The decision, as a result of which the portal is under the threat of bankruptcy and closure, was upheld on appeal in August 2015. Currently its representatives are planning to file a cassation appeal.

In another case, on 8 September 2015, *ADAM's* chief editor was ordered to pay 50 million tenge (some 180 000 EUR) in moral compensation to the deputy head of the National Security Committee over an article published the previous month. This article reported allegations about the involvement of the security service official in unlawful actions. Later *ADAM* published a correction, saying these allegations were based on incorrect information. In spite of this, the court awarded the claimant compensation to the full amount he requested. The decision was upheld on appeal.

The OSCE Media Representative on Freedom of the Media has repeatedly criticized measures undermining media pluralism and freedom in Kazakhstan, including in cases mentioned above. In a statement issued in October 2015, she stated that: "The punitive practice of unduly obstructing free expression and free media in Kazakhstan should be reversed immediately". She also said that sanctions limiting such freedoms are only acceptable if they "comply with established international standards" and are "proportionate and necessary for the protection of the fundamental rights of others".³

The misuse of Criminal Code provisions to stifle freedom of expression

The new Criminal Code, which entered into force in January 2015, retains sanctions for the broadly and vaguely worded offenses of "inciting" social, inter-ethnic or other "discord" (article 174) and "spreading false information" (article 274), which both lend themselves to enforcement unduly restricting freedom of expression. The new Criminal Code also introduced another vaguely worded provision (article 180) prohibiting propaganda and public appeals threatening the "the unity and integrity" of Kazakhstan or the "inviolability and inalienability" of its territory, which may likewise be used to criminalize the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression. In addition, the new Criminal Code retains sanctions for defamation and offers special protection to public officials in this regard, despite the calls of media watchdogs to decriminalize defamation and the position taken by international human rights bodies that criminal defamation must not be used to obstruct criticism and scrutiny of the actions of officials.

In a worrying trend, in the last few months, there has been a growing number of cases where these problematic Criminal Code provisions have been used to initiate charges against journalists, activists and other individuals exercising their right to freedom of expression and other fundamental rights.

These are recent cases of concern on "inciting discord":

- On 12 October 2015, police detained civil society activist **Ermek Narymbaev** and political activist **Serikzhan Mambetalin** in Almaty on charges of "inciting inter-ethnic discord". Three days later, on 15 October 2015, a local court sanctioned the arrest of the two activists for two months pending

an investigation into the charges against them. The detention of the activists took place the same day as representatives of the patriotic movement *Zheltoksan Akikat* held a press conference⁴ calling for the activists to be held responsible for “offending the Kazakh people” through social media posts. In these social media posts, the activists re-posted and commented on texts that previously had been posted on online portals with attribution to a book written by Murat Telibekov, head of the Muslim Union of Kazakhstan. Telibekov tried to publish the book in question over 20 years ago, but it was never published at that time since the whole print run was destroyed at the printing house allegedly for “technical” reasons. He has not tried to re-publish it since and has denied having anything to do with the online publication of the texts said to be from his book. If Narymbaev and Mambetalin are found guilty, they could face lengthy prison sentences.

- In June this year, **Murat Telibekov** was himself informed that a criminal case on “inciting inter-ethnic discord” had been opened against him over the book he tried to publish two decades ago. This was done on the basis of a complaint from a group of public figures who claimed that the book was offensive to the national honour and integrity of Kazakhs. In mid-October 2015, however, prosecutors suspended the criminal proceedings against Telibekov pending an inquiry into the online texts attributed to his book. Telibekov believes that the criminal case against him was related to his attempt to run as an independent candidate in the April 2015 presidential elections, for which he was not able to register since he did not pass the required Kazakh language exam.
- In October 2015, a criminal case was opened against civic activist **Bolatbek Blyalov** on charges of “inciting social discord” because of social media posts. Police searched his Astana home, confiscating a computer, mobile phones and documents on 30 October and detained him on 9 November. Two days later, a court sanctioned his arrest for two months⁵, under part two of Criminal Code article 174, which foresees harsher penalties for “inciting discord” for “leaders of public associations”. According to Blyalov’s lawyer⁶, the charges against his client concern in particular video clips posted on YouTube. Blyalov has expressed his views on a range of issues on social media, including sensitive ones such as those related to nationalism. He heads an NGO called the Democracy and Human Rights Institute and has, among others, provided legal assistance to citizens in cases concerning property confiscations and demolitions. He is also an active member of the Antiheptyl movement, which campaigns against the launching of Russian space rockets powered by a toxic heptyl fuel from the Baikodur Cosmodrome located in Kazakhstan’s desert steppe.
- In another case that is of concern in the light of freedom of expression, blogger **Ermek Taychibekov**, has been charged with “inciting inter-ethnic discord” over social media posts on the basis of a complaint from an Almaty resident. A local court in the Zhambyl region began hearing the case on 4 November 2015, and since then a number of court hearings have taken place. KIBHR is monitoring the court proceedings. Taychibekov has, in particular, argued that Kazakhstan should join Russia in his online writings and is known for expressing other “pro-Russian” views. Prior to the start of the court proceedings, he was subjected to a forcible psychiatric examination aimed at determining whether he was fit to stand trial.⁷

In this case, a human rights defender is facing charges of “spreading false information” for posting information about torture allegations:

- A criminal case on “spreading false information” through the use of media and social media was opened against Pavlodar-based human rights defender **Elena Semenova**, who is a member of the Kazakhstani NGO Coalition against Torture, the Public Monitoring Commission (PMC) and the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture (NPM), in October 2015. On 30 October, she was summoned for questioning. The case against Semenova concerns posts she made on Facebook about allegations of the use of torture and ill-treatment in prison facilities in the Pavlodar region. It was opened following a complaint from the head of the region’s prison system administration, who claimed that her posts create a risk of “violations of public order” among prisoners. Semenova documented allegations of torture during discussions held with prisoners when she visited regional prisons together with other PMC and NPM members, and in some cases representatives of the prosecutor’s office. This information has also been used for dozens of complaints submitted to various authorities.⁸ The NGO Coalition against Torture said that it considers the case against Semenova an attempt to prevent information about violations of the rights of prisoners from becoming publicly known, as well as a warning to other PMC and NPM members.⁹

In this case, a social media administrator was convicted under the new Criminal Code article prohibiting calls for separatism after posting an online survey:

- **Igor Sychev** was charged with propagating separatism through the use of media because of a survey posted on the public *Vkontakte* page he co-administers in spring 2015. The survey in question asked readers to imagine that a vote would be held in the city of Ridder and to express their opinion as to whether East Kazakhstan – where Ridder is located – should join the Russian Federation. Sychev has said that he did not create the survey, but only agreed to post it on the *Vkontakte* page and that he removed it after concerns were raised about it. He denied having any separatist intentions. However, on 18 November, a Ridder court found him guilty and sentenced him to five years in prison.¹⁰ Sychev’s lawyer said that they are appealing the verdict.

In these two cases, the individuals concerned were convicted on criminal defamation charges for criticizing the actions of court officials:

- On 29 October 2015, it was reported that a local court in the South Kazakhstan Region had sentenced **Amangeldy Batyrbekov** – head of the Adilet public association – to one and a half years of deprivation of liberty on charges of defamation. These charges related to an article published in Adilet’s newspaper in April 2015 where Batyrbekov questioned the lawfulness of the actions of the region’s deputy prosecutor in two legal cases. Batyrbekov was hoping to attract the attention on the General Prosecutor to these cases.¹¹
- On 30 June 2015, a court in the city of Kostanay convicted lawyer **Bulat Baytyakov** of defaming a judge and sentenced him to one year of restricted freedom because of appeals filed in a labour dispute in court. In that case, when arguing his position, he requested that the lawfulness of the actions of the judge dealing with the case be investigated. As pointed out in a statement issued by KIBHR, IPHR and four other NGOs¹², the criminal charges against Baytyakov are of concern both in the light of the right to freedom of expression and the right and duty of lawyers to protect the interests of their clients. A legal opinion issued by the International Commission of Jurists also

found an interference with his right to freedom of expression and his rights as a lawyer.¹³ The conviction of Baytyakov was upheld on appeal in August 2015.

Blocking of websites

Cases of arbitrary blocking of news sites, social media sites and other websites are regularly reported. In a recent example, in September 2015, the popular information and analytical portal **Ratel.kz** and one of the oldest news sites in the country, **Zonakz.net** were blocked without any court decision sanctioning such a measure and without any official explanation. At the end of November 2015, the two sites remained unavailable.

It is also of concern that access to online resources sometimes is fully blocked because of allegations that certain material posted on such resources is of an “extremist” or “terrorist” nature. For example, in September 2015, access to, among others, the popular video hosting site **vimeo.com** was blocked after an Astana court approved a request to this end made by the Committee on Communications and Information of the Ministry of Investments and Development, the body in charge of monitoring and tracking down unlawful content on the internet. The following month access to the site was eventually restored after the material found unlawful on it had been removed. In November 2015, access to the popular blog platform **LiveJournal** was also finally restored -- after four years. The site was blocked for allegedly hosting “extremist” and “terrorist” content in 2011.

At a forum on counteracting violent extremism in Central Asia that was held in Astana in September 2015 and attended by representatives of security services and law enforcement authorities from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were singled out as social media sites that contain “extremist” and “terrorist” propaganda. A representative of Kazakhstan’s Committee on Communications and Information spoke about what he said was a lack of control over what is posted on these sites, as well as difficulties in cooperating with them on counteracting the spread of illegal information.¹⁴ The statements made at this forum gave rise to concerns that access to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube may also be restricted in the country. In another recent development, the need for separate legislation regulating social media has been proposed, among others, by MPs.

In the summer of 2015, the chair of the Committee on Communications and Information stated that this body is also working on tracking down and blocking so-called proxies, which are used to circumvent internet censorship and access otherwise inaccessible sites.

Freedom of association and assembly

Concerns about legislation affecting NGOs

The new Criminal Code that entered into force in January 2015 contains a number of provisions that threaten freedom of association of NGOs. Among others, it sets out penalties for members of public associations for “unlawful interference” in the activities of state agencies and characterizes “leaders” of public associations as a separate category of offenders. The new Administrative Code retains provisions

that allow courts to suspend and terminate the activities of public associations for any violation of national law, no matter how minor.

There are also concerns that draft legislation that the government submitted to the parliament this summer may result in a worsening operating environment for NGOs. This draft legislation, which primarily introduces amendments to the 2004 Law on the State Social Order, contains vaguely and ambiguously worded provisions that risk creating legal uncertainty and lending themselves to implementation restricting the activities of NGOs. The draft legislation was approved by the *Majlis* (the lower house of the parliament) in late September 2015 and adopted by the Senate in the second reading on 5 November 2015. It is now pending signature by the president: if it is signed by him, it will enter into force.

As detailed in an analysis¹⁵ by KIBHR Chair of the Board Yevgeniy Zhovtis, the draft legislation contains a number of problematic and vaguely worded provisions that could result in restrictions of the freedom of association of NGOs.

In accordance with the draft legislation, the Ministry of Culture and Sports would be granted new broad powers to monitor and oversee the activities of NGOs. This would add to the extensive reporting requirements that already exist for NGOs and provide for discriminatory treatment of NGOs in relation to other types of legal entities. In particular, the Ministry of Culture and Sports would be in charge of overseeing a new government database on NGOs, to which NGOs would be required to provide information. Failure by NGOs to provide required or “correct” information to the Ministry could result in that they are fined or suspended for three months under the Code on Administrative Offenses.

The draft legislation further foresees the establishment of a new body, a so-called operator that would be in charge of allocating both state and non-state grants to NGOs. Its powers would also extend to grants provided by international and foreign organizations “on a voluntary basis”. No details are provided with respect to how this body would be set up or how it would carry out its work, giving rise to concerns as to how the impartiality and transparency of its decisions would be ensured.

The draft legislation also contains problematic wording, according to which grants regulated by it would be allocated to NGOs for work in certain listed areas of activities, which do not include, among others, human rights protection. This provision is not consistent with existing legislation, in particular the Law on Non-commercial Organizations, which sets out a much broader scope with respect to the areas in which such organizations can operate. Representatives of the government have indicated that the provision in question is not intended to restrict the areas of work of NGOs; however, however, as currently worded, it is open to such an interpretation and creates uncertainty.

While representatives of NGOs have actively taken part in the discussion of the draft legislation at all stages, their suggestions on key aspects have been disregarded. In a joint appeal issued in September 2015¹⁶, several dozen Kazakhstani human rights NGOs voiced their concerns about the draft legislation on NGOs and called on the president to ensure that it is reviewed in terms of its compliance with national and international human rights standards, as well as to veto it if needed. The office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Special Representative on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association have also warned that the draft law, if adopted in its current format, may result in violations of international human rights standards.¹⁷

Threat of closure of trade unions

The new Trade Union Law that entered into force in July 2014 requires mandatory affiliation of trade unions to regional, branch or federal trade union structures, depending on the level on which they operate. Among others, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association has criticized the requirements of the new law, saying that the law “denies trade unions the right to freely form and join labour organizations of their choice”.¹⁸

Trade unions were given one year to comply with the new requirement and re-register, by 10 July 2015. The independent Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Kazakhstan (CFTUK) sounded alarm that several hundred trade unions that had not re-registered when this deadline expired were at the treat of closure.¹⁹ As the deadline was approaching, local authorities sent notifications to trade unions, warning them that they may face liquidation lawsuits if they failed to re-register.

In an appeal to the president sent in September 2015, the independent Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Kazakhstan (CFTUK) stated that this federation and its member unions have not been able to re-register because authorities first repeatedly returned their registration documents due to alleged mistakes and thereafter refused to grant re-registration because the deadline had expired.²⁰

Closure of opposition party

In another step undermining the political opposition in Kazakhstan, the Communist Party was closed down this summer:

- On 3 August 2015, an Almaty court ruled to liquidate the Communist Party at the request of the Ministry of Justice, which claimed that the party had reported an incorrect number of members when obtaining registration and that the actual number was below the required 40 000. The trial was conducted in the absence of the Communist Party, which learned about the ruling only 10 days later. The Communist Party considered the ruling, which was upheld on appeal, to be politically motivated. The party's activities were suspended on the same grounds in December 2014. Its activities have also previously been suspended on several occasions.

Restrictions on freedom of assembly

The approach of the authorities to peaceful assemblies remains repressive. While current legislation requires the organizers of assemblies to obtain permission in advance, permission is often denied on different pretexts or protests are only allowed in remotely located venues that have been specifically designated for this purpose. Peaceful unauthorized protests are regularly dispersed by police and organizers and participants are detained and brought to justice, resulting in warnings, fines and arrests. The new Administrative Code provides for fines and up to 15 days of arrest, and the new Criminal Code for up to 75 days of arrest for violations of the rules on holding assemblies. Trials in these cases are frequently marred by fair trial and due process violations.

In the past year, numerous peaceful protests held on socio-economic issues, such as the de-evaluation of the national currency, mass dismissals, problems facing mortgage-holders, and forcible evictions have been dispersed and participants detained. Children have sometimes been apprehended along with their parents when participating in protests, and journalists have repeatedly been detained when covering unauthorized assemblies. Authorities also continue to use the tactics of “preventive” detentions of civil society activists ahead of planned protests.

Well-known civil society activist **Ermek Narymbaev** has repeatedly been targeted by police for exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly:

- On 3 July 2015, police officers arrived at the Almaty apartment of Ermek Narymbaev and tried to detain him for having organized an event at the Republic Square on 28 June. At that event, about two dozen participants laid down flowers in connection with the mass death of endangered Saiga antelopes in western Kazakhstan, which activists have linked to the operation of a space program in this region. The police officers declined to show Narymbaev relevant documentation, despite his requests, and eventually they left. The following day, a local court sentenced Narymbaev to 15 days’ administrative arrest for violating the rules for holding assemblies.²¹ A few weeks later, on 20 August, Narymbaev was detained outside his office after announcing on Facebook that he planned to go to the Republic Square in Almaty to protest the devaluation of the national currency. He was subsequently sentenced to 20 days’ administrative arrest for organizing an “unsanctioned” assembly, as well as for contempt of court.²² As already described above, in mid-October 2015, Ermek Narymbaev was again apprehended by police, this time because of posts made on social media and currently he remains in custody on charges of “inciting inter-ethnic discord”.

UN Special Rapporteur report

The outcome report²³ on the Kazakhstan mission undertaken by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in January this year was made public in June 2015. The report contains serious criticism regarding current legislation and policies infringing freedom of association and assembly in Kazakhstan and provides a set of recommendations to the authorities of the country for how to improve the current situation. The Special Rapporteur concluded, among others, that “a web of laws and practices” limits freedom of association in the country and that the government’s approach to regulating assemblies “deprives the right of its meaning”.²⁴ In a statement welcoming the report of the Special Rapporteur, KIBHR and IPHR urged the EU and other international partners to prominently raise the issues detailed in the report with Kazakhstan’s government and to insist on the implementation of the recommendations contained in it.²⁵

Individual cases of concern

In addition to the cases of Ermek Narymbaev, Serikzhan Mambetalin, Murat Telibekov, Bolatbek Blyalov, Ermek Taychibekov, Elena Semenova, Igor Sychev, Amangeldy Batyrbekov and Bulat Baytyakov described above, we urge the EU to raise concerns about the following individuals who have been imprisoned on charges deemed politically motivated after unfair trials:

- In the recent period, pressure has increased on imprisoned Alga opposition party leader **Vladimir Kozlov**. In particular, in July 2015, he was subjected to stricter prison conditions with restrictions on communication, contacts with family etc. after first being placed in solitary confinement for 10 days for allegedly threatening the prison administration. Because of this, he is currently not eligible for release on parole, for which he could otherwise qualify after having served half of his sentence, which was the case in October 2015. Kozlov is serving a 7.5-year sentence on charges relating to his alleged role in the 2011 Zhanaozen events.
- Imprisoned human rights defender **Vadim Kuramshin** has continued to report facing harassment by prison authorities, including by repeatedly being penalized for alleged violations of prison rules. He has launched several hunger strikes to protest his treatment. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison on extortion charges believed to be retaliation for his human rights work in 2012.
- Poet and dissident **Aron Atabek**, who is serving an 18-year sentence for allegedly organizing riots in 2006, has submitted numerous complaints to court about his treatment in prison, including harsh conditions, restrictions on access to medical assistance, limited contacts with the outside world and confiscation of his manuscripts. Most recently, a complaint filed by him was rejected by the Supreme Court in October 2015.²⁶ His lawyer announced plans to bring the case to the UN Human Rights Committee.

Recommendations

The Kazakhstani authorities should be requested to take the following steps:

Freedom of expression and the media

- Put an end to the trend of forced closures of independent and opposition media and allow such media to operate without undue interference.
- Revise the Administrative Code to ensure that media outlets cannot be suspended or closed down for violations of technical requirements, as also recommended by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media; and establish upper limits for the amounts of moral damages that can be awarded in any defamation lawsuits.
- Revoke or revise Criminal Code provisions that may be used to restrict the exercise of freedom of expression in violation of international standards; and ensure that no one is criminally charged or convicted for exercising this right in peaceful and legitimate ways.
- Put an end to arbitrary blocking of websites and ensure that any measure to limit access to online content deemed unlawful is strictly necessary, limited to that specific content and sanctioned by court in full accordance with due process standards.

Freedom of association and assembly

- Take concrete and effective measures to implement the recommendations made by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in the outcome report on his mission to Kazakhstan in January 2015.
- Amend provisions of the new Criminal and Administrative Codes that impose restrictions on freedom of association and assembly that are incompatible with Kazakhstan's international human rights obligations.
- The president should refrain from signing the draft law on NGOs in its current format and instead refer it for further review and revision to ensure that all its provisions are clear, unambiguous and consistent with international standards protecting the right to freedom of association and other fundamental rights.
- Safeguard the right to freedom of association of trade unions and political parties and ensure that such organizations are not denied registration or closed down in violation of international human rights standards.
- Elaborate a new Law on Assemblies in close cooperation with civil society to ensure a legal framework that serves to uphold this right; allow peaceful protests to take place without undue interference by authorities; and refrain from penalizing the organizers and participants in assemblies held without prior authorization.

Individual cases of concern

- Drop the charges of "inciting national discord" against activists Ermek Narymbaev, Serikzhan Mambetalin, Murat Telibekov, Bolatbek Blyalov and Ermek Taychibekov and promptly release those of them who are currently held in detention.
- Close the case on "spreading false information" opened against human rights defender Elena Semenova for posting information about torture allegations.
- Clear social media administrator Igor Sychev of "separatism" charges because of the survey posted on the *Vkontakte* page he administers.
- Clear lawyer Bulat Baytyakov and activist Amangeldy Batyrbekov of criminal defamation charges and repeal their sentences.
- Release opposition leader Vladimir Kozlov, human rights defender Vadim Kuramshin and poet/dissident Aron Atabek on the grounds that their convictions were handed down in unfair trials that fell short of international standards. As long as they remain in prison, protect their safety and well-being and ensure that they are not penalized for alleged violations of prison rules as a form of retaliation.

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- ¹ See statement by International Partnership for Human Rights, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, “Kazakhstan court upholds newspaper’s closure over Ukraine coverage”, 27 February 2015, at <http://www.iphronline.org/kazakhstan-court-upholds-newspapers-closure-over-ukraine-coverage-20150227.html>
- ² For more information about this case, see reports by Adil Soz at <http://www.adilsoz.kz/news/show/id/1869> and <http://www.adilsoz.kz/news/show/id/1864>
- ³ “Shutdown of yet another independent magazine in Kazakhstan a further sign of deteriorating media freedom, OSCE Representative says”, 27 October 2015, at <http://www.osce.org/fom/194796>
- ⁴ See KIBHR, “Доносим до вашего сведения”, 12 October 2015, http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/donosim_do_vashego_svedeniya
- ⁵ See Radio Azzatyk, “Активист Болатбек Бялялов арестован на два месяца”, 12 November 2015, at <http://rus.azattyq.org/archive/news-azattyq/20151112/360/360.html?id=27359403>
- ⁶ See “Репрессивная осень переходит в репрессивную зиму”, 23 November 2015, http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/repressivnaya_osen_perekhodit_v_repressivnuyu_zimu
- ⁷ For more information, see KIBHR, “Процесс Ермака Тайчибекова: первые впечатления”, 7 November 2015, http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/process_ermeka_taichibekova:_pervye_vpechatleniya; and “Репрессивная осень переходит в репрессивную зиму”, 23 November 2015, http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/repressivnaya_osen_perekhodit_v_repressivnuyu_zimu
- ⁸ For more information on the case, see KIBHR info at http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/obratnyi_yeffekt
- ⁹ The statement by the NGO Coalition against Torture from 3 November 2015 is available at: http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/zayavlenie_po_elene_semenovoy
- ¹⁰ Radio Azzatyk, “В Риддере осужден блогер по делу о призывах к сепаратизму”, 18 November 2015, at <http://rus.azattyq.mobi/a/blogger-igor-sychev-sud-prigovor/27373262.html>
- ¹¹ Adil Soz, “Лидер движения «Әділет» Амангельды Батырбеков стал новым узником свободы слова”, 29 October 2015, at <http://www.adilsoz.kz/news/show/id/1878#sthash.nXgBnoa2.dpuf>
- ¹² Statement by KIBHR, IPHR, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Article 19 and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, “Kazakhstan: Clear lawyer of criminal defamation charges!”, 14 July 2015, at <http://iphronline.org/kazakhstan-clear-lawyer-of-criminal-defamation-charges-20150714.html>
- ¹³ The legal opinion of the International Commission of Jurists is available at: <http://www.icj.org/icj-legal-opinion-in-the-case-of-kazakhstan-lawyer-bulat-baitayakov/>
- ¹⁴ See <http://khabar.kz/ru/news/obshchestvo/item/34506-nazvany-sotsseti-prepyatstvuyushchie-presecheniyu-verbovki-kazakhstantsev>
- ¹⁵ Available at http://bureau.kz/en/news/kibhr_information/statement_on_the_adoption_of_the_law_on_ngo_main
- ¹⁶ The appeal (in Russian) is available at: http://misk.org.kz/news/?ELEMENT_ID=801
- ¹⁷ Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Kazakhstan: Human Rights Office concerned at NGO law”, 8 October 2015, at <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16585&LangID=E>; UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, “New draft law threatens the independence and existence of NGOs in Kazakhstan, warns UN rights expert”, 15 October 2015, at <http://freeassembly.net/rapporteurpressnews/kazakhstan-ngo-law/>
- ¹⁸ See report by the UN Special Rapporteur on his mission to Kazakhstan in January 2015, available at <http://freeassembly.net/rapporteurreports/kazakhstan/>
- ¹⁹ See Address of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the International Community, August 2015, at <http://www.kspk.org/index.php/tribune/statements/item/55-address-of-the-confederation-of-free-trade-unions-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-to-the-international-community>
- ²⁰ See appeal to the president by Confederation of Free Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan (in Russian), September 2015, at the <http://www.kspk.org/index.php/tribune/statements/item/57-prezidentu-respubliki-kazakhstan-nazarbaevu-n-a-ot-konfederatsii-svobodnykh-profsoyuzov-kazakhstana>
- ²¹ See more detailed information in this KIBHR article from 8 July 2015: http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/my_stali_bezmolvnymi_saigakami
- ²² See more detailed information in this KIBHR article from 21 August 2015: http://bureau.kz/novosti/sobstvennaya_informaciya/novaya_devalvaciya_novoe_presechenie_nedovolstva
- ²³ The report of the UN Special Rapporteur is available at <http://freeassembly.net/rapporteurreports/kazakhstan/>

²⁴ See “UN expert warns Kazakhstan against using ‘stability’ as excuse to curtail rights, voices concern at surveillance of sources”, 28 January 2015 and the related statement at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15518&LangID=E#sthash.P4X042hI.dpuf>

²⁵ See also statement issued by KIBHR and IPHR on 18 June 2015, at <http://iphronline.org/kazakhstan-un-expert-highlights-key-freedom-of-association-and-assembly-concerns.html>

²⁶ Radio Azzatyq, “Верховный суд отклонил жалобу Арона Атабека”, 22 October 2015, at <http://rus.azattyq.org/archive/news-azattyq/20151022/360/360.html?id=27319948>