



NEWS

Yerimbetov's parents calling on USA to include Kazakh officials in "Magnitsky list"

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The parents of 46-year-old Kazakhstan businessman Iskander Yerimbetov, who is under investigation and being held in an Almaty investigative isolator (SIZO), have called on the USA to include the Kazakhstan persons carrying out the illegal, in their words, criminal prosecution of their son and his colleagues Vasilina Sokolenko, Dmitry Pestov, and Mikhail Zorov in the "Magnitsky list". Yerimbetov's father and mother – Myrzakhan and Gayni Yerimbetov – reported about this today at a press conference in Almaty.

Serving as grounds for the call to include the corresponding Kazakhstan persons in the "Magnitsky list", in the opinion of the Yerimbetovs, is that their son, who is under investigation and being held in an Almaty SIZO, had previously been subjected on numerous occasions, according to the assertions of his parents, to beatings on the part of convicted cellmates with the knowledge of employees of the SIZO, as well as to pressure on the part of KNB employees. Thus, Gayni Yerimbetova described the details of one of the beatings of her son in the following manner: "One of the criminals pulled a metal rod out of a bunk bed, very stiff and heavy, in order to beat Yerimbetov, but it turned out to be unwieldy for him. Then he asked the security guard, a police employee, and that one threw a wooden stick into the cell. They wrapped a wet towel around this wooden stick, in order not to leave traces. They were beating Yerimbetov on the head and the body with this stick with the wet towel wrapped around it." The criminals were trying, in the words of Gayni Yerimbetova, to force her son Iskander Yerimbetov to collaborate with the organs of the KNB.

During the time of interrogations of her son Iskander Yerimbetov, as Gayni Yerimbetova asserts, KNB employees were demanding of him that he talk his sister, Bota Jardemalie, into returning to Kazakhstan and giving testimony against Mukhtar Ablyazov, for whom Jardemalie worked as legal counsel. The KNB employees, in the words of Gayni Yerimbetova, were threatening Iskander Yerimbetov that they would arrest his 69-year-old father, Myrzakhan Yerimbetov, as well as his 20-year-old son, demanding that he confess that he had supposedly taken money from Mukhtar Ablyazov. The KNB employees, according to her words, likewise demanded of Iskander Yerimbetov that he telephone the mother on 5 December and tell her that he is refusing the lawyer the parents had hired for him, and that he ask her to call off the first press conference. "Because they were threatening him, Iskander was forced to call me and say what they were demanding from him. This was our first contact from the moment of Iskander's arrest on 13 November," says Gayni Yerimbetova.

Human rights advocate Bakhytzhan Toregozhina reported that a complaint about the torture in relation to Iskander Yerimbetov had been sent to the

name of the procurator-general. From there the complaint was, in her words, re-directed to the procuracy of Almaty, and from there – to the department of the criminal-execution [*penal—Trans.*] system for the city of Almaty, against the actions of the employees of an institution (the SIZO) of which the complaint had been received in the first place.

The previous day, 9 January, investigative judge of the Medeu District of the city of Almaty Anina Maydauletova had extended Iskander Yerimbetov's detention under arrest by two months – to 13 March. On that same day, 9 January, Iskander Yerimbetov's lawyer Zhanara Balgabayeva gave permission for a photocopy to be made of her client's complaint written in his own hand about the anti-sanitary conditions of his confinement in the SIZO, in particular the presence of bedbugs.

Iskander Yerimbetov and another three persons were taken into custody in Almaty on 13 November of last year on suspicion of "theft" and "money laundering". On 15 December, the investigative court sanctioned the arrest of the figurants in the "Yerimbetov case" for two months and put a lien on their property, while they were put into an investigative isolator.

The investigation is asserting that the suspects are supposedly involved in the laundering and legalization of tens of millions of dollars, taken out, as the authorities are asserting, earlier from BTA Bank by the former head of this bank, now living beyond the frontier, Mukhtar Ablyazov. Iskander Yerimbetov is likewise suspected of stealing around a billion tenge in budgetary funds [*public money—Trans.*] "through a company under his control". According to the investigators' story, the suspect Yerimbetov and his alleged accomplices were acting "jointly in the financial interests of persons hiding from Kazakhstan justice beyond the frontier".