



Mady Delvaux-Stehres
Member of the European Parliament

Mrs Dalia Grybauskaitė
President of the Republic of Lithuania
S. Daukanto a. 3
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Dear Mrs President,

As a Member of the European Parliament, I would like to draw your attention to the case of Mr Syrym Shalabayev, currently taking place in Lithuania. Mr Shalabayev is a Kazakh citizen and a brother-in-law of Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov, Kazakh dissident and co-founder of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan political party. In a broader action of repression by the Kazakh authorities and due to the political activity of his brother-in-law, Mr Shalabayev had been placed on an international Interpol wanted list by Kazakhstan and was, subsequently, arrested in Vilnius in July, 2015.

I have been following the developments within the area of human rights violations in Kazakhstan, including the current crackdown on Kazakh political opposition and non-governmental media in the country and abroad. That is why I have decided to address you about the broader, political context of the case of Mr Shalabayev.

Mr Syrym Shalabayev, just as his sister Mrs Alma Shalabayeva, who is also the wife of Mr Mukhtar Ablyazov, has become a victim of the political persecution lead by the Kazakh authorities against the main political opponent of the Kazakh President Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev. In 2013, Mrs Shalabayeva, along with her 6-year old daughter was *de facto* kidnapped from Italy to Kazakhstan, with the illegal use of the Interpol communication channels, to be finally released thanks to broad international criticism and pressure on the Kazakh authorities. After the initial failure to address the case properly, the Italian authorities recognized its political context and granted Mrs Shalabayeva and her daughter political asylum, upon their return to Italy. Similarly, several relatives and ex-colleagues of Mr Ablyazov have received international protection in a number of EU Member States (i.a. Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), including Mr Kuanysh Nurgazin, an uncle of Mr Ablyazov, in Lithuania.

Therefore, following these decisions and the voices of many other parliamentarians and human rights defenders from the EU, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, I kindly ask you to intervene in this case, not to allow Mr Shalabayev's extradition to Kazakhstan or Ukraine. I am convinced that the EU should protect third-country citizens at clear risk of ill-treatment in their home countries. Since Lithuanian authorities decided in May 2015 to provide Mr Shalabayev a temporary international protection, in light of the above, I would also call for an extension of this provisional method to a full international protection status.

In my opinion, the case of Mr Shalabayev has to be examined in the broader context of political persecution against Kazakh dissidents, their colleagues and relatives both in the country and abroad. Furthermore, Mr Ablyazov basically remains now the only political opponent to the current Kazakh authorities that is still alive and not in a Kazakh prison. The clear misuse of the Interpol's channels and the Ukrainian transitional judiciary system, still unstable and in the hands of the corrupt officials, should be reasons enough to reconsider the case of Mr Shalabayev and protect him from being extradited.

Sincerely yours,



*Mady Delvaux-Stehres
Member of the European Parliament
Vice-Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee*

CC:

Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania

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