



The law on terrorism and extremism can be used to persecute opposition in Kazakhstan

On the 3rd November 2014 Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the law which changed current legislation on combating extremism and terrorism:

- period needed for procedure of recognizing an organisation as extremist or terrorist was shortened;
- state bodies can block, or close media and web-sites, which spread information recognised by a court as extremist or terrorist;
- state bodies can immediately confiscate property of an organisation recognised by the court as extremist or terrorist;
- state bodies will conduct financial monitoring of people who are convicted of extremism and terrorism;
- Kazakhstan citizens who are going abroad will be warned of criminal responsibility for participation in extremist or terrorist organisations.

A lot of activists are critical of the new legislation, because it can be used for persecution of an opposition.

Serikbolsyn Abdildin, one of the leaders of the Communist party of Kazakhstan, says: *“Nursultan Nazarbayev’s regime any dissent and political opponent identifies as terrorism and extremism. For example, the authorities groundlessly defined oppositional party ‘Alga’ and some oppositional editions as extremist and closed them.”*

Muratbek Ketebayev, opposition politician who currently is in Spain, also recollected case of oppositional party ‘Alga’, which was recognized as extremist and closed ‘by order of Akorda’.

Ualihan Kaysarov, former deputy of the Senate of the Parliament, said: *“There can be a danger of zombiing of public consciousness by the authorities, when not only the police, CNS (Committee of National Security), the prosecutors office and courts will identify opposition and dissidents as terrorists and extremists, but also the society.”*¹

Political scientist Viktor Kovtunovskii also was critical of the innovations: *“...earlier unwanted organizations also could be closed and unwanted people could be imprisoned. With the tightening of legislation the atmosphere in the country does not change... Because of the lack of fair judiciary and transparent investigation, it is very complicated to separate imaginary terrorists from the real ones.”*²

We should remind that on 28 March, 2012, the Prosecutor's Office of Kazakhstan, in violation of the laws relating to presumption of innocence, stated that opposition politicians Muratbek Ketebayev and Mukhtar Ablyazov, as well as the security chief, Alexander Pavlov, “had conspired to commit acts of terrorism and extremism”: “It was established that in early March 2012, they instructed their accomplices to carry out a series of explosions in public places, including areas of parkland and office buildings around the city of Almaty on 24 March”³. Information about the commencement of the trial has not yet been received. In the new Criminal Code the death penalty for terrorist offences is still present.

¹ <http://rus.azattyq.org/content/protivodeystvie-terrorizmu-zakonoproekt/26605527.html>

² <http://www.respublika-kaz.info/news/politics/38502/>

³ http://odfoundation.eu/ru/urgents/731/press_reliz_generalnoy_prokuraturi_respubliki_kazahstan



OPEN DIALOG

Open Dialog Foundation

11 a Szucha Avenue, office 21

00-580 Warsaw, Poland

T: +48 22 307 11 22

Kazakhstan demanded that Spain extradite Alexandr Pavlov for terrorist activities and financial crimes committed in conspiracy with Mukhtar Ablyazov. On 31 July, 2014, Pavlov was released on bail from a Spanish prison. The Spanish government is reconsidering his asylum appeal.