



OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Oral statement on torture and ill-treatment in Central Asia (Working Session 12, Rule of Law I, 19 September 2017)

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the NGO Coalitions against Torture in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia, the Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights and International Partnership for Human Rights.

We acknowledge that the authorities of all Central Asian states have made some noteworthy positive steps in recent years, but a lot more has to be done to break the vicious circle of torture and impunity. Law enforcement officers in Central Asia continue to use torture and other forms of ill-treatment including electric shocks, suffocation, rape and beatings. Since January 2017 the NGO Coalitions against Torture have registered over 110 new cases of torture or ill-treatment in Kazakhstan, over 75 in Kyrgyzstan and over 35 in Tajikistan. These figures represent only the tip of the iceberg. Many victims and their relatives refrain from lodging complaints for fear of reprisals or because they do not believe that they will attain justice. In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan torture is also widely used.

Outside the plenary hall you find a written statement that provides an overview of the situation of torture in Central Asia and concludes with a set of recommendations to the relevant authorities. The paper pays special attention to problems connected to lodging complaints about torture; concerns to do with the investigation; impunity; the lack of access to reparation; and the necessity to conduct independent monitoring of detention facilities.

The paper highlights the cases of:

- **Yusuf Mamed-ogly Pirigam from Kyrgyzstan** whose allegations of torture have not been effectively investigated for over two years;
- **Umar Babazhanov**, who died in custody in **Tajikistan** under suspicious circumstances;
- the case of **18 men who were caught up in the anti-Gülen crackdown in Turkmenistan** and who were allegedly beaten and held naked in darkened rooms for long periods;
- and a short account of a **former prisoner in Uzbekistan** about torture in places of detention.

Thank you for your attention.

