

United States Senate / U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. [ZIP Code]

[Date]

His Excellency Kassym-Jomart Tokayev President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

CC: His Excellency Murat Nurtleu Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan

His Excellency Yerzhan Ashikbayev Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the United States

Subject: Immediate Release of Bekizhan Mendygazyev and Cessation of Transnational Repression

Dear President Tokayev:

We are writing to express our serious concerns about the continued transnational repression against U.S. investor and philanthropist Barlyk Mendygazyev. We are particularly troubled by evidence indicating that Bekizhan Mendygazyev is being held as a political hostage to pressure his brother Barlyk and urge his immediate release.

We reiterate the statement of the U.S. Department of State, which has documented this case in three consecutive annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Kazakhstan (2021, 2022, and 2023), specifically identifying it as an example of selective justice and transnational repression. We find unacceptable the practice of transnational financial repression on the U.S. soil and that despite the U.S. Department of State concerns, political hostage Bekizhan Mendygazyev remains in prison while his brother's assets continue to be seized and blocked in Kazakhstan.

Despite widespread calls of reputable human rights organizations such as Open Dialogue Foundation and Coalition of human rights organizations in Kazakhstan ActivistsNotExtremists,^{1,2} as well as European Parliament (2021,³ 2022,⁴ and 2023⁵), the Council of Europe (2022,⁶ 2023⁷, and

¹ Open Dialogue Foundation, "Political Prisoners in Kazakhstan," February 13, 2025. Available at:

https://en.odfoundation.eu/content/uploads/2025/02/13.02.2025_report_political_prisoners_kz_fin_eng-1.pdf

² Open Dialogue Foundation, "The Case of Barlyk Mendygazyev," March 7, 2025. Available at:

https://en.odfoundation.eu/content/uploads/2025/03/2025.03.07_report_mendygazyev_new_eng.pdf

³ European Parliament. Resolution TA-9-2021-0056 on the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, including Bekizhan Mendygazyev case. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0056_EN.html

⁴ European Parliament. Annual Report 2022 on human rights and democracy in the world (A-9-2022-0298), mentioning Bekizhan Mendygazyev case. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0298_EN.html

⁵ European Parliament. Report A9-0407/2023 on the EU Strategy on Central Asia (2023/2106(INI)), calling to release Bekizhan Mendygazyev. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0407_EN.pdf

⁶ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Written Declaration dated 27 June 2022, calling for investigations into political repression in Kazakhstan, including cases such as Bekizhan Mendygazyev. Available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/33144/html>

⁷ PACE Written Declaration dated 17 October 2023, addressing transnational repression and political persecution in Kazakhstan. Available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/34167/html>

2025⁸), the House of Commons of Canada^{9,10} to cease transnational repression against Mendygazyev's family and release Bekizhan Mendygazyev, Kazakhstan is continuing these shameful practices. We share their concerns and urge you to take the following immediate actions:

1. Cease all forms of transnational repression against Barlyk Mendygazyev, his family members and entities.
2. Release Bekizhan Mendygazyev from prison without delay and dismiss all charges against him.
3. Unblock and return all American investments and business assets in Kazakhstan belonging to Barlyk Mendygazyev that have been seized or frozen.

The United States takes the protection of American citizens, residents, entities from transnational repression extremely seriously. We further call on you release all political prisoners, stop abuse INTERPOL Red Notices, SLAPP tactics, mutual legal assistance mechanisms, as well as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)'s anti-money laundering and countering financing of terrorism framework to target dissidents, civil society, political opponents and their family members, associates both domestically and transnationally.

Thank you for your attention to these serious concerns. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

*The Open Dialogue Foundation, Inc. is registered as an agent of the Open Dialogue Foundation located in Brussels, Belgium under 22 U.S.C. § 611 et seq.

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Further information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

⁸ PACE Written Declaration dated 5 February 2025, highlights the case of Bekizhan Mendygazyev as a political hostage and calls for his immediate release. It also addresses transnational repression against Barlyk Mendygazyev. Available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/34167/html>

⁹ House of Commons of Canada. Petition 441-00155 regarding political prisoners in Kazakhstan, including Bekizhan Mendygazyev. Available at: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/petitions/en/Petition/Details?Petition=441-00155>.

¹⁰ House of Commons of Canada Hansard, Sitting 27, addressing human rights concerns in Kazakhstan, including references to political prisoners such as Bekizhan Mendygazyev. Available at: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/house/sitting-27/hansard>