

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names
2004		34	Turkmenistan	Rakhim Esenov, author of historical novel, a.o.
	2004			<i>follow-up 1</i>

Announcement

Amnesty International and International PEN report that writer Rakhim Esenov (78 years) was conditionally released on 9 March 2004. Two others were still detained in connection with Esenov's historical novel, *The Crowned Wanderer*, set during the period of the Mogul Empire (1526-1803 CE) (see NCH #34). We hope that you can send the recommended urgent appeals immediately. Please remember to write in your professional capacity.

RAPID ACTION NETWORK

17 March 2004—Update to RAN 06/04

TURKMENISTAN: Writer Rakhim Esenov freed yet and journalist Ashirkuli Bariyev still detained.

Below is the text of an Amnesty International Urgent Action informing of the release of writer Rakhim Esenov, and the continued detention of two others arrested at the same time. PEN Centres are asked to send appeals following the guidance given by Amnesty International. The PEN headquarters will continue to monitor the case and provide updates.

Amnesty International Urgent Action 90/04 (2 March 2004)—Further information

Rakhim Esenov was released on 9 March, on condition that he does not leave the country. He had been detained by offices of the Ministry for National Security (MNB) in the capital, Ashgabat, at the end of February, and charged on 2 March with “inciting social, national and religious hatred” in connection with his novel *Ventsenosny Skitalets* (*The Crowned Wanderer*).

His son-in-law Igor Karielov is believed to be still in detention, although his precise whereabouts remain unknown. He was reportedly accused of conspiring with Rakhim Esenov in the “smuggling” of 800 copies of the novel into Turkmenistan.

Rakhim Esenov's close friend [journalist] Ashirkuli Bayriyev is held in the MNB's investigation-isolation prison, though it is still not known why he was arrested. Shortly after his arrest, his son, an English-language teacher, and his wife, a journalist, were both fired from their jobs.

Rakhim Esenov recently told the Memorial Human Rights Centre in Moscow that he denies all charges made against him and pointed out that he had paid customs duties before bringing his book into Turkmenistan.

Rakhim Esenov is reported to have said that he was treated well while he was held in the MNB's investigation-isolation prison, and that he was allowed to receive daily messages from home. The day after his release, his passport, which had been illegally confiscated by MNB officers, was returned to him.

The international community had intervened on Rakhim Esenov's behalf, and he cites action taken by the US Embassy and the OSCE as having played a decisive role in his release. The Russian Embassy also expressed its concern over the arrest of Rakhim Esenov, a Russian citizen.

Rakhim Esenov said: "I don't know what will come of this case, but I am tired of being afraid. My son-in-law Igor Kapriyev is still in prison."

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Please send appeals as quickly as possible, in English, Russian, Turkmen or your own language:

welcoming the release of Rakhim Esenov, although remaining concerned about the continuing restrictions on his travel;

pointing out that Ashirkuli Bayriyev and Igor Kapriyev are still detained and urging that:

- (a) they are not subjected to any form of violence and are treated humanely while detained;
- (b) details be provided on Igor Kapriyev's whereabouts;
- (c) information on the reasons for the two men's continuing detention be made clear.

APPEALS TO:

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