

CRUDE ACCOUNTABILITY

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October 22, 2009

The Honorable Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

The highly respected environmentalist and civil society activist, Andrey Zatoka, was arrested in his hometown of Dashovuz, Turkmenistan on October 20, 2009 and is being detained in prison on fabricated charges of "hooliganism" after he was attacked by a stranger in a local market.

We view Andrey's imprisonment as a reflection of the increasingly repressive policies of Turkmenistan's President Berdymukhammedov. Western governments have recently turned a blind eye to human rights abuses in Turkmenistan as they pursue that country's hydrocarbon resources and forge relationships within its government toward that cause.

Andrey is a peaceful, law abiding citizen who has been arrested because he is an environmental activist in a country that has a broken legal system, refuses to allow the existence of public organizations, allows no freedom of the press and tolerates no political opposition. Turkmenistan is renowned for its human rights abuses with a ranking of 8.9 out of 10 (the poorest ranking) by the US Fund for Peace.

In 2006-2007, Andrey was imprisoned for 46 days on trumped up charges. Countless human rights organizations and individuals around the world rallied to appeal for his release. Faced with mounting global pressure, the Turkmen authorities suddenly released Andrey with a suspended sentence.

Appeals from the international community were critical in securing Andrey's release two years ago.

Recognizing this, I urge the United States Department of State to act immediately on Andrey's behalf, raising his case with the government of Turkmenistan and asking for his immediate, unconditional release.

As the United States strengthens its relationship with the government of Turkmenistan, you have the opportunity to demonstrate that the United States places the utmost priority on upholding human rights around the world.

More information on Andrey's imprisonment and background can be found at:
www.crudeaccountability.org/en/ and <http://www.crudeaccountability.org/en/index.php?page=zatoka-freed>.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Kate Watters
Executive Director