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Kazakhstan



Kazakh Supreme Court Refuses To Review Jailed Opposition Leader's Case

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By RFE/RL's Kazakh Service

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ASTANA -- Kazakhstan's Supreme Court has refused to review the case of jailed opposition leader Vladimir Kozlov.

At a session on August 5, Supreme Court Judge Moryak Shegenov ruled that "there are no grounds" to do so.

Kozlov's wife, Aliya Turysbekova, told RFE/RL that Kazakh human rights defenders and lawmakers from Poland and Italy were present at the hearing.

She added that her husband will appeal the decision at the UN Human Rights Commission.

The leader of the unregistered Algha (Forward) party, Kozlov was sentenced to 7 1/2 years in prison in October 2012 for his role in the mass strike by oil workers in western Kazakhstan.

The strike ended in violence in December 2011, when police shot dead 17 people in the towns of Zhanaozen and Shetpe.

Kozlov insists the case against him is politically motivated.

A month after Kozlov's trial, a court suspended the activities of Kozlov's party after the Almaty prosecutor's office asked a court to designate Algha, the People's Front movement, and several opposition media outlets as "extremist."

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Kozlov's case has attracted the attention of European politicians since then.

In February, two Polish members of parliament, Tomasz Makowski and Malgorzata Marcinkiewicz, travelled to Kazakhstan to visit Kozlov but were denied permission to visit him at a labor camp in Kazakhstan's northern city of Petropavlovsk.

In April, the European Parliament adopted a resolution "strongly" criticizing Kazakhstan for its failure to respect political, media, and religious freedoms.

The resolution cited the body's concerns about a Kazakh court decision to ban some opposition parties -- including Kozlov's Algha party -- and called for Kozlov's release.

The European Parliament also then urged Kazakh authorities to ease restrictions on independent labor unions and the ability of religious groups to register and to practice their beliefs.

With reporting by Kazinform

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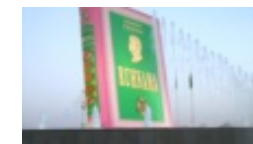


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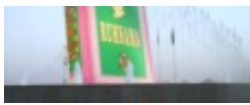
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