

# **KAZAKHSTAN: UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is calling on Kazakhstan to release Jehovah's Witness Teymur Akhmedov**

HRWF (14.10.2017) – The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) is calling on Kazakhstan to immediately release Teymur Akhmedov, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, who is in prison for peacefully sharing his religious beliefs with others. (see link to opinions adopted at WGAD's 79th session on 2 October: <http://bit.ly/2yfyZzs>) Mr. Akhmedov is the first of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kazakhstan to be criminally convicted for his religious activity since the nation's independence in 1991.

In January of this year, Kazakhstan's secret police, the (KNB), arrested Mr. Akhmedov for allegedly violating Article 174(2) of Kazakhstan's Criminal Code. The KNB accused him of "incitement of . . . religious hatred" for simply expressing his religious beliefs to others in private.

The Working Group noted that "all the alleged criminal acts were in fact set up by the authorities and that if it had not been for these deliberate actions of State agents, Mr. Akhmedov would not have been arrested and prosecuted and the issue of the application of pretrial detention would not have arisen. The Working Group also observes the silence by the Government in its late reply in relation to this point." (point #42, p. 7)

“The detention of Mr. Akhmedov was arbitrary under category II, and with this in mind wishes to emphasize that no trial should have taken place. However it did take place, and in the view of the Working Group, there were grave violations of Mr. Akhmedov’s right to a fair trial.” (point #46, p. 8)

For additional background information regarding Mr. Akhmedov’s case, see <http://bit.ly/2qpZEbu>)

**HRWF Database of religious prisoners: See the documented case of Teymur Akhmedov and believers of other faiths at <http://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Kazakhstan-FBL-2017.pdf>**

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