

**STATEMENT BY MS. RAUSHAN YESERGEPOVA,
DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, *ALMA-ATA INFO***

Distinguished Conference participants,

My husband, Ramazan Takhtarovich Yesergepov, editor-in-chief of the *Alma-Ata INFO* newspaper, has been imprisoned now for one year and eight months. Exactly one year ago I spoke from the OSCE podium with great hope for support from the international community, and I told of how he had been seized by personnel from the National Security Committee (NSC) while receiving hospital treatment. There was no arrest warrant, no order to take him into custody. My husband was guilty only of daring to publish documents revealing the NSC's unlawful interference in the activities of the courts and prosecutor's office for the purpose of influencing the outcome of a civil case being heard in court.

The trial of R. T. Yesergepov himself did not escape interference by the authorities, either. It was entirely closed, secret one could even say, so that the facts of the fabrication of the case, and the numerous procedural violations, would not become known to the public.

From the very outset my husband was denied the right to a fair trial. The NSC, which assumed the role of the plaintiff, conducted the preliminary investigation itself, and made the decisions itself as to whether defence attorneys would be allowed to participate in the trial. For this reason, in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the defence attorneys Ramazan had chosen, including me, as his spouse, were not allowed to defend him. Thus, the court allowed the NSC to operate above the law.

Yesergepov has still not received a copy of the charges, the verdict and the subsequent judicial rulings for the same reason that the proceedings themselves were closed.

The verdict of the court was not made public, in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Yesergepov has now exhausted all of the legal remedies available to him in Kazakhstan, having taken his case as far as the Supreme Court and the Office of the Prosecutor General. The highest supervisory and judicial bodies have refused to review his case, and thus have not only found all of the procedural violations to be legal, but also tacitly acknowledged their own dependent position.

The reprisal against the journalist Yesergepov began a year before my country assumed the Chairmanship of the OSCE, and it is continuing to this day, when this position of honour is coming to a close. There have already been two opportunities for my husband to be granted an early release, and two opportunities for him to be transferred to a labour colony, but he is always met with the same unfounded refusals accompanied by the same formulaic response: "He has not started down the path of correction".