



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
The Representative on Freedom of the Media  
Freimut Duve**

31 October 2002

**Statement Under Current Issues  
(In Written Form)**

I am deeply concerned about the arrest of Mr. Sergei Duvanov, a prominent Kazakh journalist, on Sunday 27 October 2002 in Almaty for alleged rape.

Mr. Duvanov participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Central Asian Media Conference in Tashkent just a few weeks ago, where the media situation, especially with regards to corruption, was discussed in a very open manner. It is for the first time that a journalist who has participated in one of our Central Asia Media Conferences is subsequently facing direct harassment.

I have also intervened on Mr. Duvanov's behalf twice in the recent past. In July 2002 Mr. Duvanov was charged with criminal libel for "infringing the honor and dignity of the President." In August 2002 Mr. Duvanov was severely attacked and beaten right before he was due to travel to Warsaw to attend the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. I am deeply concerned that all these incidents together result in a pattern of harassment against Mr. Duvanov which is connected to his activity as an opposition journalist.

I urge the Kazakh authorities to conduct a thorough, transparent and speedy investigation into Mr. Duvanov's case.