



Press Release and Online Conference Invitation

**Under strict embargo until 10:00am (GMT)
on 1 November 2022**

British Parliamentarians launch Inquiry Commission to investigate the treatment and detention of Zhanbolat Mamay by the Republic of Kazakhstan

ONLINE PRESS CONFERENCE INVITATION

SPEAKERS

- Lord Macdonald of River Glaven Kt KC, Chair to the Commission
- Yernar Kenzhebayev, Lawyer to Zhanbolat Mamay
- Yevgeniy Zhovtis, Director, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law
- Tayab Ali, Partner at Bindmans, Secretariat to the Commission

Please note, this online press conference will be spoken in English, with live Russian interpretation available.

To join the online press conference, [register here](#). Please see the full embargoed press release on the Inquiry Commission below.

WHEN

Tuesday 1 November
Start 10:00am (GMT)
End 12:00pm (GMT)

WHERE

This will be held on Zoom, click below to register.

BOOK YOUR PLACE

PRESS RELEASE

Under strict embargo until 10:00am (GMT) on 1 November 2022

Senior British Parliamentarians have launched a non-governmental Commission of Inquiry into the detention and treatment of Zhanbolat Mamay - a popular politician, journalist, and leader of the 'unregistered' opposition Democratic Party in Kazakhstan.

Mr Mamay has been detained since February 2022, after being accused by Kazakh authorities of having involvement in orchestrating the January 2022 liquified gas protests. It was reported that the

government response to the protests led to the death of over 227 people in a lethal crackdown that has become known as '[Bloody January](#)'.

Supporters of Mr Mamay claim his arrest, detention and prosecution is an attempt by the Kazakh government to suppress opposition voices in Kazakhstan. International human rights groups such as [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#) have called for Mr Mamay's immediate release, and for charges against him to be dropped.

The Commission's Chair, Lord Macdonald of River Glaven Kt KC, Rt Hon Andrew Mitchel MP (who is no longer part of the Commission, having been appointed as a minister in the government), and Rushanara Ali MP formally wrote to the Kazakh embassy in London on 11 October 2022, inviting the government to participate in the Commission's inquiry, and requesting assistance with a planned visit to Kazakhstan to interview Mr Mamay as well as other key witnesses. On 20 October 2022, the Commission met with the representatives of Kazakhstan at the Republic's Embassy in London to discuss Kazakhstan's engagement with the Commission.

The Commission is currently in the process of receiving evidence in relation to the detention and treatment of Mr Mamay and other political prisoners and will review evidence sent to them by witnesses, Kazakh human rights groups, international human rights organisations, and third State country reports. The Commission intends to hold an open evidence session to hear live evidence from witnesses later this year. Evidence can be submitted to the Commission through its website at www.inquirycommission.com.

The Commission will review evidence gathered by Kazakh-based human rights groups about the January 2022 protests. Serious concerns were expressed by human rights advocates about [President Tokayev's announcement](#) on live television that he had designated the protestors as 'terrorists' and 'militants', and authorised law enforcement to use a 'shoot to kill' policy, promising to 'eliminate' all those that did not surrender.

The action by the authorities led to the death of 227 people, with hundreds left injured and over 10,000 detained. Many are still 'missing'. Calls for an international independent Inquiry into the January protests remain unheeded by the Kazakh government.

Chair to the Commission, Lord Macdonald Kt KC said:

"The Commission will rigorously and objectively examine all the material sent for its consideration. We hope that all interested parties, including the Kazakh government, will urgently engage with us and assist with our deliberations into these very grave matters."

The Commission was convened by Bindmans LLP on behalf of citizens of Kazakhstan concerned about the use of the criminal process to suppress political opposition and free speech.

The key areas of the Commission's review are:

- Investigating the use of criminal legal processes by the Republic of Kazakhstan against Mr Mamay and, where relevant, other political opponents and opposition politicians.
- Considering material collected and provided to the Commission by NGOs, official investigators and others, which provides evidence or information on alleged violations and abuses of domestic and international law (insofar as relevant to the use of the criminal legal processes by the Republic of Kazakhstan against political opponents, and opposition politicians in the course of the January 2022 demonstrations), including:
 - The events that led to the death of hundreds of individuals during the January 2022 demonstrations.
 - Allegations of torture and ill treatment of people detained in relation to the January 2022 demonstrations.
 - Allegations of suppression of political opponents and opposition groups in Kazakhstan.

The Commission will work to establish the facts and circumstances of any potential violations and abuses of domestic and international law, and of any potential crimes perpetrated (whether against domestic or international law), and will present its findings in a written report.

Tayab Ali, Partner at Bindmans LLP who is acting in this matter, comments:

"In President Tokayev's recent address to the United Nations' 77th session of the General Assembly, he confirmed the importance of, and Kazakhstan's commitment to, the values embodied in the United Nations Charter, including the need for states to comply with international law and ensure justice for their citizens.

This claim needs to be more than words for it to be a credible ambition for Kazakhstan. It is crucial that politicians like Mr Mamay are not arbitrarily held in detention, and that citizens are afforded the freedom to protest without the risk of a lethal response.

We urge the Kazakh authorities to engage with the Commission of Inquiry, provide evidence, and allow the Commissioners access to Mr Mamay."

Bindmans LLP will support the Commission, acting as secretariat comprising the necessary expertise to implement the mandate, including professional investigators and legal analysts.

Get in contact



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NOTES TO EDITORS

- Bindmans LLP convene a non-governmental Commission of Inquiry on behalf of concerned citizens of Kazakhstan into the detention and prosecution of popular Kazakhstan opposition politician and journalist.
- Former UK Director of Public Prosecutions and senior barrister Lord Macdonald Kt KC chairs the Commission, joined by fellow commission members, Rushanara Ali MP and Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP. (Note: Andrew Mitchell MP is no longer a member of the Commission, having been appointed to a ministerial role in government, and will be replaced by a suitable Parliamentarian).
- Mamay Zhanbolat, leader of the opposition Democratic Party, has been detained since February 2022 for allegations that he was involved in the orchestration of 'Bloody January' protests. President Tokayev announced on live television that he had designated the January 2022 protestors as 'terrorists' and 'militants', and authorised law enforcement to use a 'shoot to kill' policy, promising to 'eliminate' all those that did not surrender.
- In October 2022, Commission members met the Kazakhstan Embassy in London to discuss engagement and access to Mamay in Kazakhstan.
- International human rights organisations call for Mamay's release and international independent investigation into the January 2022 protests that saw 227 deaths, and an authorisation from Kazakhstan's president for law enforcement agencies to 'shoot to kill'.
- The Commission launches its website and calls for evidence from all interested parties:
www.inquirycommission.com.

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