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KAZAKHSTAN: Prisoners of conscience still in jail, others under multiple long-term punishments

By Felix Corley, Forum 18 (<https://www.forum18.org>)

3 Muslim prisoners of conscience remain jailed 2 years after the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention called for their release "immediately". 5 other Muslim men are in jail for exercising freedom of religion or belief. Also: 6 former prisoners of conscience are serving the rest of their sentences at home under restrictions; 5 other former prisoners of conscience have bans on unspecified or specified activities; 31 others who have completed jail terms or restricted freedom sentences still have bank account access blocked.

Of the eight individuals currently known to be jailed for exercising freedom of religion or belief, three remain in prison two years after the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention called (in September 2021) for them to be "immediately" freed and compensated for their imprisonment. The three - Beket Mynbasov, Samat Adilov and Ernar Samatov - were among a group of nine men jailed for participating in an online religious discussion group.

The UN Working Group Opinion (A/HRC/WGAD/2021/33 (<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3969786?ln=en>)) stressed that "no trial" of the three Muslim men (and others sentenced with them) "should have taken place" (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2735). The other six are serving the rest of their sentences at home under restrictions. None has been freed from their sentence or compensated (see below).

Officials – including the General Prosecutor's Office - refused to explain to Forum 18 why the regime has not released all nine men from their sentences and given them compensation (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2861).

The other five Muslim men known to be serving jail sentences to punish them for exercising freedom of religion or belief are: Anatoli Zernichenko, Dadash Mazhenov, Dilmurat Makhamatov, Galymzhan Abilkairov and Abdukhali Abdurhabbarov (see below).

Mazhenov, Abdurhabbarov and Abilkairov, who have served most of their prison terms, have been refused conditional early release from prison on grounds their families regard as arbitrary (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2862). Prosecutors have rejected Mazhenov's relatives' continuing attempts to challenge the "expert analyses" on which his prosecution was based.

A further 3 Pentecostal Christians – who now live in the United States - were handed punishments in absentia (see below).

Over many years the regime has imposed criminal punishments on individuals who have exercised their right to freedom of religion or belief. Punishments include not only the jail terms or restricted freedom terms themselves, but often years-long post-prison bans on a wide range of activities (often including the exercise of freedom of religion or belief), and a block on any bank accounts imposed after conviction which lasts up to eight years after a sentence is completed. This account blocking can also block individuals from other activities such as finding work or driving.

Those currently known to be serving prison sentences:

- 8 individuals (all of them Sunni Muslim men);

Those currently known to be freed early from prison and serving sentences at home under restrictions:

- 6 individuals (all of them Sunni Muslim men);

Those currently known to be under post-prison restrictions and punishments:

- 5 former prisoners of conscience with bans on unspecified or specified activities – including exercising freedom of religion or belief – after completing their jail terms;

- 31 individuals who have completed prison terms or restricted freedom sentences but who still have access to any bank accounts blocked;

Those known to have been given prison sentences in absentia:

- 3 Pentecostal Christians – who now live in the United States - handed punishments in absentia.

(All those known to be in jail, serving restricted freedom sentences, handed punishments in absentia, or under post-sentence blocking of their bank accounts are listed at the foot of this article.)

"They want to exclude me from having any public stage"

Even when sentences are complete, punishment does not stop. A further 5 individuals who have completed prison terms or restricted freedom sentences are still under often vague or even unspecified post-jailing bans on specific activity (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743). This number is likely to be an underestimate (see below).

Those serving restricted freedom sentences live at home under probation. They can be given assigned work and are banned from leaving the town or changing their job or residence without permission. They can also be banned from visiting locations, like cafes or casinos.

People who are convicted of exercising freedom of religion or belief often face post-prison bans (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) – which can be vaguely worded – on exercising this freedom. This can include bans on visiting places of worship or sharing their faith with others (see below).

Post-jailing bans on specific activity (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743), which may include visiting specific places or sharing faith, are handed down as part of the sentence. Convicted prisoners can also be left without any knowledge of which post-prison activities are banned, or only be told of the banned activities just before their release from jail.

Bans on exercising freedom of religion and belief are also imposed on people with no link to any belief or religious community. In February 2021, after completing a five-year term to punish him for planning to hold demonstrations against proposed changes to the Land Code which would have allowed the sale of farmland to foreigners, Maks Bokayev was two days before his release banned from taking part in a wide range of public activities (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743). These included "membership and participation in the activity of social organisations, including political parties, religious organisations, public movements, professional unions, and self-regulating organisations founded on voluntary membership (participation)".

"They tried to close all loopholes," Bokayev told Forum 18 in May 2022 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743). "They want to exclude me from having any public stage", he noted. "I'm not a religious person – I don't go to mosque and don't recite prayers," he added. "Maybe one day I'll have a revelation and will want to attend or build a place of worship. Officially I wouldn't be able to do so."

In addition, a further 31 individuals who have completed prison terms or restricted freedom sentences, apparently as well as any possible post-jailing bans, still have access to any bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) (see below).

"There's a block everywhere!"

Almost all those convicted for exercising freedom of religion or belief are added to the Financial Monitoring Agency List of individuals "connected with the financing of terrorism or extremism". Being added to the List means that any bank accounts an individual may have are blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) with no further legal process. Their families often find out about the blocking of accounts only when they go to the bank. Families are allowed to withdraw only small amounts for daily living if they do not have other sources of income.

Individuals remain on the Financial Monitoring Agency List for six or eight years after their sentence has expired as they are deemed still to have a criminal record. All 8 of the jailed Muslims are on the List. So too are at least 29 former prisoners of conscience who had earlier been jailed for exercising freedom of religion or belief (see below).

"The Financial Monitoring Agency List says it relates to finance, but it's in fact about everything," one former prisoner of conscience told Forum 18 in May 2022 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743). "When you want to get a job or open a bank account .. there's a block everywhere!" Restrictions include not only bank account blocks, but also driving bans and being unable to work in many jobs.

One current prisoner, Dilmurat Makhmatov was, on 18 March 2020, banned from leaving the country

(https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until the sum he owes for court fees is paid. As he is in jail (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742) he cannot leave the country anyway.

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Known current prisoners of conscience for exercising freedom of religion or belief

There are 8 individuals (all of them Sunni Muslim men) known to be serving prison sentences to punish them for exercising freedom of religion or belief.

Convictions have been under Criminal Code articles:

- 174 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) ("Incitement of social, national, clan, racial, or religious discord, insult to the national honour and dignity or religious feelings of citizens, as well as propaganda of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens on grounds of their religion, class, national, generic or racial identity, committed publicly or with the use of mass media or information and communication networks, as well as by production or distribution of literature or other information media, promoting social, national, clan, racial, or religious discord");

- and 256 ("Propaganda of terrorism or public calls to commit terrorism" - which includes the production, storage for distribution or distribution of [unspecified in the Article] specified materials - committed by an individual using a state or non-state official position, or with the use of the mass media or other communication networks, or with foreign support, or in a group").

These prisoners of conscience are listed in approximate reverse order of expected date of release.

1) Anatoli Pavlovich Zernichenko (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2759); Sunni Muslim; born 21 October 1994.

Arrested 15 October 2021; sentenced 20 June 2022 Arys District Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 10 August 2022 Turkestan Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 7 years' imprisonment in a general regime labour camp;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 55,560 Tenge;
- plus court fee of 870,900 Tenge;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

2) Dadash Temirgaliyevich Mazhenov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 28 September 1990.

Arrested 23 April 2018; sentenced 16 November 2018 Burabai District Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 30 January 2019 Akmola Regional Court. Supreme Court annulled earlier decisions (but did not acquit him) 21 January 2020 and sent case for new trial.

Sentenced 13 October 2020 Akmola Regional Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2.

Punishment:

- 7 years and 8 months' imprisonment in a general regime labour camp;
- plus court fee of 134,599 Tenge;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

3) Ernar Samatovich Samatov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 19 March 1980.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2 and Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 7 and a half years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

4) Beket Tastanbekovich Mynbasov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 10 January 1983.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2 and Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 7 and a half years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

5) Dilmurat Sultanmuratovich Makhamatov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 19 February 1978.

Arrested 19 December 2018; sentenced 2 May 2019 Shymkent's Al-Farabi District Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 2 and Article 256, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 26 June 2019 Shymkent City Court.

Punishment:

- 8 years' imprisonment in a general regime labour camp;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409);
- plus banned from leaving the country (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on 18 March 2020.

6) Galymzhan Ramazanovich Abilkairov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 29 January 1988.

Arrested 23 April 2018; sentenced 19 October 2018 Burabai District Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 26 December 2018 Akmola Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 7 years and 7 months' imprisonment;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

7) Samat Asylkhanovich Adilov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 28 August 1986.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 5 and a half years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

8) Abdukhilil Abdukhmidovich Abduzhabbarov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 6 April 1975.

Arrested 18 February 2017; sentenced 16 August 2017 Oral City Court.

Old Criminal Code Article 164, Part 3 (replaced from January 2015 by Criminal Code Article 174, Part 3).

Punishment:

- 8 years' imprisonment;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Freed early on probation with restrictions

There are 6 individuals (all of them Sunni Muslim men), known to have been jailed for exercising freedom of religion or belief, who have been freed early from prison to serve the rest of their terms on probation, or under restricted freedom (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743). Individuals live at home on probation and under restrictions.

Convictions have been under Criminal Code articles:

- 174 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) ("Incitement of social, national, clan, racial, or religious discord, insult to the national honour and dignity or religious feelings of citizens, as well as propaganda of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens on grounds of their religion, class, national, generic or racial identity, committed publicly or with the use of mass media or information and communication networks, as well as by production or distribution of literature or other information media, promoting social, national, clan, racial, or religious discord");
- and 256 ("Propaganda of terrorism or public calls to commit terrorism" - which includes the production, storage for distribution or distribution of [unspecified in the Article] specified materials - committed by an individual using a state or non-state official position, or with the use of the mass media or other communication networks, or with foreign support, or in a group").

1) Esim Kadirzhumanovich Suleimenov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2498); Sunni Muslim; born 1 February 1983.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 5 and a half years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees.

Rest of jail term commuted to a restricted freedom sentence and freed from prison in Kyzylorda 29 October 2020.

Suleimenov has to live at home, is banned from visiting places of entertainment (such as restaurants and cinemas) and cannot move or leave his home town without permission. However, he is not banned from attending places of worship.

His bank accounts are blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

2) Azamat Gaidarovich Umbetaliyev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2498); Sunni Muslim; born 10 January 1992.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 5 years and 6 months' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Transferred to probation 6 December 2021.

3) Zhuldyzbek Abikenovich Taurbekov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2621); Sunni Muslim; born 20 September 1978.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 6 January 2020 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2 and Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 9 April 2020 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 7 years imprisonment in a general regime labour camp;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees of 112,295 Tenge;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Transferred to probation 14 December 2021.

4) Zhasulan Meiramovich Iskakov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2498); Sunni Muslim; born 22 October 1984.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 5 and a half years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Transferred to probation 18 April 2022.

5) Nazim Alimzhanovich Abdrakhmanov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 10 March 1988.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 5 and a half years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Transferred to probation 9 June 2023.

6) Bolatbek Dyusenbekovich Nurgaliyev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2742); Sunni Muslim; born 12 December 1978.

Arrested 27 October 2018; sentenced 5 August 2019 Almaty's Almaly District Court.

Criminal Code Article 256, Part 2 and Article 174, Part 2.

Appeal rejected 20 November 2019 Almaty City Court.

Punishment:

- 8 years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims" of 48,100 Tenge;
- plus court fees;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Transferred to probation 21 June 2023.

Freed, but living with post-prison restrictions

There are 5 known individuals (all of them Sunni Muslim men) under often vague or unspecified bans on conducting specific activity (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) (related to the exercise of freedom of religion or belief) now their prison term has ended.

There are almost certainly other individuals under such restrictions, as many such post-prison bans (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) are either not specified (even to the person convicted (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743)) or do not become public.

Known convictions have been under Criminal Code Article 405 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) ("Organising or participating in the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation after a court decision banning their activity or their liquidation in connection with extremism or terrorism they have carried out").

The list is in reverse order of when post-prison bans on activity are expected to expire.

1) Abilai Aidarly Bokbasarov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2452); Sunni Muslim; born 12 February 1991.

Arrested 13 August 2018; sentenced 9 January 2019 Balkhash City Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment in a medium-security institution;
- plus 5-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until August 2026 on exercising freedom of religion or belief;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

2) Bakhytzhane Esimkhanovich Baimusayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2272); Sunni Muslim; born 15 November 1963.

Arrested at end of trial; sentenced 4 April 2017 Sairam District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 4 years' imprisonment plus 4-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until April 2025 on unspecified activities;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

3) Abduvakhab Salibekovich Shakirov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2272); Sunni Muslim; born 21 December 1962.

Arrested at end of trial; sentenced 4 April 2017 Sairam District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 4 years' imprisonment;
- plus 4-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until April 2025 on unspecified activities;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

4) Baurzhan Beisembai (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2223); Sunni Muslim; born 29 March 1982.

Arrested 1 August 2016; sentenced 10 October 2016 Oskemen City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1 and Part 2.

Punishment:

- 2 years 6 months' imprisonment in general regime labour camp;
- plus 5-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until February 2024 on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

5) Iliyan Raiymzhan (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2307); Sunni Muslim; born 8 February 1992.

Arrested April 2017; sentenced 1 August 2017 Tekeli City Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 19 September 2017 Almaty Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 4 years' imprisonment;
- plus 2 years 6 months' post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until October 2023 on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Former prisoner of conscience with no belief banned from exercising freedom of religion or belief

1) Maks Kebenuly Bokayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743); born 12 May 1973.

Arrested 17 May 2016; sentenced 28 November 2016 Atyrau Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Articles 174, Part 2; 274, Part 4; 400.

Appeal rejected 23 January 2017 Atyrau Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 5 years' imprisonment;
- plus 3-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until January 2024 on engaging in "social activity" (including ban on membership or participation in religious organisations);
- plus bank accounts blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Bank accounts still blocked

There are 31 individuals (30 Sunni Muslims, one Seventh-day Adventist) known to have their bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) as of 15 September 2023. All have completed the formal prison or restricted freedom sentences (including bans on activity) imposed on them, but it is possible some of these are still serving post-jailing bans (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on unspecified activity.

"The Financial Monitoring Agency List says it relates to finance, but it's in fact about everything," one former prisoner of conscience told Forum 18 in May 2022 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743). "When you want to get a job or open a bank account .. there's a block everywhere!" Restrictions include bank account blocks, driving bans and being unable to work in many jobs.

Convictions have been under Criminal Code Article 405 (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) ("Organising or participating in the activity of a social or religious association or other organisation after a court decision banning their activity or their liquidation in connection with extremism or terrorism they have carried out") and/or Criminal Code Article 174

(https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409) ("Incitement of social, national, clan, racial, or religious discord, insult to the national honour and dignity or religious feelings of citizens, as well as propaganda of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens on grounds of their religion, class, national, generic or racial identity, committed publicly or with the use of mass media or information and communication networks, as well as by production or distribution of literature or other information media, promoting social, national, clan, racial, or religious discord").

Individuals are listed in alphabetical order.

1) Furkhat Farkhadovich Abatayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2272); Sunni Muslim; born 27 January 1965.

Arrested at end of trial; sentenced 4 April 2017 Sairam District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 2.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 1 year imprisonment;
- plus two-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

2) Abdivasit Abdikakharovich Abdirazakov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2272); Sunni Muslim; born 28 August 1965.

Arrested at end of trial; sentenced 4 April 2017 Sairam District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 2.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 1 year imprisonment;
- plus two-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

3) Murodzhon Abdivakhabovich Abdullayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2272); Sunni Muslim; born 21 January 1969.

Arrested at end of trial; sentenced 4 April 2017 Sairam District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 2.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 1 year imprisonment;
- plus two-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

4) Ermek Tursynbayevich Akhmetov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2292); Sunni Muslim; born 18 March 1964.

Arrested November 2016 (formally on 12 January 2017); sentenced 28 June 2017 Atyrau City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 29 August 2017 Atyrau Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;
- plus 2 year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

5) Orazbek Kabdrashovich Apakashev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2108); Sunni Muslim; born 3 November 1971.

Arrested 22 February 2015; sentenced 29 September 2015 Temirtau City Court, Karaganda Region. Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

6) Rollan Talgatovich Arystanbekov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2292); Sunni Muslim; born 5 December 1981.

Arrested November 2016 (formally on 12 January 2017); sentenced 28 June 2017 Atyrau City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 29 August 2017 Atyrau Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment;
- plus 3 year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until January 2023 on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

7) Nurlan Amangaliyevich Atalykov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2772); Sunni Muslim; born 20 January 1968.

Sentenced 2 March 2022 Atyrau Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 1 year's restricted freedom;
- Religious books confiscated, ordered destroyed;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

8) Estai Kanatbekovich Dzhakayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2170); Sunni Muslim; born 17 May 1978.

Arrested at end of trial; sentenced 11 March 2016 Alakol District Court, Almaty Region.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment;

- plus 4 year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until March 2023 on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

9) Serik Kudaibergenovich Erimbetov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2245); Sunni Muslim; born 12 September 1975.

Arrested 8 July 2016; sentenced 28 December 2016 Almaty Region's Zhambyl District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 28 February 2017 Almaty Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment;

- plus court fee;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

10) Nurlan Amangeldyevich Ibrayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2292); Sunni Muslim; born 24 March 1977.

Arrested November 2016 (formally on 12 January 2017); sentenced 28 June 2017 Atyrau City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 29 August 2017 Atyrau Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;

- plus 2 year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

11) Yklas Kairullinovich Kabduakasov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2119); Seventh-day Adventist; born 19 February 1961.

Arrested 14 August 2015; sentenced 28 December 2015 Astana City Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 1

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;

- plus book destruction;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

12) Serik Elubayevich Kanaliyev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2245); Sunni Muslim; born 25 April 1971.

Arrested 20 August 2016; sentenced 22 December 2016 Zhanaozen City Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1 and Part 2.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 4 years' imprisonment;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

13) Marat Amantayevich Konyrbayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2379); Sunni Muslim; born 16 March 1981.

Arrested 30 October 2017; sentenced 6 April 2018 Karaganda's October District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Appeal rejected 22 May 2018 Karaganda Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment in general regime labour camp;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

14) Oralgazhi Omarkhanovich Koshtybayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2245); Sunni Muslim; born 2 October 1966.

Arrested 8 July 2016; sentenced 28 December 2016 Almaty Region's Zhambyl District Court; Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 28 February 2017.

Punishment:

- 1 year 6 months' imprisonment;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

15) Bolatbek Kambarovich Kozhageldinov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2153); Sunni Muslim; born 30 June 1977.

Arrested 23 September 2015; sentenced 18 February 2016 Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

16) Kazbek Asylkhanovich Laubayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2379); Sunni Muslim; born 30 October 1978.

Arrested 30 October 2017; sentenced 6 April 2018 Karaganda's October District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Appeal rejected 22 May 2018 Karaganda Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment in general regime labour camp;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

17) Zhenisbek Erakhmetovich Manbetov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2272); Sunni Muslim; born 16 July 1983.

Arrested at end of trial; sentenced 4 April 2017 Sairam District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 2.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 1 year's imprisonment;

- plus two-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

18) Rustam Imenzhanovich Musayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2229); Sunni Muslim; born 17 April 1985.

Arrested 4 April 2016; sentenced 1 June 2016 Karasai District Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 1.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment in general regime labour camp;

- plus 35,890 Tenge court fee;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

19) Taskali Nasipkaliyevich Naurzgaliyev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2379); Sunni Muslim; born 3 May 1981.

Arrested 30 October 2017; sentenced 6 April 2018 Karaganda's October District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Appeal rejected 22 May 2018 Karaganda Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment in general regime labour camp;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

20) Sarsen Zhumayevich Netekov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2772); Sunni Muslim; born 6 November 1973.

Sentenced 2 March 2022 Atyrau Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405.

No appeal.

Punishment:

- 1 year's restricted freedom;

- Religious books confiscated, ordered destroyed;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

21) Nurzhan Beisembayevich Nuradilov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2153); Sunni Muslim; born 13 January 1980.

Arrested 23 September 2015; sentenced 18 February 2016 Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

22) Zhumabai Shaikhyuly Nurpeyis (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2292); Sunni Muslim; born 23 July 1961.

Arrested November 2016 (formally on 12 January 2017); sentenced 28 June 2017 Atyrau City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 29 August 2017 Atyrau Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;

- plus 2 year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

23) Bauyrzhan Omirzhanovich Serikov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2162); Sunni Muslim; born 20 November 1977.

Arrested 7 October 2015; sentenced 28 March 2016 Karaganda's Kazybek Bi District Court.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

24) Nariman Kabdyrakhmanovich Seytzhonov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2286); Sunni Muslim; born 2 May 1989.

Arrested 15 January 2017 (after earlier arrest in Kyrgyzstan); sentenced 9 June 2017 Kokshetau City Court.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 1.

Appeal rejected 16 August 2017 Akmola Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 5 years' imprisonment;

- plus 91,693.58 Tenge court fee;

- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

25) Kanat Serikovich Shaigozhanov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2292); Sunni Muslim; born 30 November 1984.

Arrested November 2016 (formally on 12 January 2017); sentenced 28 June 2017 Atyrau City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 29 August 2017 Atyrau Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;
- plus 2 year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

26) Aidin Zulfukarovich Shakentayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2162); Sunni Muslim; born 15 August 1982.

Arrested 7 October 2015; sentenced 28 March 2016 Karaganda's Kazybek Bi District Court. Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Punishment:

- 2 and a half years' imprisonment;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

27) Murat Askarovich Shopenov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2162); Sunni Muslim; born 15 November 1982.

Arrested 7 October 2015; sentenced 28 March 2016 Karaganda's Kazybek Bi District Court. Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

28) Dmitry Valeryevich Tsilenko (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2300); Sunni Muslim; born 7 February 1991.

Arrested 5 October 2016; sentenced 12 May 2017 Kostanai City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Appeal rejected 4 July 2017 Kostanai Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 3 years' imprisonment;
- plus 278,038 Tenge court fee;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

29) Saken Peisenovich Tulbayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2078); Sunni Muslim; born 16 June 1969.

Arrested 1 April 2015.

Sentenced 2 July 2015 Almaty's Bostandyk Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 174, Part 1 and Article 405, Part 2.

Punishment:

- 4 years 8 months' imprisonment;
- plus 3-year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) until December 2022 on sharing his faith with others and membership of "extremist" organisations;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

30) Kubaidolla Abishevich Tyulyubayev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2153); Sunni Muslim; born 6 August 1962.

Arrested 28 September 2015; sentenced 18 February 2016 Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Part 1.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

31) Nuralim Archiyevich Tyupeyev (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2292); Sunni Muslim; born 13 November 1962.

Arrested November 2016 (formally on 12 January 2017); sentenced 28 June 2017 Atyrau City Court No. 2.

Criminal Code Article 405, Parts 1 and 2.

Appeal rejected 29 August 2017 Atyrau Regional Court.

Punishment:

- 2 years' imprisonment;
- plus 2 year post-prison ban (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2743) on exercise of freedom of religion or belief;
- bank accounts still blocked (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2409).

Punishments in absentia

The 3 individuals (all leaders of Almaty's New Life Pentecostal Church who currently live in the United States) known to have been given punishments in absentia to punish them for exercising freedom of religion or belief. Should they return to Kazakhstan they would expect to be arrested and jailed.

1) Maxim Alekseyevich Maximov (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2521); born 2 July 1970.

Sentenced 29 July 2019 Almaty's Specialised Inter-District Court for Minors.

Old Criminal Code Article 103, Part 2 and Article 337, Part 1, current Criminal Code Article 190, Part 3.

Appeal rejected 1 November 2019 Almaty Regional Court.

Punishment in absentia:

- 5 years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims";
- plus court fee;
- plus 1-year ban on leading religious organisations.

2) Sergei Borisovich Zaikin (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2521); born 5 February 1975.

Sentenced 29 July 2019 Almaty's Specialised Inter-District Court for Minors.

Old Criminal Code Article 103, Part 2 and Article 337, Part 1, current Criminal Code Article 190, Part 3.

Appeal rejected 1 November 2019 Almaty Regional Court.

Punishment in absentia:

- 4 years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims";
- plus court fee.

3) Larisa Anatolyevna Maximova (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2521); born 7 March 1963.

Sentenced 29 July 2019 Almaty's Specialised Inter-District Court for Minors.

Old Criminal Code Article 103, Part 2, Article 337, Part 1, and Article 337, Part 3.

Appeal rejected 1 November 2019 Almaty Regional Court.

Punishment in absentia:

- 4 years' imprisonment;
- plus "compensation" to alleged "victims";
- plus court fee.

(END)

More reports on freedom of thought, conscience and belief in Kazakhstan (<https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=29>)

For background information, see Forum 18's Kazakhstan freedom of religion or belief survey (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2753)

Forum 18's compilation of Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) freedom of religion or belief commitments (https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=1351)

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