

Kazakhstan Coalition
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Basle, 31 August 2005

H.E.
Federal Chancellor
Micheline Calmy-Rey
Department of Foreign Affairs
3003 Berne

Your Excellency,

May we draw your attention to a matter, which we think needs a Swiss intervention.

The Kazakhstan Coalition, consisting of several NGO's from Switzerland and Kazakhstan, has been formed in 2005 to bring back to Kazakhstan money, which is presently blocked on Swiss bank accounts.

Since 1998 over 120 million US-dollars are blocked on bank accounts in Geneva belonging to high-ranking Kazakh officials and the State Treasury of Kazakhstan. The sum is suspected to be part of a corrupt deal, organised by a US-citizen, between US-oil companies and Kazakh officials. The US-intermediary in the meantime faces charges in the USA for corrupting foreign officials. The US-court suggested the confiscation of the money by the US-treasury. The next date for a court hearing has been rescheduled to January 2006.

In his answer to an inquiry concerning this matter by member of the National Council Remo Gysin (04.1093), the Federal Council declared on the 25/8/2004, that he cannot intervene into a pending court case, but that he «supports the plan by Swiss authorities in connection with foreign partners to avoid that the money will be returned to high-ranking Kazakh officials who might have been involved in the corruption case».

The Kazakhstan Coalition supports this aim and kindly requests information about the latest development in case the Swiss delegation to Kazakhstan discussed the matter with Kazakh officials during the visit in June 2005 or if any progress has been made.

The Coalition is of the opinion that the money should not become an asset for the US-government. This money is an integral part of the proceeds from Kazakh oil bought by foreign companies; therefore it belongs to the people of Kazakhstan and should be returned to Kazakhstan where it can be used for projects, which are in the interest of the country and its population – for instance those promoting freedom of speech and supporting institutions of the developing civil society.

Therefore we would appreciate it if you possibly could act on two issues:

- 1 Get in touch with the relevant US-authorities and propagate the idea that the money should not be confiscated by the US-Treasury but be returned to Kazakhstan.
- 2 Make sure that the money is not returned to corrupt civil servants in Kazakhstan; we think that an independent Fund should be established. This procedure has been followed several times in the last years; as an example, we would like to refer to the money on bank accounts belonging to the former chief of the Peruvian secret service, Vladimiro Montesinos, which has been returned to a fund in Peru. High- ranking Kazakh officials already have indicated to be favourably disposed towards the idea. As the court hearing has been adjourned till January 2006, there is a window of opportunity to create this fund. We would greatly value your support for the idea of establishing such an independent fund, which will administer the money.

Yours sincerely,

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Aktion Finanzplatz Schweiz (AFP),
Basel

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This letter is supported by:

- Zairesh Battalova, Member of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Ludmila Zhulanova, president of the “Public Committee Against Corruption”, Astana
- Serikbolsyn Abdildin, member of board “For a Fair Kazakhstan”, Almaty
- Tolen Tokhtassynov, member of board “For a Fair Kazakhstan”, Semipalatinsk
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- Andreas Missbach, Erklärung von Bern, Zürich

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