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Dear President,

I am writing to express my concern about the case of human rights defenders **Maks Bokaev** and **Talgat Ayan**. The two men were detained on 17 May 2016 after posting information about peaceful protests on social media. On 28 November, following an unfair trial, they were sentenced to five years in prison each. In January 2017, the Atyrau Regional Court upheld the decision, and the following month Maks Bokaev and Talgat Ayan were transferred to a penal colony 1500 km from their home city, where they are serving their sentence. They are prisoners of conscience, prosecuted solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Maks Bokaev has been living with chronic hepatitis C for the past five years. Since his detention, his health has deteriorated considerably. He has also been on hunger strike since 9 June, which he started in response to the authorities' refusal to relocate him to a penal colony closer to his home.

I would like to urge you to release Maks Bokaev and Talgat Ayan immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience. Until such time and in line with Kazakhstani law, please ensure that Maks Bokaev and Talgat Ayan are transferred to a penal colony near their place of residence and that they have access to all the medical care they require.

Yours sincerely,

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