

Statement on Kazakhstan VNR by a representative of the European Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism at HLPF

14 July 2022, UN, New York

Ladies and gentlemen,

Despite of all achievements that have been presented, Kazakhstan still faces major challenges on SDG16 that drag the whole country behind in SDG implementation. Citizens are limited in their ability to influence the government, there is no free space in the country for pluralism, expression of opinion, creation of independent political views. Human rights defenders, civil and political activists face pressure and persecution from the state. Corruption is a systemic problem and threatens the independence of the country. The justice system and law enforcements still exist within the Soviet system.

Additionally, the economy is monopolized, freedom of association to protect labor rights is being suppressed, independent trade unions are closed and their leaders have been convicted.

The unresolved social problems, namely poverty, unemployment, the gap between large cities and other regions, as well as debt bondage hinder the development of the country. All major social protests have been brutally suppressed. An objective and comprehensive investigation into the bloody events in Zhanaozen in 2011 and January 2022 has not been carried out. The true number of those killed during the suppression of protests and the ensuing mass torture of detainees on charges of organizing mass riots is still unknown. Law enforcements deliberately delays investigation of deaths during the January and thus obstructs justice.

Finally, on SDG5, despite the ratification of international instruments relating to gender issues, Kazakhstan demonstrates problems in women's inclusion, justice, and security. Gender inequality persists in political positions and wages, and girls and women are subjected to systematic physical, sexual and psychological violence. Gender issues particularly affect some marginalized social groups such as LGBTI and transgender people, exposing them to discrimination and violence.

That is why we would like to raise the following question -

1. When will Kazakhstan stop repressions against people expressing their views, human rights defenders and activists?
2. How are you going to implement the introduction of a 50 percent quota for women on participation in administration of state affairs?