

### Week 5: Pray for Yklas Kabduakasov (Kazakhstan)

**Arrest and background** Yklas Kabduakasov (55) is serving a two-year sentence in labour camp for sharing his faith with Muslims. He was arrested in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, in August 2015 after he discussed Christianity with a group of students, and was accused of "inciting religious discord". Yklas, a father of eight, is a former Muslim and works for a building company. Officers of Kazakhstan's National Security Committee (KNB) or secret police searched his home and the Seventh Day Adventist church he attends and seized books.

The KNB is believed to have had Yklas under surveillance for over a year, and recorded his conversations with several people about Christianity. It appears the KNB rented a flat to which four students invited Yklas for religious discussions, filmed the meetings with hidden cameras and used the footage as evidence in the prosecution case.



The trial began in October 2015, and Yklas was brought to the hearings in handcuffs, which were unlocked once he had been put in a cage. In November 2015, he was sentenced to seven years of restricted freedom, to be served at home. Yklas appealed against the decision to Astana City Court – as did the state prosecutor, who sought seven years' imprisonment in place of the restricted freedom sentence.

At the appeal hearing, in December 2015, the judge increased his sentence to two years' imprisonment in labour camp; the twelve weeks he spent in pre-trial detention will count towards his two-year term. The labour camp is 450 km from home, and visiting is very limited.

Kazakhstan controls religion very strictly and evangelism is prohibited. Police frequently raid church meetings. Kazakh Christians believe Yklas was arrested because of his conversion from Islam and his witness to Muslims, and they believe the KNB wants to make an example of him.

**Family** Yklas and his wife Karlygash have eight children, ranging from an adult son Alibek (a lawyer representing his father) to a toddler Daniil, born in September 2015 – Karlygash was eight months pregnant when Yklas was arrested. Their teenage son and daughter are finding Yklas' imprisonment especially difficult.

**Latest news** It was thought that Yklas could be eligible for early release in October 2016, but this did not happen. He has considered appealing to the Supreme Court, but his family decided against an appeal amid fears that the sentence could be increased.

#### Prayer Diary

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Pray that Yklas would be released early.</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Ask God to strengthen his faith and protect his health.</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Ask God to bless and help Karlygash.</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Pray for Yklas' eight children.</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Pray for funds for legal fees and for his family.</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Pray for safety for Yklas once released.</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Ask God to protect and encourage the church in Kazakhstan.</b>