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June 14, 2007

His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbaev
President, Republic of Kazakhstan
Astana, Kazakhstan

Dear Mr. President:

We were very disturbed to learn today from Hare Krishna sources that Kazakh authorities are planning to demolish tomorrow, June 15th, a Hare Krishna Temple, as well as possibly houses belonging to Hare Krishna adherents, in the Karasai district of Almaty province. This follows the demolition last November of 14 homes of Hare Krishna members, which was strongly criticized by the U.S. Government, the British government and the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, as well as the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

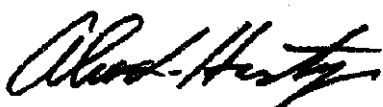
Regardless of the legal issues involved, we condemn in the strongest possible terms plans to demolish any house of worship. We would remind you that the last time any house of worship was destroyed in the former Soviet Union was in Turkmenistan and the international community and human rights organizations the world over reacted with outrage. Given that your government is strongly pursuing Kazakhstan's bid to chair the OSCE in 2009, demolishing any house or community of worship would be viewed by many within the OSCE community as a direct violation of the commitment to "respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion" enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act (Principle VII).

We urge you to continue to work to settle this matter through the legal system and also utilize the expertise of the OSCE Advisory Council on Freedom of Religion or Belief in attempting to resolve this situation. We know that representatives of Hare Krishna have been engaging in discussions with Kazakh authorities, specifically the Chairman of the National Religious Committee, Mr. Erali Tugzhanov, and the Chief Ombudsman for Human Rights, Mr. Bolot Baikadamov, since March 2007 about these and related issues. Surely a different resolution can be found.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev
June 14, 2007
Page Two

We will be following this matter carefully and hope to receive a positive response soon.

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings, M.C.
Chairman



Benjamin L. Cardin, U.S.S.
Co-Chairman



Christopher H. Smith, M.C.
Ranking Member
