

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/kazakhstan-authorities-again-urged-to-drop-05-09-2013,45141.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Kazakhstan

Trumped-up charges

Authorities again urged to drop all charges against atheist blogger

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Reporters Without Borders is relieved by journalist and atheist blogger [Alexander Kharlamov](#)'s release from prison into house arrest yesterday but reiterates its call for the withdrawal of all the charges against him so that he can recover his full freedom.

"Kharlamov's ordeal has dragged on for too long," Reporters Without Borders said. "After six months in pre-trial detention, including several weeks in a psychiatric clinic against his will, no hard evidence has been produced to support the grave accusations made against him.

"We hope that, after the additional investigation requested by the prosecution, the judicial authorities will recognize that the charges were trumped-up and will compensate him. The [growing use of enforced psychiatric hospitalization for dissidents](#) highlights the disturbing reemergence of the worst Soviet practices in support of [Kazakhstan's current crackdown](#)."

Kharlamov's transfer from prison to house arrest was ordered late on 3 September by a municipal court in the northeastern town of Ridder at the prosecution's request. Detained since 14 March, he was released yesterday evening from the nearby Öskemen detention centre.

He continues to be [charged with "inciting religious hatred" in his blog posts](#). His trial on this charge began on 19 July, with the prosecution requesting a four-year jail term. But a month later the prosecution requested an adjournment for further investigation.

As well as criticizing religion in his blog and in books published online, Kharlamov is known locally for investigating and combatting corruption. Aged in his 60s, he has lost nearly 20 kilos in weight while in detention, [according to the Ferghana news agency](#).

For more information on this case, [read our July press release](#).
