



For immediate release – 1 October 2010

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Kazakhstan: Adopt Freedom of Information Law**

**Today, ARTICLE 19 releases its analysis of the draft Law on Access to Public Information which has been created by a group of Kazakhstani MPs and legal experts. We call on the Kazakhstani Parliament to incorporate ARTICLE 19's recommendations and adopt the law.**

Kazakhstan is one of the few member states of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) without an access to information law. As a result, public governance remains non-transparent. The failure to adopt access to information legislation goes against international law which recognises this right and obliges states to ensure that public authorities respond to information requests. Moreover, the lack of such legislation is urgently felt in view of Kazakhstan's leadership in Central Asia and its 2010 chairmanship of the OSCE.

Supported by UNDP, a group of MPs and legal experts prepared a draft Law on Access to Public Information. In its analysis, ARTICLE 19 welcomes the draft Law and highlights many of its positive features, including broad definition of the right to access information, good process guarantees, specific obligations of proactive disclosure, and the recognition of a right to attend public meetings. At the same time, the analysis identifies the weaknesses of the draft Law and recommends a number of improvements aiming to bring the draft in line with international standards. The most serious shortcomings of the Law are the broad regime of exceptions and the mechanism securing the enforcement of the law.

Last week, ARTICLE 19 also presented its recommendations and broader suggestions on the pending legislation at an international conference in Astana, which included legislators, government officials and other stakeholders from Kazakhstan.

ARTICLE 19 welcomes and strongly supports the efforts of the MPs and civil society of Kazakhstan to adopt an access to information law and calls on Parliament to urgently adopt the Law, subject to ARTICLE 19 recommendations, and make it fully operational.

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- The analysis is available at:  
[www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/kazakhstan-foi-memo.pdf](http://www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/kazakhstan-foi-memo.pdf)
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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name

from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.