**UNDER STRICT EMBARGO Until 5:00 PM ET/11:00 PM CET ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21**

CT patient Sharigul (standard regimen)

*Sharigul, 45, worked all her life as a primary school teacher in Nukus (Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan). She was diagnosed with drug-resistant TB during a yearly medical check-up that she had for her job. It was the second time she would face tuberculosis – she had survived bone TB almost 10 years before, having gone through surgery to be cured.*

When I heard my diagnosis, I thought that it would be better to die. Turns out that if the God does not want you, can’t do it…

It was difficult to accept that I had tuberculosis again, I went into a pretty deep depression. I cried, and was not able to hear what other people told me, even though my counselor was repeating that everything would be okay, and my family supported me a lot. My mother-in-law went above and beyond, and my husband and children did as well.

I decided to join the TB-PRACTECAL clinical trial, but I was not selected to receive the shorter six-month treatments they were researching. I hoped that I would be on the six months treatment course, as it was so short and involved taking fewer pills. But they said it was not possible for me as I was randomized to receive the standard two-year treatment course.

**Taking treatment**

I have two sons. The elder one is 17, he is student, training to become a policeman, the younger is 14, he is still at school. When I was on treatment, they cooked and washed dishes. I became incapable of doing anything for some time after every pills intake. It was hard to take these medicines.

At first, all my colleagues came to visit me when I was in the hospital. Even doctors were astonished by it, they asked everyone to meet outdoors and wear masks. Although everyone supported me I shut myself off from people. I wanted to be separate from them. I did not know how I would accept it if someone told me that they had this disease. I felt sad and devastated.

In fact, I shut myself off for almost 3 years. I am gradually starting to restore my contacts within my community now.

**Patients supporting each other**

In the hospital, other patients helped me a lot. They taught me how to take pills, how it would be easier to take medications. We talked a lot about our families… We supported each other there. It helped to cope, and I was able to successfully finish the two-year treatment period.

 I could resume my work after I finished my treatment but only if I would work with older children, not in primary school. However, due to coronavirus pandemic my doctor advised me to stay at home. After all I’ve been through it’s difficult – both physically and psychologically – to return to normal life.