



To: President of the European Council, Charles Michel

Copy: Ambassadors of the European Union Kestutis Jankauskas (to Kazakhstan), Marilyn Josefson (to Kyrgyzstan), Raimundas Karoblis (to Tajikistan), Diego Ruiz Alonso (to Turkmenistan) and Charlotte Adriaen (to Uzbekistan); and European Union Special Representative for Central Asia Terhi Hakala

Brussels, 26 May 2023

Re.: Key Human Rights Issues for High-Level Meeting with the Heads of the Central Asian States

Dear President Michel,

We are writing to you in view of the upcoming High-Level Meeting of the Heads of the Central Asian States and the President of the European Council in Kyrgyzstan.

At this time of increasing EU engagement in Central Asia, we urge you to use this opportunity – both publicly and non-publicly – to remind the Central Asia leaders that the EU pays close attention to their governments' compliance with international human rights standards and expects concrete progress in this area as a condition for a further strengthening of partnerships. We also urge you to use your discussions with the Central Asia leaders to raise key human rights issues of concern, in particular the continued lack of accountability for serious human rights violations related to last year's crises in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, when the authorities of these countries employed harsh measures to end mass protests and ensuing unrest, as well as ongoing patterns of persecution of civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists, bloggers and others who are critical of the authorities. Below we summarise major trends regarding these issues, highlight individual cases of particular concern and provide recommendations for each of the Central Asian countries.

We thank you in advance for your attention to our letter and wish you productive discussions with the Central Asian leaders.

Sincerely,

International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)
Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KIBHR)
Legal Prosperity Foundation (LPF)
Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights (TIHR)
Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA)

CURRENT KEY ISSUES IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

Kazakhstan

A key concern in Kazakhstan is the **continued failure of the authorities to take effective measures to impartially and thoroughly investigate and hold accountable** those responsible for **serious human rights violations reported during the 'Bloody January 2022 events**, when the authorities forcibly put down mass protests for social and political change and evolving unrest. Reported violations include the excessive use of force and related killings of protesters and passers-by, arbitrary detentions of thousands of protesters, and widespread torture and ill-treatment of protesters in detention. Many investigations opened into killings and torture allegations have **been prematurely closed** due to the alleged lack of evidence of crimes in the actions of law enforcement and security officials involved, and **only a few cases have gone to court and ended with convictions**.¹

When examining Kazakhstan's compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in May 2023, **the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) stated that it was deeply concerned** about "many consistent reports indicating various forms of torture, ill-treatment, including excessive use of force" related to the January 2022 protests, as well as the "high rate of closed cases" in this context. It called on the authorities to promptly, independently and impartially investigate all acts of torture, ill-treatment and excessive use of force and punish the perpetrators in a manner commensurate with the gravity of their acts.²

The political modernisation drive initiated by President Tokayev in the aftermath of the January 2022 events has resulted in some welcome steps being taken. However, the reforms initiated have not been systematic in nature and **the modernisation initiative has been undermined by ongoing persecution of those who criticise and challenge government policies**.³

While requirements for the registration of political parties have been eased, and two new parties were registered ahead of the early parliamentary elections in March 2023, **opposition parties continue to face difficulties with obtaining registration** and no genuine opposition party is still registered in the country. For example, despite repeated attempts since last spring, the opposition party **Alga Kazakhstan!** has been unable to register and has had its application documents returned because of alleged technical issues.

Opposition supporters, civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists continue to face intimidation and harassment ranging from threats and surveillance to detention and prosecution on politically motivated charges. More than two dozen activists were charged with rioting and other crimes related to the January 2022 protests despite the lack of any evidence of their involvement in violent, unlawful actions. While the criminal cases against some activists have been closed, and some activists have been amnestied, others are still under investigation or are serving sentences issued against them. The most high-profile case of an activist charged over the January 2022 events is that of the leader of the unregistered opposition Democratic Party, **Zhanbolat Mamai**. On 10 April 2023, an Almaty court convicted Mamai of the charges initiated against him, handing him a suspended six-year prison sentence and banning him from conducting political, civic or social media activities during this period. While it is a relief that Mamai was not imprisoned, **the sentence issued against him – which will effectively prevent him from opposition campaigning – is highly regrettable, in violation of Kazakhstan's international obligations and should be overturned**.⁴ Mamai announced that he was appealing the sentence.

In another worrying trend, the authorities **routinely deny permission to opposition and civil society activists for holding peaceful protests** on political and socio-economic issues that are inconvenient to those in power. Peaceful assemblies held without advance permission are dispersed and participants are detained and penalised by being fined or locked up for up to 15 days. The authorities have carried out an increasing number of “preventive” detentions of activists prior to planned or expected protests.

There are further concerns about **new efforts of the authorities to control and stigmatise civil society organisations (CSOs) receiving funding from abroad**. CSOs who receive foreign funding for legal assistance, surveys, and data collection, analysis and dissemination are currently required to report about their funding to the government. This information is included in a database, which up to now has only been accessible to government bodies. However, in accordance with a Ministry of Finance order from March 2023, the information will hereafter be published, thereby creating a public record of foreign funded groups, which is likely to negatively impact the public perception of these groups. This initiative has also sparked fears that further measures targeting foreign-funded groups might follow.⁵

Recommendations

The Kazakhstani authorities should:

- In accordance with the UN CAT’s recommendations, ensure that all allegations of the use of excessive force, torture and other violations related to the January 2022 events are investigated in a prompt, impartial and effective manner – with the involvement of both national and international experts - and that those responsible for violations are brought to justice in fair trials and given appropriate penalties.
- Allow opposition political parties to obtain state registration and carry out their activities without obstruction and hindrance.
- Ensure that no one is arrested, prosecuted or convicted in retaliation for their peaceful and legitimate exercise of fundamental freedoms and repeal convictions issued on such grounds, including in the case of Democratic Party leader Zhanbolat Mamai.
- Uphold the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in accordance with international standards and revise current legislation and law enforcement practice to this end.
- Refrain from any measures of undue control and stigmatisation of foreign-funded CSOs and safeguard their right to work without intimidation and harassment.

Kyrgyzstan

The **climate for free speech has deteriorated significantly** in Kyrgyzstan as the authorities have stepped-up efforts to suppress criticism and prevent discussion on issues of public interest.⁶ As part of these efforts, the authorities have **exploited the fight against disinformation** to stifle legitimate free speech, including by initiating the blocking and **closure of the Kyrgyz service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)** because of a video report about the September 2022 hostilities at the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border, which presented the official views of both countries regarding these events. In April 2023, a local court ruled in favour of the government’s request to revoke the service’s license.⁷ The service has appealed this decision, which was a serious blow to freedom of expression in the country.

Journalists, bloggers, civil society activists, lawyers and others who criticise the authorities and speak out on corruption and other sensitive issues **have faced increasing intimidation and harassment**, ranging from online threats to criminal prosecution in apparent retaliation for their activities. In a high-profile case, **close**

to 30 civil society activists, journalists, bloggers, human rights defenders and opposition political figures were arrested in October 2022 and charged with preparing riots, although they are only known to have peacefully engaged against a government-negotiated border deal with Uzbekistan concerning the strategically important **Kempir-Abad water reservoir**. While several people charged in this case have been transferred to house arrest in recent months due to serious health issues, others remain in pre-trial detention despite the apparent lack of tangible progress on the investigation and the absence of any compelling grounds for keeping them behind bars. Thus, among others, human rights activist **Rita Karasartova is still held in deplorable conditions in a pre-trial detention facility** in Bishkek, although several other women activists charged in the case have been transferred to house arrest.⁸ IPHR and partners are seriously concerned that the criminal charges initiated against the critics of the border agreement constitute retaliation for their legitimate civic engagement on the Kempir-Abad issue and have called for their release.⁹

Another case of particular concern is that of journalist **Bolot Temirov**. Although he was acquitted and released from penalty on a set of spurious charges initiated against him last year following the publication of high-level corruption investigations, he was nevertheless **deported from Kyrgyzstan** in November 2022.¹⁰ This was an unprecedented turn of developments, which lawyers have shown violated the constitutional prohibition on expelling citizens of the country.¹¹ Temirov's legal team continues the struggle for justice in his case.

Last autumn the presidential administration initiated **new restrictive draft media and NGO laws**, which are currently being revised following widespread criticism of the initial drafts. Separately, Members of Parliament have proposed **new legislation aimed at controlling and stigmatising in particular foreign-funded NGOs**.¹² In this context, it would be essential to stress the importance of adequately addressing the feedback of independent national and international experts on the draft laws and of ensuring that any new legislation corresponds to international human rights standards before it is taken forward.

When reviewing Kyrgyzstan's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in October 2022, **the UN Human Rights Committee voiced serious concerns about undue pressure** on human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and others expressing opinions critical of the government, as well as about **legal initiatives restricting fundamental freedoms in violation of the ICCPR**.¹³ The Committee issued important recommendations, which the Kyrgyzstani government is required to implement given the legally binding nature of the ICCPR.

Recommendations

The Kyrgyzstani authorities should:

- Reverse the decision to close down the local RFE/RL service and ensure that the fight against disinformation is not misused to stifle critical reporting.
- Comply with national and international due process and fair trial guarantees in the case initiated against critics of the Kempir-Abad border deal, ensure that Rita Karasartova and others still held in pre-trial detention without compelling grounds are subjected to alternative measures of restraint during the continued investigation; and promptly and unconditionally release all against whom criminal charges have been initiated in this case because of their peaceful and legitimate exercise of their freedoms of expression, association and assembly.
- Repeal Bolot Temirov's deportation and allow him to return to Kyrgyzstan and continue his journalistic work there without further persecution.

- Ensure that any new legislation on media and NGOs fully correspond to international standards before being further pursued.
- Take concrete and effective measures to implement the recommendations issued by the Human Rights Committee regarding the protection of fundamental rights in the country.

Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, there has been **no accountability for serious human rights violations perpetrated in connection with the authorities' response to mass protests that took place in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO)** in November 2021 and again in May 2022. Reported violations include the excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions, torture and ill-treatment, extrajudicial killings, and unfair trials of dozens of people charged in relation to the GBAO events.¹⁴

Following the GBAO events, the Tajikistani authorities launched **a widening crackdown on dissenting voices and civil society**, targeting in particular those who have criticised the authorities' actions in this region.¹⁵ A number of **human rights defenders and journalists have been detained, criminally prosecuted and convicted following non-transparent trials** held in violation of international standards. In a case of particular concern, in December 2022, the Supreme Court **sentenced Manuchehr Kholiknazarov**, Director of the Lawyers' Association of Pamir (LAP), **to 16 years in prison** on charges of participation in a criminal and banned organisation. As stressed in a joint statement issued by IPHR and other international NGOs¹⁶, these charges clearly constituted retaliation for his efforts to assist victims of human rights violations and promote access to justice and the rule of law in the GBAO. Following the November 2021 events in the GBAO, Kholiknazarov joined a commission of local civil society and law enforcement representatives (the co-called Commission 44) set up to investigate these events. However, the commission's activities were derailed in May 2022 amid the government's renewed crackdown on protests in the GBAO. That same month Kholiknazarov was arrested and charged together with other commission members. Kholiknazarov's organisation, **the LAP was liquidated** at the end of 2022 without any court review –the Ministry of Justice simply informed the team that the organisation had been closed down.

Moreover, in recent months, the authorities have **further increased pressure on CSOs in the GBAO**, in particular those addressing human rights and socio-economic issues. Most alarmingly, security officials have reportedly summoned CSO representatives and threatened them with serious repercussions, such as criminal cases against them or their relatives unless they "voluntarily" dissolve their organisations. According to unconfirmed information, **several dozen CSOs have been forced to close down** in the GBAO since last summer. This trend has given rise to concerns that the authorities are seeking to fully suppress and eradicate independent CSO activities in the region.

When visiting Tajikistan in November-December 2022, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Mary Lawlor expressed concern that the events in the GBAO have "had a broader effect on the ability of civil society to operate in the country" and "marked a watershed moment" in the attitude of authorities toward civil society actors. She criticised the authorities for creating an **"intensifying climate of fear"** for civil society.¹⁷

Outside the GBAO, journalists, bloggers, civil society activists, independent lawyers and human rights activists also continue to face intimidation and harassment, including by being interrogated, arrested and criminally prosecuted on charges initiated because of their exercise of freedom of expression and other fundamental freedoms. Among those targeted is human rights lawyer **Buzurgmehr Yorov** who is currently

servicing a 22-year prison sentence handed down to him on a series of spurious charges after being arrested when representing leaders of the banned opposition party, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRTP) in 2015. In April 2023, the authorities reportedly opened a new criminal case against Yorov on charges of fraud, which could result in his sentence being further extended.¹⁸ The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has concluded that Yorov's detention violates international law and called for his immediate release.¹⁹

Recommendations

The Tajikistani authorities should:

- Ensure that serious human rights violations reported in connection with the GBAO events are investigated in an independent, transparent and effective manner and that those responsible for violations are held accountable.
- Take effective measures to put an end to the widening crackdown on civil society and safeguard the right of civil society actors to peacefully exercise their fundamental freedoms without intimidation and harassment, in accordance with the recommendations of international human rights bodies, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.
- Immediately and unconditionally release human rights defender Manuchehr Kholiknazarov and others imprisoned in retaliation for their human rights engagement in the GBAO.
- Put an end to the pressure exerted on CSOs in the GBAO and ensure that CSOs are able to operate free from undue government interference.
- Refrain from further persecution of lawyer Buzurgmehr Yorov and promptly release him in accordance with the opinion issued by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Turkmenistan

In Turkmenistan, the authorities continue to **crack down on people who publicly express discontent about the situation in the country, stand up for their rights and engage with like-minded people.**

In a welcome development, in December 2022, doctor Khursanai Ismatullaeva and lawyer Pygambergeldy Allaberdyev were pardoned and released after previously being imprisoned on charges initiated in apparent retaliation for their civic engagement. However, others imprisoned on similar grounds remain behind bars.²⁰

When examining Turkmenistan's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in March 2023, the UN Human Rights Committee voiced particular concerns about the cases of **imprisoned journalist Nurgeldy Khalykov, civil society activist Murat Dushemov and human rights activist Mansur Mingelov** and called for their release.²¹ When asked about these cases during its interactive dialogue with the Committee, the government delegation promised to "consider" their releases. It would be very important to follow up with the government on this pledge. In a joint appeal recently made public, Nurgeldy Khalykov, Murat Dushemov and two other individuals believed to have been convicted on politically motivated grounds who are serving their sentences in the same prison facility in Lebap region, stated that they had been unlawfully imprisoned, subjected to physical and psychological pressure, and denied the right to contacts with relatives while in prison. They **requested help with ending the "lawlessness" facing them.**²²

In addition to targeting critics living in Turkmenistan for prosecution, **the authorities have sought the detention and return of outspoken activists based abroad, in particular in Turkey.** Previously a number of activists have succeeded in legally challenging such requests. However, in a highly alarming development, on 20 May 2023, **YouTube blogger Farhat Meimankulyiev (aka Durdyiev) was reportedly deported from Turkey to Turkmenistan** after being detained by Turkish police the previous day. His detention was reportedly carried out at the request of Turkmenistan's consulate in Istanbul, although the formal reason for his deportation was a migration violation.²³ Because of his previous vocal criticism of the authorities, Meimankulyiev is at **serious risk of politically motivated arrest, imprisonment and torture in Turkmenistan.** It would be essential to request assurances for his protection from the government. The blogger has previously been subjected to harassment, including by being arbitrarily detained at the premises of Turkmenistan's consulate in Istanbul in connection with a planned protest in August 2021. While held there, he was reportedly ill-treated and pressured to apologise for posting videos critical of the regime.²⁴

The Turkmenistani authorities also continue to put pressure on activists based abroad by **intimidating their relatives** who still live in Turkmenistan. For example, two Turkey-based women activists recently reported such experiences: **Dursoltan Taganova** reported that security service officials had questioned her 12-year-old son and attempted to recruit him as an informant, while **Khamida Babadzhanova** reported that her 73-year-old mother had been denied the right to travel abroad in apparent attempt to retaliate against the activist because of her criticism of the government.²⁵

Recommendations

The Turkmenistani authorities should:

- Stop persecuting citizens living in- and outside the country because of their criticism of the situation in Turkmenistan and their engagement on issues of concern to them, and ensure that no one is criminally charged, declared wanted, arrested or imprisoned because of their expressions of discontent or their civic activities.
- As called for by the UN Human Rights Committee, promptly release Nurgeldy Khalykov, Murat Dushemov, Mansur Mingelov, and others held on politically motivated grounds. As long as these individuals remain behind bars, ensure that their treatment fully corresponds to international standards.
- Ensure the safety and protection of Farhat Meimankulyiev following his recent deportation to Turkmenistan and refrain from initiating any retaliatory measures against him because of his video blogging activities.
- Stop intimidating and harassing relatives of activists based abroad, including those of Dursoltan Taganova and Khamida Babadzhanova.

Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, the authorities have yet to **ensure an independent investigation into the July 2022 events in Karakalpakstan in western Uzbekistan,** when mass protests broke out against proposed constitutional amendments which would have deprived the republic of its current constitutionally protected status and its right to secede from Uzbekistan. There are credible reports that authorities used excessive force, arbitrary detentions, and torture and ill-treatment when putting down the protests. According to official figures, at least 21 people died and 270 needed medical assistance.²⁶

The investigative efforts undertaken into the Karakalpakstan events have been shrouded in secrecy and **no one is known to have been held accountable to date for the killings or violations of the rights of protesters**, although a few law enforcement officials reportedly have been charged with wrongdoing.²⁷ At the same time, the authorities have depicted the events as an attempt to seize power in Karakalpakstan, and **several dozen protest participants have been charged with and convicted of various crimes following legal proceedings falling short of international fair trial standards**. Among them are well-known journalists, bloggers and activists, who had publicly criticised the proposed constitutional amendments, including **lawyer and blogger Dauletmurat Tazhimuratov** who has been depicted as a protest leader. In January 2023, he was **sentenced to 16 years in prison** on charges of encroaching on the constitutional order, organising riots and other crimes. His allegations of torture in detention were not referred for an independent investigation before the verdict was issued. An appeal trial started in the case of Tazhimuratov and co-defendants in early May 2023 and is ongoing at the time of writing.

When visiting Uzbekistan in March 2023, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk **reiterated his office's call for a transparent and independent review** of the July 2022 events in Karakalpakstan and stressed the importance of upholding fair trial standards in this context.²⁸

Journalists, bloggers and activists who are critical of the authorities continue to face pressure also outside the context of the Karakalpakstan events.²⁹ For example, after being handed a three year-sentence of so-called restricted liberty for alleged slander in January 2022, blogger **Miraziz Bazarov** has been subjected to restrictions on his freedom of movement, internet use and activities and held under surveillance. As reported by Bazarov's relatives, on 19 May 2023, the blogger was **forcibly detained by law enforcement officials** outside his home in Tashkent and taken away in an unknown direction. It turned out that he had been taken to the Main Department of Internal Affairs of Tashkent, where he was held for several hours, and reportedly pressured to delete online content under torture (which left traces on his body as visible on photos) and threats that he might face charges for non-compliance with the 2022 court decision in his case. Bazarov's lawyer subsequently filed a complaint about unlawful actions of the law enforcement officials, while the Ministry of Interior has claimed that the blogger was taken in for a standard "prophylactic" discussion concerning alleged violations of the terms of his sentence.³⁰ The incident is of serious concern and should be promptly and independently investigated.

Another outspoken blogger, **Otabek Sattoriy** is currently serving a six-year prison sentence on charges of libel and extortion initiated in retaliation for his criticism of corruption among local officials. In an opinion published in February 2023, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention **deemed Sattoriy's detention unlawful and called for his immediate release**.³¹ However, Sattoriy remains behind bars and was recently denied a transfer to less harsh prison conditions – which he could request after serving one third of his sentence - because of alleged violations of internal prison rules.³² In addition, he was made to carry out heavy physical labour related to brick production.

Another issue of major concern in Uzbekistan is that **homosexuality remains criminalised**, with article 120 of the Criminal Code providing for punishment for consensual sexual relations between men by up to three years' imprisonment. This punishment was retained in the new draft Criminal Code, which was put forward in 2021 and still is under consideration.³³ International human rights bodies and experts have repeatedly called for repealing the Criminal Code provision in question. **It would be important to reiterate this call** as the issue is subject to further consideration in the country.

Recommendations

The Uzbekistani authorities should:

- Ensure that an independent investigation, with the participation of independent international experts, is carried out into July 2022 events in Karakalpakstan and the reported human rights violations and that those responsible for violations are held accountable.
- Ensure that the legal proceedings against Dauletmurat Tazhimuratov and others charged because of their alleged involvement in the Karakalpakstan events fully correspond to international standards, that allegations of torture of defendants are impartially and thoroughly investigated, and that defendants are acquitted of all charges initiated because of their peaceful and legitimate exercise of their freedoms of expression, association and assembly.
- Put an end to pressure against outspoken journalists, activists and bloggers, including by immediately releasing Otabek Sattoriy in accordance with the opinion issued by the UN Working Group, and repealing the restricted liberty sentence imposed on Miraziz Bazarov and independently investigating his recent detention.
- Promptly decriminalise consensual sexual relations between men.

¹ For more information on human rights violations related to the January events and the measures taken to investigate and prosecute violations, see briefing paper prepared by IPHR and Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KIBHR) for the EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue in March 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/IPHR-KIBHR-briefing-paper-for-EU-Kazakhstan-HR-dialogue-2023.pdf>; report issued by IPHR, KIBHR, the Coalition against Torture and the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) in January 2023 on torture, ill-treatment and impunity related to the January 2022 events: <https://www.iphronline.org/we-don-t-even-cry-anymore.html>; as well as joint CAT submission by the Coalition against Torture, IPHR and OMCT from March 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/CAT-submission-final-22-March-1.pdf>

² The Committee's concluding observations are available at:

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FKAZ%2FCO%2F4&Lang=en

³ For more information on recent developments, see briefing paper prepared by IPHR and Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KIBHR) for the EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue in March 2023:

<https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/IPHR-KIBHR-briefing-paper-for-EU-Kazakhstan-HR-dialogue-2023.pdf>

⁴ See more in IPHR statement on Mamai's conviction: <https://www.iphronline.org/kazakhstan-opposition-party-leader-banned-from-campaigning.html>

⁵ For more information, see the following media article featuring an interview with KIBHR's Director Yevgeniy Zhovtis:

<https://respublika.kz.media/archives/84811>

⁶ For more information on the most recent developments in Kyrgyzstan, see update prepared by IPHR and Legal Prosperity Foundation as part of their cooperation with the CIVICUS Monitor, published in May 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/kyrgyzstan-tightening-the-screws-on-free-speech-and-civic-engagement.html>

⁷ See IPHR statement on the court decision in this case: <https://www.iphronline.org/court-rules-to-close-down-kyrgyz-service-of-radio-free-europe-radio-liberty.html>

⁸ See the previous note.

⁹ See joint NGO statement on the arrests in the Kempir-Abad case from October 2022: <https://www.iphronline.org/kyrgyzstan-mass-arrests-of-government-critics.html>

¹⁰ See IPHR statement on Temirov's deportation from November 2022: <https://www.iphronline.org/kyrgyzstan-corruption-busting-journalist-deported-to-russia.html>

¹¹ See legal analysis carried out by the Adilet Legal Clinic: <https://adilet.kg/ky/tpost/aozbr0hms1-pravovaya-pozitsiya-of-pravovaya-klinika/>

¹² A new draft law of this nature was published on the parliament's website on 19 May 2023

(http://kenesh.kg/ru/draftlaw/634426/show?fbclid=PAaAZK8dz79rpfaCbjQbw1YcS-6y-fn2WD54wN2M_m1tLx7Rt63abALAWC5KM), following an earlier similar initiative of an MP from November 2022 (see more about that initiative in the following IPHR statement: <https://www.iphronline.org/kyrgyzstan-foreign-agents-style-draft-law-poses-new-serious-threat-to-civil-society-groups.html>)

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- ¹³ The Committee's concluding observations are available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CCPR%2fC%2fKGZ%2fCO%2f3&Lang=en
- ¹⁴ For more information, see briefing paper from October 2022: <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Briefing-paper-on-key-concerns-in-Central-Asia-October-2022.pdf>
- ¹⁵ For more information on this trend, see update prepared by IPHR as part of its cooperation with the CIVICUS Monitor, published in March 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/tajikistan-continuous-crackdown-on-civil-society.html>
- ¹⁶ See joint statement by IPHR, the OMCT, Human Rights Watch, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Frontline Defenders, International Federation for Human Rights and Freedom Now issued on 3 April 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/tajikistan-manuchehr-kholiqnazarov-must-be-immediately-released.html>
- ¹⁷ See the Rapporteur's end-of-visit statement at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/12/tajikistan-human-rights-defenders-face-increasing-threats-climate-fear-says>
- ¹⁸ See IPHR statement from 2 May 2023 at: <https://www.iphronline.org/tajikistan-new-criminal-case-against-buzurgmehr-yorov.html>
- ¹⁹ The opinion, issued in 2019, is available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session84/A_HRC_WGAD_2019_17.pdf
- ²⁰ For more information, see submission by IPHR and Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights (TIHR) to the UN Human Rights Committee, January 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TIHR-IPHR-submission-to-the-HR-Committee-January-2023.pdf>
- ²¹ The Committee's concluding observations are available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolNo=CCPR%2FC%2FTKM%2FCO%2F3&Lang=en
- ²² See TIHR report on this appeal: <https://www.hronikatm.com/2023/05/political-prisoners-un-appeal/>
- ²³ See Turkmen Helsinki Foundation reports from 23 May and 25 May 2023: <https://www.tmhelsinki.org/article/8dddb3e-238d-4335-816b-644d7ec5e270>, <https://www.tmhelsinki.org/article/a6177b10-6aec-4f43-9975-11a07619d1f4>; and TIHR report from 22 May 2023: <https://www.hronikatm.com/2023/05/fargat-durdyev-detained/>
- ²⁴ See IPHR-TIHR update from October 2021: <https://www.iphronline.org/turkmenistan-s-government-targets-critics-at-home-and-abroad-in-its-relentless-crackdown-on-dissent.html>
- ²⁵ See reports from the Turkmen Helsinki Foundation from 8 February 2023 and 10 April 2023: <https://www.tmhelsinki.org/article/c6c0e061-1564-463a-aebd-b6de1f313cb7>, <https://www.tmhelsinki.org/article/50e7f783-9f65-4ee7-9119-00e57d48e318>
- ²⁶ For more information about the Karapalpakstan events and related violations, see submission for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Uzbekistan by Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA) and IPHR from April 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UPR-Uzbekistan-2023.pdf>
- ²⁷ See more in the following news report: https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2023/02/09/gp/?utm_source=push&utm_medium=telegram
- ²⁸ See the High Commissioner's statement at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/03/un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-concludes-his>
- ²⁹ For more information and case examples, see AHRCA-IPHR submission to the UPR: <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UPR-Uzbekistan-2023.pdf>
- ³⁰ See more in the following media reports: https://t.me/sarpa_media/396; <https://repost.uz/na-prof-besedu-vizivali>
- ³¹ The opinion is available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/detention-wg/opinions/session95/A-HRC-WGAD-2022-83-AEV.pdf>
- ³² See AHRCA-IPHR statement from April 2023: <https://www.iphronline.org/uzbekistan-otabek-sattoriy-denied-transfer.html>
- ³³ For more information, see AHRCA-IPHR submission to the UPR: <https://www.iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UPR-Uzbekistan-2023.pdf>