



Plenary sitting

B9-0084/2024

16.1.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on Tajikistan: state repression against the independent media
(2024/2506(RSP))

Michaela Šojdrová, Andrius Kubilius, Vangelis Meimarakis, Janina Ochojska, Luděk Niedermayer, Vladimír Bilčík, Peter Pollák, Jiří Pospíšil, Ivan Štefanec, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Inese Vaidere
on behalf of the PPE Group

B9-0084/2024

**Motion for a European Parliament resolution on Tajikistan: state repression against the independent media
(2024/2506(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Tajikistan,
 - having regard to repeated reports from stakeholders, including the Committee to Protect Journalists and the Front Line Defenders,
 - having regard to the EEAS and EU Statement on the developments in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region on 26 May 2022,
 - having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the democratic control function of independent media in Tajikistan is continuously declining and reached a concerning level, especially after the crackdown on protest in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province in 2022, beginning with the arrest of journalist Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva on charges of allegedly organising the protest;
- B. whereas Mamadshoeva is not the only example of a journalists who has been arrested in Tajikistan, where at least seven journalists : Abdullo Ghurbati, Zavqibek Saidamini, Abdusattor Pirmuhammadzoda, and Khurshed Fozilov Khushom Gulyam, Daler Imomali, have been imprisoned in 2022 and 2023;
- C. whereas the ban on the largest opposition party set a legal precedence for the persecution of journalists; whereas five of the seven jailed journalists in 2022-2023 were convicted on charges of “under extremisms provisions of the criminal code (Art 307)”;
- D. whereas the authorities’ arbitrarily use of the charge of extremism against journalists does not stand up to the rule of law and disregard the right to non-discriminatory legal procedures;
- E. whereas cases of violence against journalists occurred, like the physical attacks on the journalists including Mullorajab Yusufzoda and Barotali Nazarov in May 2022, or other forms of violence like online abuse, predominantly experienced by female journalists;
- F. whereas media outlets in Tajikistan are confronted with state-orchestrated pressure, including the threat of tax fines, intimidation of advertisers, indirect censorship, or the threat of criminal charges against the management, such measures particularly affect the remaining independent media outlets like Radio Free Europe or the news agency Asia-Plus, these measures led to an atmosphere of self-censorship and harmed the development of Tajik civil society;
1. Deeply regrets the decline of free journalism in Tajikistan in recent years;

2. Expresses concern about media freedom in Tajikistan; calls on the Tajik authorities to respect the right of non-discrimination based on political beliefs and the right of free expression;
3. Calls on Tajikistan to ensure just and fair legal procedures for journalists under investigation; expects the authorities to release unjustly imprisoned journalists;
4. Urges the Tajik authorities to refrain from using anti-extremism legislation such as the 2020 “Law on Countering Extremism” and the 2021 “Law on Combating Terrorism” to unduly restrict freedom of expression;
5. Calls on the Tajiki’s authorities to stop the political persecution of independent media including Asia Plus, Radio Ozodi and independent bloggers;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the President, Government and Parliament of Tajikistan.