



Plenary sitting

B9-0332/2023

11.7.2023

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 crackdown on the media and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan
(2023/2782(RSP))

Marisa Matias

on behalf of The Left Group

B9-0332/2023

**Motion for a European Parliament resolution on crackdown on the media and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan
(2023/2782(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. Whereas media freedom and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan are rapidly backsliding, in particular due to recent legislative developments;
 - B. whereas two draft laws to be considered by the Kyrgyz Parliament, one on Mass Media and the other one on the Protection of Children from Harmful Information, increase state control and censorship of information provided to the public, including the inadmissibility of distributing information about same-sex relations;
 - C. whereas the draft law on Foreign Representatives restricts the work of NGOs, among others, by granting the Ministry of Justice broad powers to interfere in their activities and providing for criminal liability for vaguely worded offences, such as participating in NGOs whose activities are deemed to “harm the health of citizens”;
 - D. whereas the Kyrgyz Law on Protection from Inaccurate Information criminalises the dissemination of “false” information in vague terms, giving authorities the power to block access to websites and close social media accounts without due process;
 - E. whereas there has been a spate of criminal cases against independent journalists, bloggers and media outlets, as well as cases of harassment and smear campaigns against NGOs and human rights defenders; whereas, for example, some of Kyrgyzstan’s most prominent figures were detained for their work to protect the Kempir-Abad Reservoir;
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- 1. Strongly calls on the Kyrgyz Parliament and President Sadyr Japarov to withdraw or repeal repressive laws that restrict the media and freedom of expression, in line with international human rights law and the Kyrgyzs Constitution;
 - 2. Calls on the Kyrgyz authorities to immediately release arbitrarily detained human rights defenders, media workers and journalists; in cases of detention based on credible evidence, calls on the authorities to guarantee fair trials;
 - 3. Calls on Kyrgyzstan authorities to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe environment for civil society organisations, journalists and media workers, enabling them to

carry out their legitimate and useful work without undue interference, criminalisation, censorship or persecution;

4. Expresses grave concern about the high number of custodial deaths in detention centres and prisons in Kyrgyzstan; calls for effective, independent and impartial investigations into these cases and into all allegations of torture; calls for those responsible to be held accountable;
5. Supports the approach to disinformation proposed by various UN actors, which is based on positive measures such as the promotion of independent fact-checking mechanisms and public education campaigns;
6. Underlines the need for a EU-Central Asia strategy based on mutually beneficial cooperation and also designed, implemented and monitored in line with human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, and in cooperation with local civil society organisations, including women rights organisations, environmental activists and trade unions;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Kyrgyzstan.