



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2024)0039

Tajikistan: state repression against the independent media

European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2024 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 Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the democratic control function of independent media in Tajikistan has been continuously declining over the last decade and Tajikistan's media are in their worst state since independence in 1991;
- B. whereas since October 2022, authorities have sentenced numerous journalists, including Abdullo Ghurbati, Daler Imomali, Zavqibek Saidamini, Abdusattor Pirmuhammadzoda, Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva, Khushruz Jumayev and Khurshed Fozilov, to between seven and over 20 years in prison in retaliation for their coverage of social issues and human rights abuses, including in GBAO; whereas the 'Law on Countering Extremism' and the 'Law on Combating Terrorism' are used to persecute journalists, as deplored by UN experts in July 2023;
- C. whereas the only two significant independent news agencies – Asia-Plus and RFE/RL local service Radio Ozodi – regularly face harassment and threats, including difficulties in obtaining accreditation and criminal charges, notably against journalist Rustami Joni; whereas journalists running the independent Azda TV in exile report ongoing pressure by the Tajik security services on their relatives remaining in the country;
- D. whereas pressure exerted by authorities on domestic media and self-censorship facilitate Russian propaganda and disinformation, in particular by stifling coverage of the ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine;
 1. Strongly condemns the ongoing crackdown, including anti-extremism legislation, against independent media, government critics, human rights activists and independent lawyers; condemns the closure of independent media and websites, including the online media outlets Pamir Daily News, New Tajikistan 2 and Akhbor.com;
 2. Condemns all politically motivated trials and the lack of fair and public hearings by independent courts; urges the authorities to stop persecuting journalists, immediately

and unconditionally release those who have been arbitrarily detained and drop all charges against them, stop the persecution of lawyers defending government critics and release human rights lawyers Manuchehr Kholiknazarov and Buzurgmehr Yorov;

3. Urges the government to ensure that detainees have access to adequate healthcare; calls for a thorough investigation into allegations of mistreatment in custody and forced confessions, and those responsible to be brought to justice;
4. Calls on the government to ensure a safe working environment for media workers and human rights defenders in accordance with Tajikistan's international human rights obligations; reiterates that the free and independent work of the media and civil society organisations is a cornerstone of any democratic society; insists that the situation of freedom of expression in Tajikistan should be taken into account when assessing the application to GSP+ and for negotiation of the new EU-Tajikistan EPCA;
5. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to increase support for civil society, human rights defenders and independent media workers in Tajikistan, including funding and visas for those in need of protection;
6. Calls on international institutions to continue to monitor the human rights situation in Tajikistan;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, Commission, HR/VP, EU Member States, UNHRC and the President, Government and Parliament of Tajikistan.