

## **Report on Freedom of speech violation in Tajikistan, June 2015- June 2016**

The Government of Tajikistan proceeded its action related freedom of speech after a parliamentary election in 2015.

On the 30th of June, the meeting of the government ended by signing the "Protocol of Government of Tajikistan Republic", number 7. This protocol limited media to receive official information directly .

This act bound up all of the authorities to give official information only to National News Agency "Khovar". This protocol is into force until now and every governor can refuse to give information for the nongovernmental media according to this act. To reduce press conferences from 4 until 2 times in a year, in 2014 which made authorities "unavailable", this act was the second hit to freedom of speech in Tajikistan .

While at the past sometimes will be demanded applications or letters in written form from editor-in-chiefs to answer correspondent's questions (while any laws or acts do bind up nobody to ask such letters) by authorities, this protocol can be the second reason that authorities can refuse to give official information to non-governmental media according to it too. By this case, several media of Tajikistan called It "dangerous order <sup>1</sup>."

In July and August 2015 government's pressures proceed on IRPT. IRPT faced to false charges by the government in this period and the governmental media spread these charges. IRPT denied all the charges using its press, "Najot" newspaper, "Nahzat" site and the other non-governmental media. So the first measure of the government for "shutting IRPT's mouth up", it was to deny its publishing house named "Muattar". There were printed this party's newspaper, magazine and other bulletins which It needed them<sup>2</sup> .

September occurrence in Tajikistan which calls " the mutiny of Haji Halim" was the third hit to democracy and freedom speech in Tajikistan. On the 16th of September, the media informed about detention 13 members of the Supreme President of IRPT. After some days officials said 23 high ranged members of IRPT were detained<sup>3</sup>. Now more than 200 members of IRPT are in prison .

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ozodagon.com/22617-protokoli-alasai-ukumat-dasturi-havfnok-tasdi-shudaks.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tojnews.org/tj/news/makomot-dari-chophonai-khnit-ro-bastand-nachot-bo-mushkil-nashr-shudaast>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ozodagon.com/23500-shari-bozdoshti-13-masuli-nit-badi-atli-o-alim-ono-asdi-firorkardand.html>.

Among 13 members of IRPT, who were detained at first, were journalists. They are Mahmatali Hait, Zubaidullah Raziq, Abdulqahhari Davlat, Rahmatullah Rajab, Hikmatullah Sayfullahzade and Zarafa Rahmani.

When the conditions of the media will be discussed and compared with the last 5 years in Tajikistan, it shows, that the media had a critical condition in 2015. For example, media could cover the occurrences which happened in Tavildara district in 2009, military actions in Rasht region and the captors escape in 2010, meetings and clashes in Khoruq in 2012, but covering the events of 2016 were very critical for media. Five correspondents who were asked for these reasons told, organs pressure, their security, unfavorable political situation don't let them write about such themes. They are afraid of that If they write about political problems such as detaining IRPT's members and Haji Halim's mutiny, they'll be linked to these events. So experts don't want to speak about such political themes too. They link their silence with the political situation in Tajikistan .

In the October 2015 Ministry of foreign affairs of Tajikistan called on local and the representatives of foreign media not to cover the IRPT's activity when It's activity was outlawed. After this, all of the Tajik media and representatives of the foreign media in Tajikistan refused to write about IRPT's problem. So the media can cover only officials positions about IRPT<sup>4</sup> .

On the 25th of November, 2015 was adopted amendments to the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan about fighting against terrorism. According to an amendment to the 20th article of the mentioned above the law, "as the demand of the organ which fights against terrorism directly electric communication service or other services related to it will be rejected all over the country or over the separate areas of the country"<sup>5</sup>. This point came into force legally in 2015, while authority used it during Tavildara and Rasht events .

President's annual Adress to parliament was sent on January 20, 2016 .

Emamali Rahman ordered the General Attorney to present a five-year strategy to fight against terrorism and extremism with other related organs<sup>6</sup>. After this soared to detain opposition persons and pressure to Mass Media. So press couldn't cover problems as was as possible. In addition, high range officials want to strong their pressure using the order of the president. They want to join the struggle against "terrorism". For example, Ministry of culture presented a project of amendments to the media Law in February 2016. According to that project, Ministry of culture with an allowance of the General Attorney could ban the activity of the newspapers until three months. As Shamsiddin Orumbekzade, the minister of culture commented, Ministry of culture presented this point to prevent publishing terrorist newspapers. But fortunately, the parliament didn't adopt this point of the project<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://news.tj/ru/node/217118>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art\\_id=22580](http://www.jumhuriyat.tj/index.php?art_id=22580)

<sup>6</sup> <http://president.tj/node/10585>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ozodi.org/a/parliament-press-law/27529186.html>

David Kaye, the special rapporteur of US in freedom of expression area visited Tajikistan in March 2016. He proclaimed freedom of expression dangerous in Tajikistan. He told Radio "Ozodi", "to my mind the condition of freedom of expression is worrying in Tajikistan. I mean serious pressure to press, political parties, pressure for political expression, pressure to the internet and cultural society. I think, the condition of freedom of speech in compared with the past years became very bad and freedom expression became limited, particularly in the last 39 months<sup>8</sup>."

The editors of several media told, the State Committee of National Security watches publishing analytical articles seriously. According to them, If they publish any analytical articles, they'll be invited to State Committee of National Security immediately and will be forced to introduce an author to them who wrote the article. As well as they will be asked why they published such article .

When IRPT was outlawed several journalists and experts such as Isfandiyori Nazar, Safvat Borhanov, Abdumannon Sheraliev, Mahmudjoni Faiz Rahman, Bobojon Qaumzod, Amrullohi Nizam, Abduazimi Abduvahhab and Jannatullohi Kamil left Tajikistan.

The referendum for changes and amendments of Constitution was held in Tajikistan on the 22nd of May current year. A day before this referendum Reporters Without Border published the report, there was said nongovernmental media is under pressure. As well as Professor Ibrohim Usmanov told in his interview with "Ozodagon" News Agency government wants to take the nongovernmental media under its pressure.

On the 2nd of June, current year, the court proclaimed the verdict of the high ranged members of the IRPT behind closed doors<sup>9</sup>. There weren't any correspondents. As well as any representatives of the diplomatic corps and correspondents couldn't enter court process of advocates Buzurgmehr Yorov and Nuriddin Mahkamov, who were the advocates detained members of IRPT too.

The Head of Nation Association of Independence Media of Tajikistan noticed the condition freedom of expression is negative in Tajikistan, particularly the condition of nongovernmental media is worrying. On the 16th of July he told in his interview with the New Agency "Asia Plus" "ups and downs of the media's activity are changeable on freedom of expression, but the difference of current time with the past it is that the authorities see terrorism and threat to the security on a face of nongovernmental media<sup>10</sup>."

At last, the chief of the Department of the Ministry of interior affairs in Sugd region told the press he doesn't tell the press statistic of the several heavy crimes. So several media experts, particularly Nuriddin Qarshiboev told, It is illegal and violence of the rights of the citizens<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ozodi.org/a/uno-reporter-about-freedom-of-expression-in-tajikistan/27601779.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://tajik.irib.ir/82>

<sup>10</sup> <http://news.tj/ru/node/227146>

<sup>11</sup> <http://rus.ozodi.org/a/27860868.html>

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