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Исх. №0088 от 22 Сентябрь 2016г.

TO THE REPRESENTATIVE OF OSCE

ON FREEDOM OF MEDIA

DUNJA MIJATOVIĆ

APPEAL

Dear Dunja Mijatović!

We, a group of independent journalists working at different times with the TV channel "CATV" (Central Asian TV, Moscow, Russia), would like to bring into your attention to the increasing pressure on this independent channel and its journalists. During the preparation of a number of programs, the Tajik government pressure on us and our family members who live in Tajikistan due to our professional duties.

Sitora Yusupova, a female Tajik national, has worked in the channel from February 2015 to May 2015 as TV presenter of the daily news program "Imruz" (Today), but she could not continue to work because her parents who live in Tajikistan had been under harsh pressure by the Tajik authorities. Officials belonging to Committee of National Security in Isfara distt. used to go to her father's house in Isfara district in far northern Tajikistan and told him that her daughter (Mrs. Yusupova) was working with a TV belonging to "enemies of Tajikistan. So, they threatened him that if she would not quit her job in CATV, he would have problems with a piece of land that he owns and supplements the family's livelihood through this land. Mrs. Sitora Yusupova has finally quitted her job and returned Tajikistan where she was twice interrogated about the owner of the channel and how it works.

Victoria Boutkevitch, national of the Russian Federation, has worked as CATV correspondent from October 2015 to the present. During investigation of Tajik opposition-blogger, Ehsan Odinaeva (he is well-known as Sarafrozi Olamafruz in the social networks, a citizen of Tajikistan) who disappeared without trace in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on May 2015, she received a phone call from a hidden number. The anonymous caller who refused to introduce himself, asked her to give up the investigation of the said case.

Pairav Masaidov, Tajik national who is graduate of a European university, has worked as chief-in-editor of CATV's Tajik service from May to September 2015 as well as he had been presenting a cultural program in the channel. His parents and sisters who lives in Asht district,

were twice summoned by the Tajik security official for the whole day over Pairav activities. They threatened him to “make” many problems for him and the whole family, if his son would not leave his professional activities in this independent channel. Moreover, Pairav’s family members and his ex-wife were frequently called by the authorities in order to silence him. Due to this circumstance, he left the channel.

Beck Rahmoni, Tajik national, has worked in the channel from February to October 2015 as presenting a pure cultural program. His brother who live in Tajikistan had been many times interrogated by the officials over Mr. Rahmoni’s job. But, Mr. Rahmoni repeatedly refused the requests of his brother to stop presenting in this TV that led to his brother’s dismissal from his administrative job in Ishkashim, a district in Badakhshan. Until now, his brother remains unemployed.

Malvina Manzarova, Tajik national, who has succeeded Sitara Yusupova as television presenter of the news program “Imruz” (Today) and worked from mid-June to November 2015. She was also forced to resign after her father was three times approached the members of the security agencies in Tajikistan. She was too forced to quit her job in the channel because the government pressures on her father.

Salim Nakhimov, Tajik national, has worked from February to July 2015 as a camera operator in CATV. He was pressured to quit his job by one of the employees of the Tajikistan Embassy in Russia.

Andrei Ryabchenko, Kyrgyzstan national, worked as editor of a news programs since foundation of the TV. He had been repeatedly received threatening messages from a fake profiles on Facebook. He had been threatened to be deported to Kyrgyzstan where he would be sentenced due to his activities on charges of extremism.

Mahmudjon Fayzrahmonov, Tajik national, political expert, television presenter of the program “What news you have” (Boz chi gap) as well as spokesman for the opposition Tajik Islamic Renaissance Party (IRPT). His family members, including his 60-years old mother, sisters-in-law and teenage brother has been called for periodic interrogations by the security officials in Qumsangir district in southern Tajikistan where his family live. His mother was asked to tell him not to appear not only in CATV, but in other news channels as BBC, Aljazeera, etc. It is worthy to note that the passports were removed from them in order not to flee the country and be used as hostages.

Muhammadjon Kabirov, Tajik national, is executive director of the news channel CATV. In March 2016, the Tajik security officials descended on house of his father-in-law Bobokhonov Dzhamsheh who lives in the city of Vahdat (near Dushanbe) and illegally searched the house. They told Mr. Bobokhonov that his son-in-law has been leading the channel and also cooperating with the banned IRPT. Recently, Mr. Bobokhonov along with his wife and three daughters were taken to police station where they were interrogated and harassed. The officials threatened him

that his son-in-law might be face problems or killed abroad and they will not bear any responsibility for that.

In the end, the Tajik government has many time tried to block the TV and its website “www.catv24.com” in the territory of Tajikistan. There has been an active propaganda for the people not to watch “CATV”, a channel was charged by the government as “channel of the Republic’s enemies”. If it was known to the authorities that a particular citizen has cooperated with the channel, he will severely punished.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned cases, we kindly ask you to pay attention to these facts of oppression and take measures.

Sincerely,

Journalists of CATV