

**Statement of the Open Dialogue Foundation on working session 1: Fundamental freedoms, including: freedom of expression, free media and information**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Open Dialogue Foundation is an NGO with 10 years experience of protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the post-Soviet area. Today I would like to focus your attention on the situation with freedom of expression and media in Kazakhstan.

Since the last HDIM we do not observe a progress in this field. Freedom of expression in Kazakhstan is still very limited. Kenzhebek Abishev, Almat Zhumagulov, Ablovas Dzhumayev, Aset Abishev, Bolatkhan Zhunusov, Serik Zhakhin were jailed for criticising the authorities in social media.

Few years ago Kazakhstan shut down all local independent media outlets. Journalists of Radio Liberty and Current Time, who are covering protests and politically motivated trials in Kazakhstan, are prosecuted, face obstruction, arbitrary detention, administrative punishment and expulsion. The reaction of the editorial office of Radio Liberty in Kazakhstan on these violations is disappointing.

Journalist of Radio Liberty Sania Toiken was detained 5 times from the beginning of this year. In March she was convicted and fined on charges of "refuse to follow police orders". Journalist of Current Time Svetlana Glushkova was detained twice during the protest against renaming of Astana in March. She was also convicted and fined.

On the day of the presidential election on 9 June 2019 and during the following 3 days of mass protests at least 12 journalists were detained in Kazakhstan despite the fact they performed their professional duties. Police interrogated them and deleted their video footage. As a result of forcibly detention correspondent of the France Press agency Chris Rickleton suffered a hematoma under the eye.

On 6 July 2019 at least 5 journalists were detained during mass protests. The editor of Uralsk Week journal Lukpan Akhmedyarov was convicted and fined.

Kazakhstan misused migration mechanisms to expel ukrainian journalist Oleksandr Gorokhovskiy, french journalist Vincent Prado and journalist from Kyrgyzstan Jazgul Egemberdieva from its territory.

The Open Dialogue Foundation demands all OSCE participant states to condemn violations of freedom of speech, media freedom, rights of journalists in Kazakhstan. We ask OSCE and the European Union to activate its missions in Kazakhstan. We appeal to the US government to make a constant monitoring of the work of editorial office of Radio Liberty in Kazakhstan and to demand from the government of Kazakhstan to stop prosecute journalists.

Thank you for your attention,

Maksym Sytnikov, Open Dialogue Foundation