

CPJ, partners call on Kyrgyzstan to implement UN working group demands and free journalist Tajibek kyzy

New York, January 30, 2026—Ahead of a February 2 [decision](#) by Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Court on whether to consider reopening the case of imprisoned journalist Makhabat Tajibek kyzy, eight international press freedom and human rights organizations urge Kyrgyzstan authorities to fully comply with the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's favorable opinion and release Tajibek kyzy without delay.

Director of anticorruption investigative outlets Temirov Live and Ait Ait Dese, Tajibek kyzy was [arrested](#) in January 2024 along with 10 other current and former staff members and [sentenced](#) in October of that year to six years in prison on charges of calling for mass unrest. Our organizations have repeatedly denounced her conviction as baseless and consider it retaliation for her outlets' investigations into senior officials' alleged corruption. Authorities were unable to identify any calls for unrest in the outlets' publications, instead claiming that the critical reporting "could" incite unrest. The Clooney Foundation for Justice's TrialWatch initiative [found](#) significant violations of Tajibek kyzy and her colleagues' right to a fair trial. Her conviction came after a long campaign of pressure against the outlets, including the [arrest](#), [stripping of citizenship](#), and [deportation](#) of their founder, [international prize-winning](#) investigative journalist [Bolot Temirov](#).

The 10 other current and former Temirov Live and Ait Ait Dese staff were [acquitted](#), handed suspended sentences, or subsequently [pardoned](#). In December 2024, Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Court [upheld](#) Tajibek kyzy's sentence, exhausting her domestic avenues of redress unless the court grants her lawyer's [petition](#) to reopen her case in light of the UN working group's August 2025 [opinion](#) declaring her detention arbitrary.

We, the undersigned organizations, believe that the working group's opinion underlines the political nature of Tajibek kyzy's prosecution and provides clear grounds for her urgent release. Finding that she was convicted for "her legitimate exercise of freedom of expression through her journalistic work investigating government corruption and criticizing political leadership," the working group said Kyrgyz authorities "failed to identify any specific excerpts" in her publications "that constituted calls for violence" and "conflat[ed] criticism with incitement to violence." The group highlighted how Tajibek kyzy's conviction was part of the "systematic harassment" of Temirov Live and other independent media and said she was targeted "in part because she is seen as an extension of" Bolot Temirov.

Citing its earlier [opinion](#) on the case of nine other Temirov Live and Ait Ait Dese journalists, the working group reiterated its criticism of article 278 of Kyrgyzstan's criminal code, under which they and Tajibek kyzy were prosecuted, as "impermissibly broad and vague," saying it was deeply concerned by authorities' systematic misuse of the article "to suppress legitimate criticism and silence independent media."

While stressing that Tajibek kyzy should not have been on trial at all, the working group found that authorities also violated her right to a fair trial. She was denied access to a lawyer during the initial stages of her arrest, including during the search of her home and office. The courts' failure to provide a "duly reasoned" rationale for conviction hindered the defense's ability to challenge the conviction on appeal. Senior state officials, including Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, violated the presumption of innocence by prejudging Tajibek kyzy and her colleagues as guilty before their conviction.

The working group therefore requested Kyrgyz authorities release Tajibek kyzy immediately, grant her the right to compensation, ensure a full and independent investigation of her

arbitrary deprivation of liberty, and take measures against those responsible. It further urged the government to “immediately cease its campaign of intimidation against independent media and undertake urgent legislative reforms to bring article 278 into compliance with international human rights law.”

We also express deep concern at the situation surrounding Tajibek kzy and Temirov’s 13-year-old son, whom Temirov has [accused](#) Kyrgyz authorities of holding hostage. Following Tajibek kzy’s arrest, Temirov [said](#) investigators threatened his wife that they would put the couple’s son, who now lives with his grandmother, in a state-run orphanage. Sentencing Tajibek kzy in late 2024, the court [granted](#) state social services the right to determine the child’s custody, a process that [remains pending](#). Kyrgyz authorities should ensure that Tajibek kzy and Temirov have sole authority as parents to determine their son’s place of residence. Using the custody of a minor child as a tool to exert pressure on independent journalists would be an odious step and Kyrgyz authorities must ensure that this does not occur.

The undersigned organizations call on Kyrgyz authorities to fully and swiftly implement the working group’s requests. As a party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, multiple violations of which are highlighted by the working group’s report, and as a three-time member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, most recently in 2023-2025, Kyrgyzstan should demonstrate a clear commitment to human rights and the United Nations mechanisms that uphold them.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)

International Press Institute (IPI)

Norwegian Helsinki Committee

Freedom For Eurasia

International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)

Araminta

Civil Rights Defenders