

Press Release

International Organizations' Hypocrisy and Government Oppression

(Translated)

In the past week, 11 journalists have been arrested in Kyrgyzstan, and criminal charges have been brought against the heads of some online platforms. For this reason, international organizations and Western countries have issued repeated appeals to the Kyrgyz authorities. For example, the European Union representation in Kyrgyzstan and the embassies of the United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden jointly issued a statement on January 19 expressing their concern about the arrest of journalists in Kyrgyzstan. In the joint statement, they called on the Kyrgyz government to fulfill international commitments regarding human rights, protect the rights of journalists and freedom of the press, and conduct an investigation within the legal framework with the participation of lawyers.

U.S. authorities have also expressed their concern about the arrest of journalists. The spokesman for the U.S. Department of State, Matthew Miller, issued the following statement on January 18 regarding the situation in Kyrgyzstan: "The United States is deeply concerned by reports of recent actions taken by the government of the Kyrgyz Republic against independent media outlets and journalists. These actions contribute to a pattern of government activity that appears aimed at stifling public debate and free expression. We encourage the Kyrgyz authorities to ensure journalists can operate without undue pressure or harassment. A free and independent press is essential for protecting human rights, maintaining effective democratic institutions, and promoting peace and security."

The International Press Institute (IPI), based in Vienna, Austria, called for the immediate release of the 11 journalists on January 17. Additionally, Amnesty International issued a statement stating that "the Kyrgyz government must stop pressuring citizens who think differently, release the detained journalists, and free those imprisoned for expressing their opinions."

On the same day, a vote was taken on a resolution regarding Central Asia and was approved in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The resolution was supported by 543 out of 629 members of the parliament. The resolution stipulates that "authoritarian regimes in power in Central Asia must respect their international commitments in the field of human rights."

President Sadyr Japarov stated in an interview with the Khabar agency that the journalists were arrested on suspicion of "calling for collective disturbances." According to him, independent journalists and bloggers use funds received from various institutions and organizations for different purposes. He said, "In general, news agencies like kloop.media, Mediahab, kaktus.media, PolitKlinika, factcheck.kg, and T-Media receive over \$600,000 USD each year in the form of grants from foreign donors. These grant funds are intended for freedom of expression, supporting the media community, and projects for the development of independent journalism. However, in reality, the grant money is spent on a policy of condemnation and criticism of the government, disrupting public peace, filing unconstitutional appeals, and spreading false information that threatens national security."

Do the appeals of these international organizations genuinely relate to the arrest of journalists and human rights violations, especially freedom of expression? Or are there other interests behind their appeals? Or is it a step towards establishing a dictatorial regime in the country?

It is known that since the current government took office, it has leveled criminal charges against hundreds of Muslims for expressing their opinions or sharing religious information on social media. To this day, dozens of our brothers and sisters affiliated with Hizb ut Tahrir remain detained in prisons on charges of extremism, facing harsh conditions, including severe and unusual torture, beatings, electric

shocks, and solitary confinement in closed rooms. However, the mentioned international organizations and Western countries have not uttered a word about such actions against Muslims, let alone raised concerns about "freedom of expression" and "human rights." In fact, when sincere Muslims are accused of extremism and face severe punishments, these "secularists" applaud and rejoice. It is interesting to note that these organizations only began to stir up controversy after government opponents were imprisoned under the labels of "extremism" and "against the state system." Hence, the slogans of "freedom of expression" and "human rights" are nothing but hypocritical tactics used by the West and international organizations to achieve their goals. This indicates that the colonizing disbelievers are losing the ideological struggle against Islam and its advocates.

In reality, it is also known that the "freedom of expression" advocated by the West is completely at odds with Islam. Because freedom of expression is not limited to criticizing politicians; on the contrary, it includes the expression of disbelief, promoting views contrary to Islamic beliefs, endorsing usury and adultery, as well as showcasing various forms of immorality through television series and the like. We have witnessed this clearly in unethical events such as the publication of disrespectful caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the desecration of the Noble Quran. Therefore, the freedom of expression for disbelievers is only utilized when it comes to combating Islam.

Similarly, holding rulers accountable in Islam is not a matter of freedom of expression; rather, it falls under the concept of "commanding the right and forbidding the wrong," which is a duty upon Muslims. If holding rulers accountable were a part of freedom of expression, then "commanding the right and forbidding the wrong" would be permissible for Muslims. However, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) stated: «مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ» **“Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.”** [Muslim]

And this hadith includes holding rulers accountable as well.

We do not intend with these words to defend or justify the repression of the current government in the pursuit of establishing a dictatorship. Instead, we want to emphasize the hypocrisy of the West in promoting and applying democratic values. Accusing Muslims and journalists of extremism, and their subsequent arrest, is nothing but suppression and an attempt to maintain control. Ultimately, the government of Kyrgyzstan has faithfully served Russia since the years of independence, although it now occasionally attempts to establish relations with the West and distance itself from Russia. Previous attempts by authorities to establish a dictatorship have failed, and the current government of President Sadyr Japarov maintains a cautious stance in its relations with the West, evident in freezing strategic agreements. The current government's foreign policy is directed towards China, indicating a shift away from the West. Consequently, it is striving to establish dictatorial control, leading to increased attacks on journalists and Western-affiliated non-governmental organizations.

For the establishment of a dictatorship, it is first necessary to monopolize information, a process observed in global regimes and historical actions of various systems. Kyrgyzstan, however, has branded itself as the "Democratic Island" among autocratic states in the Commonwealth of Independent States, securing loans worth millions of dollars from Western countries and international organizations. Therefore, international organizations call on Kyrgyz authorities to adhere to international standards and agreements. Moreover, the cultural impact on the dictatorial system in Kyrgyzstan is minimal, and shaping public opinion in this direction requires considerable time.

In conclusion, the Kyrgyz society must resist government attempts to establish a dictatorship and strengthen the courage of its people against oppression. At the same time, we should not be deceived by the destructive and hypocritical policies of the West. Instead, we should study Islamic culture and use our power to elevate it to the highest levels.

**Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir
in Kyrgyzstan**