



# Kyrgyzstan

## Rita Karasartova

### *Facing 15 years for peacefully protesting*

Rita Karasartova loves spending time with her children, practising yoga, and sewing chapans, the traditional quilted jackets worn by people in Kyrgyzstan. But since October 2022 Rita's life has been turned upside down. She was arrested and spent months detained in a cramped cell, denied access to healthcare and unable to see or speak to her family. Now she is under house arrest and a strict curfew.

Rita is a human rights defender and an expert in civic governance. For over a decade she dedicated her life to providing independent legal advice, helping people whose rights had been violated by a corrupt and unreliable legal system. She leads the non-governmental Institute for Public Analysis and is a member of the United Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan, fighting against poverty and injustice.

Alongside 26 others, Rita was arrested for opposing a new border agreement that gave control of a freshwater reservoir to Uzbekistan. The group called for people to peacefully demonstrate against the agreement, demanding transparency from the government. Like others, Rita feared Uzbekistan would restrict or prohibit access to water, a scarce resource in the region where loss of access could have devastating consequences.

Rita and the others were initially detained for organizing "mass disorder", and she was charged with attempting to "violently overthrow the government", which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years' imprisonment.

Rita Karasartova loves yoga, travelling and sewing traditional Kyrgyzstani jackets with her daughter. Now she is under house arrest, having spent months detained in a cramped cell unable to see or speak to her family. Worried about her people's access to water, Rita peacefully opposed a border agreement giving control of a freshwater reservoir to Uzbekistan. She has been charged with attempting to "violently overthrow the government" and faces 15 years' imprisonment.

## Take Action: Free Rita Karasartova

Demand Rita is immediately released from house arrest, all charges against her dropped and that she can carry out human rights activities without fear of retaliation.

### Write to:

General Prosecutor  
A. Toktonaliev Street, 139  
Bishkek  
720040  
Kyrgyz Republic

Email: [statement@prokuror.kg](mailto:statement@prokuror.kg)

Salutation: Dear General Prosecutor

Note: *Kyrgyzstan does not have diplomatic representatives in Canada.*

Hashtags: #W4R23 #W4RCanada

## Keep Rita's hope alive

Let Rita know she is not alone by sending your messages and drawings of friendship and hope.

Rita Karasartova  
c/o Civic Initiatives  
Abdrakhmanova 204  
Office 14  
Bishkek  
710040  
Kyrgyz Republic

Email: [freedomrita@protonmail.com](mailto:freedomrita@protonmail.com)

