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Second UA: 30/24 Index: EUR 58/8776/2024 Kyrgyzstan of November 21, 2024

## KYRGYZSTAN

### DROP ALL CHARGES AGAINST KYRGYZ JOURNALISTS

On October 10, 2024, the Leninsky District Court in Bishkek sentenced four journalists from independent media projects “Temirov Live” and “Ayt Ayt Dese.” These outlets are known for exposing corruption in Kyrgyzstan. The court sentenced Makhabat Tazhibek-kyzy, head of “Temirov Live,” to six years in prison. Azamat Ishenbekov, a journalist and poet, received a five-year sentence. Aike Beishekeeva, a fact-checker, and Aktilek Kaparov, an investigative journalist, were sentenced to three years of probation. The charges included “calls for disobedience” and inciting violence — claims widely seen as baseless. Meanwhile, seven other defendants were acquitted. These harsh sentences represent an attack on press freedom and the right to independent reporting.

#### Write to the Kyrgyz General Prosecutor urging him to:

- Ensure that Makhabat Tazhibek-kyzy and Azamat Ishenbekov are released immediately.
- Drop all charges against the four convicted journalists from “Temirov Live” and “Ayt Ayt Dese,” and allow them to continue their professional activities in Kyrgyzstan without undue restrictions.

#### Write to:

Asanaliev Maksat Kubatovich  
General Prosecutor  
A.Toktonalieva Street, 139  
Bishkek  
720040  
Kyrgyz Republic  
Email: [statement@prokuror.kg](mailto:statement@prokuror.kg)

Salutation: *Dear General Prosecutor,*

#### And copy:

Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic  
2360 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C., DC 20008  
United States of America  
Tel: (202) 449-9822 Fax: (202) 449-8275  
Email: [kgembassy.usa@mfa.gov.kg](mailto:kgembassy.usa@mfa.gov.kg)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On January 16, 2024, police detained 11 journalists and media workers from “Ayt Ayt Dese” and “Temirov Live” during a heavy-handed operation. They were denied access to legal representation while in custody. By January 30, all 11 were transferred to the SIZO 1 pretrial detention center in Bishkek.

Authorities claimed the detentions were part of a criminal investigation under Article 278(3) of the Criminal Code, citing alleged "calls for mass disobedience, riots, and violence" based on a December 13, 2023, video from "Ayt Ayt Dese." The accused denied the charges, stating they were politically motivated retaliation for criticizing the government.

On October 10, 2024, the Leninsky District Court convicted four journalists. Makhabat Tazhibek-kyzy, head of "Temirov Live" and "Ayt Ayt Dese," received six years in prison. Journalist and poet Azamat Ishenbekov was sentenced to five years. Fact-checker Aike Beishekeeva and investigative journalist Aktilek Kaparov were given three years of probation. Seven others were acquitted due to lack of evidence.

The court also ordered that the young son of Makhabat Tazhibek-kyzy and Bolot Temirov, the exiled founder of "Temirov Live," be placed under state guardianship. However, this decision has not been enforced, and the child remains with his grandparents.

"Temirov Live," launched in January 2020, has faced relentless pressure from authorities. In January 2022, police raided its office and detained Bolot Temirov. By November 2022, Temirov, who held dual Russian and Kyrgyzstani citizenship, was stripped of his Kyrgyzstani citizenship and deported to Moscow. These actions were widely seen as retaliation for his investigative reporting.

This case is part of a broader crackdown on freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan. Independent media outlets have been shut down or restricted, and activists face criminal prosecution, including in high-profile cases like the "Kempir-Abad case." Amnesty International continues to document these alarming trends.

***Please take action as soon as possible until January 6, 2025! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***