



“Civil society in Kyrgyzstan: between praise and persecution”

- Increasing attempts by the authorities to control the media environment and suppress discussion on issues of public interest.
- Increasing intimidation and harassment of journalists, bloggers, civil society activists, lawyers and others who criticize the authorities and speak out on corruption and other issues that are sensitive to those in power.
- Exploitation of the fight against disinformation to crack down on dissent.
- Mass arrests of activists
- The introduction of a new unjustified and discriminatory financial reporting scheme for NGOs and attempts to re-initiate “foreign agents” NGO legislation.
- A series of court-imposed blanket bans on peaceful protests. Detentions of peaceful protesters by police based on problematic court-imposed bans on protests.
- Significant limitation of access of citizens and media to socially relevant information.
- Significant increase of discriminatory draft laws published by state officials for public discussion.
- Defence of the so-called “traditional values” has become a widespread mechanism for the authoritarian regime in Kyrgyzstan to fight pluralism, consolidate power.

What New Trends are we Witnessing?

- Transparency-linked restrictions
- Culture & traditions VS human rights
- Democracy – no consensus
- Digital restrictions
- Narrowing the space for INGOs
- Increasing priority given to counter-terrorism and national security
- Propaganda and false news

RECOMMENDATIONS

URGENT

- Urge Kyrgyzstani authorities to release all human rights defenders arbitrarily detained in retaliation for their legitimate human rights work.

EMPOWER CIVIL SOCIETY

- “Kyrgyz Zharan” New Democratic Identity to strengthen social cohesion (for example: projecting a discourse of democratic religiosity, with the promotion of citizenship with democratic religious values. New role of the UNESCO to protect and promote freedom of expression).
- Cognitive resilience of citizens (supporting civil society to promote reform in education system, to increase funding for civic educational and research projects, that develop the critical thinking of citizens, especially in terms of raising awareness of misinformation and propaganda).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- More effective monitoring and publication of opportunities and trends relating to civic space (support research on socio-economic impact, civic space monitor)
- Expanding CSO engagement to include support for progressive social movements (support of the innovative tools of civic engagement, community mobilization, Gender Action Learning System etc.)
- Convey positive messaging on civil society (new narratives)
- Adapt aid approaches fit to current realities (commit to long-term support, strive toward policy coherence and coordination, flexible funding, long-term core support, non-financial support)
- Facilitate cooperation with the private sector on human rights and civic space issues
- Diplomatic support to civil society

Support to and Cooperation with Government

- Support independent institutions
- Consider trade and aid conditionality
- Promote cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Leverage Agenda 2030

WOW is possible!

