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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

November 1, 2022

His Excellency Emomali Rahmon
President of the Republic of Tajikistan
Palace of the Nation
Dushanbe
Republic of Tajikistan

Dear Mr. President:

The recent escalation of repression against journalists and independent media, and specifically those affiliated with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Tajikistan service, Radio Ozodi, have given us cause for great concern. Arbitrary arrests, politically-motivated prosecutions, and violent harassment of RFE/RL employees are unacceptable and threaten to erode the progress our two nations have made toward building a closer, mutually beneficial relationship.

For over 30 years, the United States has aspired to be a strong partner of Tajikistan and advance our shared interests, which include Tajikistan's stability and sovereignty. Given these shared goals, you can understand our alarm at hearing these reports, which indicate Tajik authorities under your government's leadership have failed to uphold your commitments to the freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

We call upon your government to halt all violence and intimidation against journalists. Additionally, we request that you release journalists who have been unjustly arrested, drop any related charges, and restore access and communication to their lawyers and their families.

You will recall that we wrote to you in October 2019 to address the issue of press accreditation for Radio Ozodi journalists that had been wrongfully denied, and we deeply appreciated how your government swiftly rectified the situation. We urge you to take an active role in the protection and promotion of journalistic freedom in Tajikistan, and we look forward to receiving your prompt response.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
Ranking Member



ROBERT MENENDEZ
Chairman