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United States Senate

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November 27, 2023

His Excellency Emomali Rahmon
President of Tajikistan
Qasri Millat (The Palace of the Nation)
Shirinshoh Shohtemur Street
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Dear Mr. President:

I write to express concern regarding your government's ongoing harsh treatment of political opponents, human rights, and civil society actors.

As Tajikistan seeks to benefit from increased international engagement, foreign trade and investment, the government of Tajikistan must make progress towards fulfilling its commitments under the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act and other commitments undertaken in the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE). Specifically, I appeal to you to end your government's ongoing repression of peaceful opposition figures, journalists, and civil society members, both when they are in Tajikistan and when abroad. There are persistent reports of arbitrary arrest, denial of judicial due process, as well as acts of violence including torture, assault and even instances of murder of journalists, political dissidents, as well as community and religious leaders. The ongoing crackdown on ethnic and religious minorities, their local organizations and leaders, in the Gorno-Badakhshan region, in particular, is especially troubling.

According to the U.S. Department of State's 2022 Country Report on Human Rights, your government used intimidation and abused judicial procedures to engage in repression against individuals outside of Tajikistan's borders – also known as transnational repression - targeting political opponents, civil society activists, human rights defenders, and journalists. Freedom House, whose research and publications are widely respected internationally, found that Tajikistan accounted for nearly one third of all recorded global incidents of direct physical transnational repression, in addition to countless incidences of digital harassment and intimidation.

I urge you to immediately end the repression of peaceful demonstrators, community leaders, journalists and activists in Tajikistan, as well as all forms of transnational repression that your government is pursuing abroad, including the issuance of Interpol red notices to forcibly repatriate dissidents.

The United States wants to strengthen its growing partnership with Tajikistan. Bolstering human rights and the rule of law will reap long-lasting benefits for Tajikistan through increased influence, foreign investment, tourism, and trade.

I look forward to hearing your reply, and to exploring ways the United States can support your government's reform efforts.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator