

Initiation of a criminal case and arrest of human rights activists Kamil Ruziev drew public response in the civil society of Kyrgyzstan. His colleagues believe security agencies will act in the case of the human rights activist depending on the public reaction.

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Kamil Ruziev. Photo: IWPR

The head of Ventus human rights organisation, Kamil Ruziev, prominent in the town of Karakol (administrative centre of Issyk Kul region, in the east of the country), was detained on May 29 by GKNB officers. The Issyk Kul office of the State National Security Committee initiated a criminal case against him – at first, Ruziev was accused of two crimes (document forgery and fraud), and then only document forgery was left. On May 31, the court sentenced Ruziev to home detention.

Kamil Ruziev is a prominent resident of Karakol. He is known to local authorities and territorial branches of republican state authorities for his human rights activities.

According to him, he pays special attention to tortures in security agencies, which are prohibited by law, and in recent years he started filing complaints against some law enforcement officers. His colleagues and he think this activity has made the officers of security agencies in Karakol “angry”.

Director of Bir Duino human rights organisation **Tolekan Ismailova** said to CABAR.asia that this case of Kamil Ruziev speaks of the attack on human rights activists. Moreover, she emphasised that this attack was committed by the State National Security Committee. Ismailova reminded that the head of City Parks municipal enterprise, Kalicha Umuralieva, former human rights activist, was also detained by GKNB on a suspicion of abuse of office. Later on, Umuralieva said to the media she was a witness in the case.

“The State National Security Committee turns into a repressive agency. During previous regimes, the State Committee was also used to suppress human rights activists,” Ismailova said.

Director of 'Adilet Legal Clinic' Public Foundation **Cholpon Dzhakupova** noted that Kamil Ruziev positioned himself as a furious fighter against corruption and injustice in law enforcement bodies.

"He repeatedly made declarations about the mess there. Based on the statements available in the media we can say that the situation with him is a vengeance for his human rights activity," she said.

In the beginning of his office, the president of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbai Zheenbekov met human rights activists and non-governmental sector and said he wanted their support in the fight against corruption. Also, he said the authorities are ready to hear positive criticism and constructive ideas.

However, today, according to experts, there is an attempt being made to create negative background around human rights activists. Political analyst **Medet Tyulegenov** said the draft law on NGOs contributes to this because it binds non-commercial organisations to report their sources of funding, as well as provide more information about their activities, and the situation around Kalicha Umuralieva and Ruziev.



Medet Tyulegenov. Courtesy photo

The political analyst reminded that there were attempts to put pressure on human rights activists and civil society were at all presidents of Kyrgyzstan.

"There were attempts to put pressure since the Akaev (Askar Akaev is the first president of the Kyrgyz Republic - author's note) times, including GKNB. It is an old theme to turn human rights activists into public enemies," he said. Tyulegenov said today situation in the country is exacerbated because of forthcoming elections and epidemiological situation, and scapegoat is needed, which the civil society can become.

The situation with Kamil Ruziev, according to the political analyst, is a part of one secret policy that is pursued by representatives of security agencies and local authorities. Also, he noted, local security officers could detain the human rights defender for his fervent activity against violations.



Political analyst **Emil Dzhuraev** relates the detention of Kamil Ruziev to the draft law on NGOs. He thinks Russian authorities are promoting the draft law on non-governmental organisations.

Dzhuraev also feels puzzled about the silence kept by the president in this situation. He reminded the meeting of the head of state with human rights activists and leaders of the civil society, where he told about the need of joint work to build a strong state. Today, according to the political analyst, the president does not analyse the significance of the civil society.

“The president and his office need to take this issue seriously. If the president and his team are really interested in keeping the civil society’s mouth shut, it looks like previous regimes in the Kyrgyz Republic,” Emil Dzhuraev said. “When we see the government that attacks the freedom of expression, association, and all kinds of liberties of the civil society, it leads to disastrous results.”

Political analyst **Sheradil Baktygulov** thinks that the case of Kamil Ruziev is a separate situation that happened only to him. He noted that this case does not mean there is repression against all human rights activists. Moreover, Baktygulov reminded there are statements against Ruziev.



He does not think the country has a confrontation between the government and human rights activists.

Speaking of the draft law on NGOs, Baktygulov said the initiators did not evaluate the consequences of amendments proposed by him. This, in his opinion, can lead to the fact that the law would be used with a mercenary motive.

Some commentators noted that the draft law on NGOs and non-profit organisations means transparent activity of organisations and does not mean any restriction of their activity.

Political analyst **Medet Tyulegenov** noted that the confrontation between the government and non-governmental sector will remain until law enforcement bodies have drastic reforms.

According to him, today GKNB is accountable only to the president. The parliament needs to create a special committee to control the activity of the State National Security Committee.

"Yes, they have restrictive information about intelligence, etc. But there are facts that need to be reported. This is a global practice," he said.

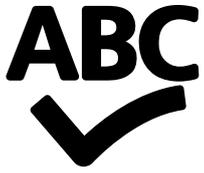
Besides, Tyulegenov thinks the role of the Public Supervisory Board at the ministry of interior affairs needs to be strengthened and a similar agency should be created at the GKNB. Also, the General Prosecutor's Office that should normally watch the legality of actions across the country should be reformed.

Meanwhile, the fate of Kamil Ruziev and charges against him remain to be seen.

Some experts think the human rights activist's case will intentionally be delayed to prevent his human rights activity. Some tend to think that Ruziev can really be imprisoned based on the current status of the judicial system.

Human rights activists think the authorities would focus on the degree of public response and attention to this process. If the public keeps on monitoring, the security agencies may mitigate their position. We have seen similar examples.

This article was prepared as part of the Giving Voice, Driving Change - from the Borderland to the Steppes Project.



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