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### **Kyrgyzstan: Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy assaulted while in detention**

On 5 April 2024, woman human rights defender and journalist **Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy**, was reportedly physically assaulted by law enforcement officers in Pre-Trial Detention Center #1 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. According to her lawyer, the woman human rights defender suffered bruises on her arms and her face, along with the left side of her jaw. She is also experiencing severe headaches as a result of the assault. At time of writing, it remains unclear whether the woman human rights defender has access to medical support.

[Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy](#) is a woman human rights defender and journalist who serves as the director of Temirov Live and Ayt Ayt Dece. Temirov Live is a YouTube-based media outlet that investigates and reports on corruption by state and non-state actors in Kyrgyzstan, founded in 2020 by Bolot Temirov, a prominent Kyrgyzstani human rights defender and journalist. Ayt Ayt Dese is a YouTube-based project aimed at popularizing human rights issues through the performance and publication of folk songs on human rights topics. Among other topics, Ayt Ayt Dese has covered investigations by Temirov Live.

On 6 April 2024, human rights defender and journalist Bolot Temirov reported in his personal Telegram channel that on 5 April 2024, Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy and four of her cellmates were subjected to physical violence in the pre-trial detention center by a law enforcement officer from the State Penitentiary Service, Aqyl Ryskulov. Bolot Temirov suggested that this exposure to physical violence was retaliation for Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy's official complaints about psychological violence by another prison staff member, submitted on 20 March 2024. The woman human rights defender also reported to her lawyer that the prison psychologist questioned her about her work in human rights media.

On 6 April 2024, representatives of the National Center for the Prevention of Torture of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan – a part of the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman in Kyrgyzstan – visited Pre-Trial Detention Center #1. They accepted a complaint on behalf of Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy and compiled a report documenting evidence of inhumane treatment. However, the staff of Pre-Trial Detention Center #1 prevented the representatives from taking pictures of the bruises, despite there being no rules against such actions.

On 16 January 2024, law enforcement officers in Kyrgyzstan raided the office of the media outlet Temirov Live and detained 11 human rights journalists, including Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy, for alleged calls for mass civil unrest in one of the corruption investigations published by media outlets Temirov.Live and Ayt Ayt Dece. The woman human rights defender will remain in Pre-trial Detention Center #1 until 13 May 2024, despite having a 12-year-old son. The investigation suggests that the woman human rights defender is one of the "organizers" behind the "calls for mass civil unrest," criminal offenses envisaged by Part 2 of Article 41 and Part 3 of Article 278 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

Front Line Defenders expresses grave concerns about the reported physical and psychological violence inflicted upon woman human rights defender Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy while in detention,

and condemns the detention of human rights defenders and independent journalists in Kyrgyzstan, including the detention of Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy, viewing it as reprisal against legitimate and peaceful human rights work. Front Line Defenders organization is gravely concerned about the wave of repressions faced by human rights defenders and journalists in the country. In recent years, Kyrgyzstan's authorities have refused accreditations to media outlets, passed laws restricting their activities, and filed lawsuits against independent journalists.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Kyrgyzstan to:**

1. Ensure that all necessary measures are taken to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy, and provide her access to independent medical doctors and mental health professionals;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough, and impartial investigation into the documented instances of inhumane treatment of Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy, publish the results, and bring those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Immediately and unconditionally release Makhabat Tazhibek Kyzy, along with other human rights defenders and journalists, and close the criminal case on "calls for mass civil unrest";
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Kyrgyzstan can carry out their activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in line with Kyrgyzstan's international human rights obligations and commitments.

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