

**EUROPEAN UNION****OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1070
Vienna, 8 October 2015**

EU Statement on recent events in Tajikistan

We regret the recent loss of life during recent violent clashes in Tajikistan.

Mr Chairman, the European Union has voiced its concerns over continuing reductions in space for alternative political views to be expressed freely in Tajikistan. Recent events unfortunately reinforce these concerns.

The outlawing of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) as a terrorist organisation by the Tajik Government last week adds a further restriction on the freedom of political expression and on pluralism in the country. The decision to ban any political party from political competition and democratic participation must be open to legal review and be supported by credible evidence.

Media reports of torture are very worrisome. We call for all those detained as a result of the recent events to be treated humanely and transparently. We urge the Tajik Government to secure access to legal advice for those detained in accordance with due process and the rule of law. In this context, we are extremely concerned by the recent arrest of the IRPT detainees' lawyer, Buzurgmehr Yorov, on the grounds of alleged fraud and forgery. We remind the Government of Tajikistan of its international and OSCE obligations to follow fully transparent and independent legal processes.

Our concerns are not just about the rights of those detained, but also Tajikistan's wider implementation of commitments. We are deeply troubled by the Tajik Government's association of these events with the IRPT, and the consequent arrest of that party's remaining leadership. We would question the basis for these assertions, given the increasing pressures placed on opposition figures, including criminal prosecutions and unexplained deaths.

Shutting off legitimate avenues for alternative political views to be peacefully expressed may drive them underground, and can only increase the risk that some will

turn to the radical or extreme solutions which the government says it is so anxious to prevent. We strongly urge the Tajik Government to return to implementation of the principle of political pluralism, enshrined in both its OSCE commitments and the 1997 Peace Accord.

Finally, Mr Chairman, the European Union expresses its concern about the information received that on 11 September, an OSCE staff member, Mr. Farkhod Navruzov, was detained in Tajikistan. He was later charged with a criminal offence related to the events on 4 September. A lawyer provided by the Office in Tajikistan had access to Mr. Navruzov only once since his arrest. The European Union expects Mr. Navruzov will be provided with due access to his lawyer. We also expect that this issue will be resolved as soon as possible.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country NORWAY, member of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.