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Kyrgyzstan: Prosecutor's office to shut down human rights media outlet Kloop Media

On 22 August 2023, the Prosecutor's Office of the city of Bishkek filed a motion to shut down the human rights media outlet **Kloop Media (Kloop)** in the Oktyabrskiy and Pervomaiskiy district courts of Bishkek. The main reason cited by the Prosecutor's office to shut down the organisation is that Kloop allegedly carried out activities, specifically media activities, that go beyond the scope of the charter of the human rights organisation.

[Kloop Media \(Kloop\)](#) is a human rights media outlet in Kyrgyzstan. It was founded in 2007 and gained recognition in 2010 for its prompt and transparent coverage of the April 2010 revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Kloop strives to adhere to the principles of independence, impartiality, honesty and accuracy while sharing information that holds significance to the public. It has used investigative journalism to document human rights violations, focusing on topics that include corruption, armed conflicts and violations in such contexts.

On 22 August 2023, the Prosecutor's Office of the city of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, filed a motion to shut down the human rights media outlet Kloop Media, in principle, because "media activities" are not included as a listed activity in the charter of the organisation. However, the motion itself focuses not on the content of Kloop's charter, but on the fact that Kloop's journalistic work offers a critique of the Kyrgyzstani authorities and state politics. The motion primarily states that the human rights organisation, through its independent journalistic work, aims to discredit Kyrgyzstani national and municipal authorities with sharp criticism of the state's policy. Kloop's publications are described as manipulative of public opinion, causing harm and inciting hatred. News pieces published by Kloop are said to cause feelings of fear, anxiety, hopelessness and depression, that eventually cause psychological disorders, "aggressive criminal behaviour, sexual anomalies, addictions, suicidal inclinations and other disorders of social adaptation."

In 2023, the authorities commissioned a forensic linguistic review and a forensic review from the perspective of political science of Kloop's content. The motion cites excerpts from these forensic reviews that accuse Kloop, among many things, of convincing the population to negatively assess Kyrgyzstan's relations with Russia and form a negative impression of the actions of the state authorities. Since 2021, the Kyrgyzstani authorities have commissioned two psycho-psychiatric forensic investigations into the human rights publications of the media outlet. The motion suggests that the Kyrgyzstani authorities have been investigating the human rights organisation's activities since 2021, targeting the media outlet for alleged "public calls to seize power," an offence envisioned by Article 327, part 2.1. of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

Kloop themselves believe that the human rights media outlet is being targeted for their investigative piece on the president of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov, and the head of the country's State Committee for National Security, Tashimbek Tashyev, revealing that their family members were involved in the construction of a soccer academy in Kyrgyzstan financially related to a

Spanish soccer club. After the publication of the article on 22 August 2023, Sadyr Japarov [criticised](#) the article, saying that media outlets like Kloop “bring only harm and no benefit to Kyrgyzstan.”

Front Line Defenders is gravely concerned by the motion to shut down human rights media outlet Kloop, as it believes that the media outlet is being targeted for its peaceful and legitimate human rights work. Front Line Defenders remains concerned about the scope of threats against human rights defenders and journalists in Kyrgyzstan, and argues that in the context of repressive legislative initiatives concerning the work of media and NGOs, the targeting of Kloop fits into the recent pattern of systemic limiting of rights and freedoms of human rights defenders.

Front Line Defenders urges the Kyrgyzstani authorities to:

1. Immediately cease targeting and surveillance against human rights media outlet Kloop Media;
2. Immediately withdraw the motion to shut down the public fund Kloop Media;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Kyrgyzstan can carry out their human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in line with Kyrgyzstan’s international human rights obligations and commitments.