

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2020

His Excellency Emomali Rahmon
President of the Republic of Tajikistan
Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan
1005 New Hampshire Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to follow up on our October 9, 2019 letter regarding journalists affiliated with Radio Ozodi, the Tajik Service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). We recently learned that in addition to experiencing continued threats, several Radio Ozodi journalists' press credentials were either denied, placed "under review," or extended for a period of time shorter than one year. It is our hope that your government will take swift action to reconsider these decisions and allow Radio Ozodi to continue its important work.

We learned that only ten of eighteen RFE/RL journalists recently received press credentials after submitting their applications in February. In particular, we were alarmed to hear that the current Acting Bureau Chief and Bureau Administrator's credentials remain "under review." Our understanding is that only these two positions are legally permitted to sign documents or submit accreditation applications to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and that the denial of their applications would essentially close Radio Ozodi's operations in Tajikistan. We were also concerned to hear that several new journalists' applications were denied.

As Tajikistan has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), protects freedom of expression in its constitution, and defends media freedoms in its domestic laws, we hope you will agree that upholding freedom of the press remains imperative. We appreciate your concerns regarding Radio Ozodi's coverage, a free press often results in coverage that policy makers dislike. This, however, is the nature of independent journalism. At this time of uncertainty and crisis as we confront a global pandemic, trustworthy, reliable, and independent sources of news are at an even greater premium. We therefore urge your government to accredit all Radio Ozodi journalists and allow Radio Ozodi's operations to continue unabated.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Steve Chabot
MEMBER OF CONGRESS