

Universal Periodic Review 25 – Tajikistan

Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Mr President,

The Netherlands welcomes the delegation of Tajikistan to the UPR and thanks the delegation for the report.

The Netherlands recommends Tajikistan:

1. To ensure that suspension of media outlets, including online media, cannot occur without judicial procedures on the basis of strict necessity and proportionality.
2. To allocate resources to promote universal access to HIV prevention and treatment in state and NGO-run health-diagnostic facilities without fear of stigma and discrimination.

Mr President,

The Netherlands welcomes the fact that constitutional protection of freedom of expression exists and that defamation has been decriminalized. However, we share the concerns voiced by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Opinion and Expression after his visit to Tajikistan in March 2016.

We are concerned by the fact that free press is undermined and critical sources of information, especially on the Internet, have been made inaccessible for citizens.

Mr President, we welcome the recent amendments to the Law on HIV/AIDS removing mandatory HIV testing for all foreigners. The increase in HIV-infections nonetheless remains a cause for concern. The HIV prevalence in Tajikistan has increased to 0.4% of the population in 2014. Stigma and discrimination harm people, especially those who are most at risk, and prevent them from accessing health services. This has been proven to be a major obstacle for an effective AIDS response.

Thank you, Mr President.