

FREEDOM OF SPEECH BAROMETER IN KAZAKHSTAN

We present an overview of the situation regarding the rights of journalists and the media in Kazakhstan for the second quarter of 2026.

This edition highlights the most significant cases of legal pressure, obstruction of journalists' professional activities, restrictions on access to information, cyberattacks, and internet censorship, as well as legislative changes and public initiatives that could affect the state of freedom of speech in the country.

Despite public debate on the need to liberalize legislation and improve mechanisms for protecting freedom of expression, the journalistic community continues to face numerous challenges. These include criminal and civil prosecutions, restrictions on access to information of public interest, instances of journalists being barred from events and courtrooms, and pressure exerted through digital platforms.

The monitoring is based on information from open sources, media publications, official statements by government agencies, and reports from journalists and newsrooms themselves.

1. General Situation (adoption of new laws, statements by public figures, introduction of new regulations).

The debate over the decriminalization of Article 274 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan continued, as did discussions on legislative changes affecting the activities of the media and online platforms; international organizations also increased their focus on press freedom issues. Kazakhstan dropped to 149th place in the Press Freedom Index, falling 8 positions, while journalists and human rights defenders reported an increase in the number of cases against the media, the risks of self-censorship, and the need for additional safeguards to protect freedom of speech.

April

[The Ministry of Culture and Information is considering the possibility of decriminalizing Article 274](#) of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "dissemination of knowingly false information." The issue is being discussed jointly with other government agencies, but a final decision has not yet been made.

[The discussion has elicited mixed reactions among members of parliament.](#) MPs Nikita Shatalov and Magherram Magherramov opposed the complete decriminalization of the article, pointing to the risks of disinformation spreading, including through the use of artificial intelligence and deepfakes. At the same time, MPs Irina Smirnova and Natalya Dementyeva suggested easing criminal liability and reclassifying such offenses as administrative violations, while maintaining liability for the dissemination of false information.

On April 22, [a group of journalists appealed to the Ministry of Culture and Information](#), the Supreme Court, Parliament, the Presidential Administration, and the General Prosecutor's Office with a proposal to partially decriminalize Article 274 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan and reclassify its first two parts as administrative offenses. The authors of the appeal believe that the current wording is vague and could be used as a tool to restrict freedom of expression.

[On](#) April 29, the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law [issued a statement regarding restrictions on access to](#) the social media [accounts](#) of journalists and news organizations. The organization expressed concern over instances of account blocking and called for transparency in procedures for restricting access to digital platforms.

May

On May 8, [the](#) international organization [Reporters Without Borders appealed to the UN](#) regarding the murder of Kazakhstani journalist Aidos Sadykov, pointing out what it considered to be insufficient cooperation by the Kazakhstani authorities with the Ukrainian side in the investigation.

On May 12, [a number of international organizations issued a joint statement](#) calling on Central Asian states to prevent arbitrary restrictions on internet access, ensure judicial oversight of blocking measures, and protect independent media from cyberattacks.

On May 13, [representatives of Kazakhstan's media community sent an open letter](#) to members of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, calling on them to support amendments to the Constitutional Law "On Elections" and the Code of Administrative Offenses (CAO). Journalists are demanding that the law distinguish between professional sociological research and standard editorial content (street interviews, quick polls, interactive voting), which—due to legal uncertainty—are currently treated as opinion polls, resulting in fines. The authors of the appeal propose enshrining a clear scientific definition of a public opinion poll in law and amending Article 120 of the Code of Administrative Offenses to exempt media outlets and online platforms from liability for publishing non-representative journalistic materials during the election period.

On May 13, Reporters Without Borders [published](#) its [annual Press Freedom Index](#). Kazakhstan ranked 149th out of 180 countries, falling eight places compared to the previous year. The organization noted a deterioration in working conditions for journalists and an increase in legal and administrative risks for the media.

Changes to election legislation were also discussed in May. [The Central Election Commission warned bloggers](#) and social media users of the consequences of campaigning without the written consent of candidates and political parties. In addition, fines were proposed for online platforms that refuse to post campaign materials, as well as amendments prohibiting the publication of photos of filled-out ballots on election day.

[Kazakhstan plans to ban children under 16 from using social media.](#) The measure is currently being discussed by the government. The package of amendments includes provisions restricting children’s access to online platforms.

June

On the eve of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s visit to Brussels, [the human rights organizations IPHR and KMBPCH sent](#) a special appeal [to EU leaders](#) calling on them to raise issues regarding media freedom, the persecution of journalists, the cases of Gulnara Bazhkenova and Amir Kasenov, the cases of Duman Mukhamedkarim and Marat Zhylanbayev, and pressure on civil society and activists.

[Representatives of Kazakhstan’s media community expressed concern](#) over the growing number of cases against journalists, arguing that this intensifies pressure on independent media, encourages self-censorship, and limits the use of traditional journalistic tools, such as working with leaks and anonymous sources.

[In June, amendments](#) to the Code of Administrative Offenses [were published](#), introducing a new provision—the publication of informational materials containing prohibited propaganda.

[Magerram Magherramov, a member of the Mazhilis, sent a letter to](#) Aida Balaeva, [Minister of Culture and Information](#), in which he commented on the list of recipients of foreign funding published by the State Revenue Committee. He stated that, in his assessment, the disclosed data indicates the extent of foreign influence on certain members of the journalism and human rights communities. He also expressed the view that some media outlets and public figures may act as “mouthpieces of hate” and influence the socio-political situation in the country.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart [Tokayev stated that deepfakes and “bot farms” have become a threat to society](#), as modern technologies are being used to spread disinformation, manipulate public opinion, and instigate provocations. He noted that “bot farms” create a digital environment designed to intensify conflicts and spread false information, and he also highlighted the risk of a shift toward so-called “post-truth,” where facts are replaced by emotions and manipulation.

The president also stated that journalists must become part of society’s “immune response” to disinformation and help expose it, while emphasizing that freedom of speech remains in place in the country and censorship is prohibited; however, freedom must not turn into permissiveness.

[On June 26, Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin](#), addressing journalists at [a public event](#), said the following: “I am not satisfied with how you are covering events. I get the impression that you’re looking for publicity by talking to me, whereas what I need most is for what I say to reach as wide an audience as possible without distortion. I understand your position and do not condemn it, but please understand mine as well. I am doing the job I am paid to do, and I want to ensure that my message reaches people without distortion. That is why I have chosen

this approach: I first post my position on Facebook, then collect comments and feedback, and answer questions there.”

2. Legal Pressure (Lawsuits, Pre-trial Claims, Arrests, Detentions)

During the reporting period, there were court lawsuits, pre-trial claims, criminal cases, interrogations, and administrative prosecutions of journalists and bloggers. At the same time, some court rulings were issued in favor of the media, and the dispute over the accreditation of Radio Azattyk journalists was resolved through a mediation agreement. At the same time, proceedings continued in a number of high-profile criminal cases against representatives of independent media.

April

[The Elmedia editorial team received a pre-litigation claim](#) from Documentolog LLP following the publication of a story on the spending of budget funds in the field of digitalization. The company demanded that the publication be removed, that a retraction be posted, and warned of possible legal liability. The editorial team stated that the article was based on publicly available data, an analysis of procurement, and documents related to the audit of digital projects, and expressed its readiness to defend its position in the event of legal proceedings.

[The legal dispute between “Company for the Management of Returned Assets” LLP and Orda.kz has concluded.](#) The dispute stemmed from an interview published on the Orda News YouTube channel, which contained statements about the company’s activities and its employees. The appellate court upheld the lower court’s ruling, finding that the information disseminated was untrue and damaging to the plaintiff’s business reputation. After the ruling took effect, the editorial team removed the video.

[The court dismissed a Moscow-based developer’s lawsuit against Ulys Media.](#) The case stemmed from the publication of a complaint by a resident of the Respublika residential complex, who expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of the area surrounding the complex. The court concluded that the publication did not contain false information and did not damage the company’s business reputation. The claim was dismissed in its entirety, and the plaintiff was ordered to pay the costs of the expert examination.

In the Turkestan Region, [bloggers and civil society activists began to face charges](#) of defamation following posts based on a report by the Turkistan TV channel. The basis for the prosecution was the reposting of material about an official who had been discussed at an official meeting. One of the authors, Bekbolat Samenov, was subjected to administrative detention. The case sparked a debate over the permissibility of citing information previously disseminated by the media.

In Shymkent, journalist Arai Esenbek [was found guilty of extortion](#) and sentenced to five years in prison, with an additional five-year ban on working in the media. The court concluded that, following the publication of articles about the local akimat, he demanded the signing of a contract worth 10 million tenge, threatening further publications.

[Astana police found no violations in the actions of the officers](#) who detained “Azattyk” correspondent Zholdas Orisbay on the day of the referendum on the draft Constitution. This response was given to the editorial office, which had previously reported the journalist’s unjustified detention at a polling station.

May

In Almaty, [the hearing continued on a lawsuit filed by a construction company against journalist Vadim Boreyko](#), related to publications about the construction of the “Premier.” During the hearing, the plaintiff’s representative moved to close the proceedings to the media, citing the protection of business reputation and trade secrets, but the court denied the motion. The proceedings are continuing in open court, with the company seeking a substantial amount in damages from the journalist.

In Pavlodar, [journalist Olga Voronko was summoned for questioning](#) as part of a pretrial investigation related to a publication about a local military commissar. The summons contained a warning about the possible application of measures provided for by law in the event of failure to appear. According to the journalist, the questioning lasted about twenty minutes.

[A criminal case against journalist Alexandra Alekhova has been referred to court](#): she is accused of disclosing personal data following the publication of an article about the “Kenzhekhan” market, which included information about Elena Sadvakasova’s past criminal convictions. According to media reports, the first complaint against Alekhova was filed back in 2022 and was dismissed at that time, but a new complaint was later filed. Until recently, the journalist was involved in the case as a witness with the right to defend herself, and in March 2026, she was summoned for investigative proceedings. The maximum penalty under the charge brought against her is up to seven years in prison. Previously, in a similar case, journalist Oleg Gusev was sentenced to three years’ probation.

[The criminal case against journalist Botagoz Omarova was dismissed](#) following a settlement between the parties. This was preceded by the publication of a retraction in which she acknowledged that the information she had previously disseminated about the activities of VD Stroy-Engineering LLP was inaccurate and apologized to the company and her readers.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and the representative office of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [resolved a dispute over the accreditation of Radio Azattyk journalists](#). The mediation agreement was approved by the Astana Specialized Administrative Court. According to RFE/RL representatives, the agreements reached will allow most Azattyk journalists to resume their full-time work in Kazakhstan. The conflict stemmed from refusals and delays in issuing accreditations to journalists.

June

[The trial of Kaztag editor-in-chief Amir Kasenov began](#) in Almaty. Prior to this, the court had tightened his pretrial detention measures, replacing house arrest with detention in custody. According to the court, this occurred after he violated the terms of his house arrest by posting video statements online regarding the criminal case and failing to appear at one of the court hearings. Kasenov and KazTAG CEO Aset Mataev are defendants in a case involving the dissemination of knowingly false information, which was initiated at the request of Freedom Finance due to the publication's reports on alleged fraudulent schemes.

[The court ordered "Ural Week" to retract a non-existent headline.](#) The West Kazakhstan Region Court granted the claim filed by the State Institution "West Kazakhstan Region Energy Administration" against the publication "Ural Week" regarding the protection of its business reputation. The court ruled that the headline of the article, "Liquefied Gas Supplier Accuses the West Kazakhstan Region Energy Administration of Creating a Scheme to Drive It Out of the Market," was untrue and defamatory. The editorial office was ordered to retract the information contained in the headline.

[The first court hearing in the criminal case against Gulnar Bazhkenova, former editor-in-chief of Orda.kz,](#) has been scheduled in Almaty: it will take place on July 2 at District Court No. 2 of the Bostandyk District and will be held online. According to media reports, a public defender is representing the journalist. Bazhkenova has been under house arrest since December 2025 after several criminal cases were opened against her on charges of spreading knowingly false information.

[The Legal Media Center is suing the Ministry of Information](#) for refusing to disclose budget expenditures on private media outlets. The government agency refused to provide information on the total amount of grants allocated to the media. At the preliminary hearing, representatives of the government agency stated that the requested information falls under the category of "for official use only" and, therefore, cannot be disclosed. The plaintiffs point out, however, that such information had previously been made publicly available, and they also note public statements regarding plans to provide access to data on government information contracts through a unified media platform.

[Three months later, journalist Aset Mataev was recognized as a victim](#) in a hooliganism case in Almaty. According to his attorney, on June 27, the Medeu District Police Department in Almaty reported that Mataev had been officially recognized as a victim in the case. She noted that as a result of the attack, he was struck several times with a metal bar and was diagnosed with a fracture of the left frontal bone of the skull. However, he had previously been detained and placed in a temporary detention facility, and then in a pretrial detention center, because a criminal case had been opened against him under the article on intentionally causing moderate bodily harm.

3. Obstruction of journalists' professional activities (beatings, threats, assaults, bans on filming, denial of access to events)

Among the most common violations are denial of access to public events and court proceedings, restrictions on photography and video recording, bans on communicating with officials, interference with journalists' work, as well as cases of detention and pressure while performing professional duties.

April

During a forum for machine builders in Astana, [security guards prevented media representatives from approaching](#) Prime Minister Olzhas Bektanov after his speech to ask questions.

A similar situation arose during the Minister of Education's visit to Atyrau: journalists who had been invited in advance to participate in a press tour [were excluded from the trip and asked to leave the bus](#). Later, the Department of Education explained that coverage of the visit had been entrusted to the regional communications service.

At the hearing in the case of blogger Yerbolat Zhanabylov, [media representatives reported interference in their work](#) after the defendant turned off the recording devices set up by the journalists.

In Shymkent, Marina Nizovkina, editor-in-chief of Vera.kz, [reported that a ban had been imposed on publishing](#) materials and comments [on social media](#) regarding an ongoing court case.

In Almaty, as part of a lawsuit filed by a construction company against journalist Vadim Boreyko, his bank accounts were frozen, and [a ban was imposed on coverage of the trial](#) in which he is the defendant.

In Atyrau, [journalists were asked to leave an open meeting](#) on greening initiatives attended by the regional prosecutor. According to reports from the editorial staff of "Ak Zhayik," the request applied specifically to media representatives, while other participants in the event—including bloggers and civic activists—remained in the room.

The decision regarding the complaint filed by journalist Tolegen Imanov, who had previously been denied access to an open court hearing in Petropavlovsk, deserves special attention. Following an investigation, the Judicial Ethics Commission found that the judge had committed a disciplinary offense and [determined that the principle of openness had been violated](#). Explanations regarding the inadmissibility of such restrictions on access to open court proceedings have been sent to the region's court administration.

May

Qumash journalist [Svetlana Glushkova reported facing obstacles while covering an event for students](#) at Maqsut Narikbayev University. Despite having accreditation, representatives of the organizers, the press office, and security personnel monitored her movements on the premises and attempted to limit the range of questions she could ask event participants. The editorial board viewed these actions as interference in the journalist's professional activities.

In Almaty, [media representatives were barred from attending a discussion on the demolition of structures](#) involving government officials, with access to the hall and the opportunity to obtain comments restricted.

In Petropavlovsk, [journalists were not allowed to film at the site of the reconstruction of Lake Pestroye](#), where an eco-park is being built with public funds

an eco-park is being built using public funds. Editorial staff were ordered to leave the site, and access to the area was granted only after the city administration intervened.

Journalists [also faced](#) access issues [while covering the founding congress of the “Ədilet” party in Astana](#). Media representatives reported opaque accreditation requirements, including requests for individual identification numbers and details about the equipment they were using. After the congress, journalists’ access to the hall and to the event participants was restricted. According to eyewitnesses, individuals identifying themselves as security personnel physically blocked the passage of press representatives without explaining the reasons for their actions or presenting any credentials.

Journalist Askhat Niyazov stated that [after attempting to contact Almaty city officials, he was stopped by the police](#): he was fined for not having a fire extinguisher and sent for a medical examination due to allegedly suspicious signs, but the examination revealed nothing, after which he was released. Niyazov linked the incident to the Almaty City Administration, noting that similar situations arise every time he contacts city authorities, and emphasized that he will continue to seek interviews and cover the work of the city’s mayor.

June

[Journalist Lukpan Akhmedyarov was detained](#) in Uralsk for a document check following a report of an international arrest warrant issued at the request of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. At the police station, he was informed that a criminal case had been opened against him in Russia in March 2025 under the article regarding the dissemination of knowingly false information about the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Akhmedyarov stated that he does not understand the nature of the charges and attributes the persecution to his journalistic activities and reports on the war in Ukraine. After a medical examination, he was also fined for lacking mandatory auto insurance, after which he was released.

[Journalists with video cameras were barred from the courtroom](#) where the case of public figure Yermek Narymbay is being heard. Media representatives were allowed to attend the hearing only without recording equipment, while the court itself recorded the proceedings on video. The judge explained the restrictions by citing a lack of seating in the courtroom; however, journalists stated that such measures hinder full coverage of an open trial and limit the media’s ability to document what is happening.

On June 11, [Azamat Omarov](#), the creator of the YouTube channel “Akhual Today,” [reported that police officers had come to his home](#). According to the journalist, he was shown a statement from a man who claims that Omarov allegedly pushed him during an incident involving a cyclist in Astana. Afterward, Omarov was taken to a police station to provide a statement.

[Journalist Olga Voronko reported](#) that Rabbani Ashimbekov, secretary general of the Kazakhstan Gymnastics Federation, threatened her with legal action. According to her, the reason was the federation’s omission from articles and a video dedicated to the search for funding for two Kazakhstani pairs to travel to the World Sports Acrobatics Championships in Italy.

4. Internet Censorship (Blocking, Hacking, DDoS Attacks)

DDoS attacks on media outlets, mass account suspensions and the removal of posts on social media, restrictions imposed by Meta and Google, as well as attempts to use false copyright infringement complaints to remove socially significant content from search results were recorded.

April

In April, [there were instances of attacks on online resources](#) and restrictions on access to content on social media. At the beginning of the month, a service featuring an interactive flood-forecasting map—used to track flood risks—was subjected to a DDoS attack. As a result of the attack, the resource was temporarily unavailable. During the same period, [the Exclusive.kz website](#) briefly [became inaccessible](#); however, the editorial team attributed the outages to technical issues with the hosting provider.

On the night of April 2, [Instagram unblocked the “Radio Azattyk” account](#) (with approximately 784,000 followers), which had been inaccessible since March 25 due to alleged violations of intellectual property rules. The platform’s administration issued an official apology to the editorial team, acknowledging that the page—which covers social and political life in Kazakhstan and around the world—had been blocked **“by mistake.”**

In the second half of the month, several independent journalists and media outlets [reported mass deletions of posts and restrictions imposed by Meta platforms](#). The most significant incident involved the Respublika.kz Facebook page: first, dozens of posts were deleted; then the number of deleted posts rose to several hundred; and finally, the page was blocked. Similar complaints came from journalist Vadim Dergachev, who reported a new wave of post removals on Facebook and Instagram following a flood of complaints about his content.

[The media project Shishkin like](#) faced similar issues. Following a series of complaints alleging copyright infringement, the project’s Instagram account was first restricted and then blocked. The editorial team also reported widespread takedowns and account suspensions faced by other independent Kazakhstani media outlets and civic projects, including KazTAG, “Respublika,” FINANCEkaz, and the Legal Media Center.

[The “Legal Media Center” announced that its Instagram account](#) had been [completely blocked](#), following a month of systematic digital attacks that included mass complaints and the temporary suspension of the organization’s YouTube page. On the eve of the permanent ban, the social network restricted the profile’s functions and required identity verification; however, immediately after completing this procedure, the account was completely blocked.

May

The Instagram account of the online publication [“98 Magazine” was suspended](#) due to an alleged copyright infringement.

[Journalist Kirill Pavlov](#) reported that his Facebook account had been subject to restrictions imposed by the platform’s algorithms for several months following a flood of complaints; the restrictions were later lifted after he contacted Meta’s support team.

[Journalist Dinara Yegeubayeva](#) also [reported](#) that her Instagram account had been blocked, noting that this was preceded by numerous notifications of attempts to hack her page.

On May 18, users from various regions of Kazakhstan [reported that the “Azattyk” and “Azattyk Asia” websites were inaccessible](#). It later emerged that Google had removed content from “Azattyk Asia” and “Fergana” related to the blocking of RFE/RL resources in Kazakhstan from its search results, citing claims of copyright infringement.

[Google removed content from Azattyk Asia and “Fergana”](#) related to publications about the company “VD Stroy-Engineering” [from its search results](#) following complaints of alleged copyright infringement. The news outlets called the decision a moderation error and filed appeals, pointing out the risk that such complaints could be used to restrict access to information of public interest.

Also in May, [a DDoS attack](#) was [recorded against the Qumash.kz website](#). As a result, the site experienced repeated disruptions and was periodically unavailable to users.

June

[The Legal Media Center reported an attempt to remove one of its publications](#) from Google’s search results via a false copyright infringement complaint recorded in the Lumen Database. An analysis showed that similar complaints were filed against independent media articles mentioning “VD Stroy-Engineering” LLP, with old New York Post articles—unrelated in content—being used as “originals.” The Legal Media Center considers this part of a digital pressure campaign aimed at restricting the dissemination of socially significant information and content from independent media.

On June 1, [the reQUEST human rights team reported that the website](#) [lgbtpropaganda.kz](#)—created for monitoring the application of the law, legal analysis, and educational work—[had been blocked](#). According to the organization, from March 30 to April 5, access to the site was intermittently disrupted within Kazakhstan, though it remained accessible from abroad. In April, representatives of reQUEST submitted a request to government agencies demanding that they provide the decision authorizing the blocking, the legal grounds for restricting access, and specify exactly which content had been deemed illegal. On April 21, the Information Committee of the Ministry of Culture and Information confirmed the restriction on access to the website, citing provisions of the law banning “propaganda of non-traditional sexual orientation,” but did not provide the blocking order itself or a detailed assessment of the content. The organization filed a lawsuit demanding that the order be declared unlawful, that access to the website be restored, and that the grounds for the blocking be provided.

[Journalist Ayan Sharipbaev reported a cyberattack](#) on his Facebook page following the publication of an article about businessman Timur Turlov. According to him, the account became inaccessible, and attempts to restore access were unsuccessful. Ayan Sharipbaev stated that he believes the incident is linked to the publication of the high-profile article. He noted that he does not rule out deliberate interference with his page and has publicly reported the incident.

5. Access to Information and Censorship (denial of information, disregard, incomplete responses, evasion of answers).

Government agencies provided incomplete or perfunctory responses to requests, refused to disclose information on the expenditure of budget funds, avoided commenting on issues of public importance, and in some cases cited grounds that cast doubt on their legality. At the same time, discussions continued regarding the transparency of government activities and the permissible limits on restricting access to information.

April

At a briefing on preparations for the Regional Environmental Summit in Astana, representatives of the Ministry of Ecology confirmed the event's total budget of 2.7 billion tenge but [did not disclose the detailed breakdown of expenses](#) or the distribution of funding between the government and international partners.

At a briefing at the Central Communications Center, [representatives of the Ministry of Labor did not provide clear explanations](#) regarding the possibility of retaining social benefits when young mothers return to work. The question of under what circumstances benefits are retained or discontinued in cases of part-time employment remained unanswered.

A similar situation arose during the discussion of a possible change to the thresholds for sufficient pension savings. In response to journalists' inquiries, government agencies confirmed that new approaches to the calculation are being considered, [but did not disclose the details of the proposed changes](#) or the timeline for making decisions.

The Department of Education and the Atyrau City Administration [refused to respond to official requests from the editorial staff of *Ak Zhayyk*](#) regarding a number of high-profile issues (problems at Binom schools, major budget expenditures, and land disputes), citing the formal lack of "confirmation of journalist status." The publication attributes this boycott to its recent critical reports, noting that all requests were submitted strictly in accordance with the law—on official letterhead and signed by the editor.

In Atyrau, [the editorial staff of "Ak Zhayik" was unable to obtain comprehensive answers](#) to questions regarding compensation for residents of a building affected by flooding. Despite the availability of information about contractors and the financing of repair work, local authorities did not explain the mechanism for compensating damages, the procedure for submitting claims, or

the division of responsibility among the parties involved in the work. Information regarding the cost of the ongoing repairs also remained unavailable.

May

[On May 5, the Ministry of Energy announced the possibility of classifying](#) some information related to nuclear power plant projects. Deputy Minister of Energy Sungat Esimkhanov stated that such a need might arise in the event of intergovernmental agreements, although information on ongoing projects remains public at this time.

On the sidelines of the Mazhilis, [Nurlybek Nalibayev, the akim of the Kyzylorda Region, did not answer journalists' questions](#) and left the press briefing. Similarly, Deputy Minister of Energy Kairkhan Tutkyishbayev declined to comment, not stopping to answer questions from media representatives.

[The editorial staff of Sotreport.kz reported on the formal responses](#) from government agencies to inquiries regarding the use of expert opinions in criminal cases related to QNET. The Supreme Court, the General Prosecutor's Office, and the Financial Monitoring Agency did not provide substantive explanations regarding the issues raised, limiting themselves to references to judicial independence and previously issued rulings.

Journalists did not receive information about which government agencies received the vehicle seized as part of the Perizat Kairat case and transferred to the disposal of state authorities; [the information was classified under legislation on state secrets.](#)

The issue of selectivity in the disclosure of information was also raised in public discourse. It was noted that data on recipients of foreign funding is published and publicly accessible, whereas information about individuals and companies that have returned assets to the state through the relevant procedures [remains closed to the public.](#)

June

[The General Prosecutor's Office refused to provide information](#) to the Ulys Media website in response to a journalistic inquiry regarding former high-ranking officials and heads of the quasi-public sector who are in hiding abroad due to corruption cases.

The agency recommended using publicly available statistics from the [qamqor.gov.kz](#) portal, which publishes only aggregated data on individuals wanted by the authorities. However, the editorial staff noted that it is impossible to identify, from open sources, the former officials and heads of state-owned companies who are in hiding abroad.

[Ulysmidia.kz correspondent Ilyas Bakhyt was unable to obtain a comment from](#) Aslambek Mergaliyev, Chairman of the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan, on issues related to corruption in the judicial system and the transparency of court proceedings.

According to the publication's editorial staff, after the forum concluded, the journalist introduced himself and explained the subject of his questions; however, Aslambek Mergaliyev declined to speak with the press and left the venue. The publication also reported that staff members

from the press service prevented the journalist from obtaining a comment.

[Journalist Zhania Urankaeva attempted to ask Bagdat Musin, chairman of the board of JSC of “Kazakhtelecom.”](#) Bagdat Musin, a question about internet quality and rising rates outside the Mazhilis building. However, instead of answering, the head of the national company stated that he was not at a press conference, called this format of communication “unethical,” and emphasized that he did not want to answer “questions taken out of context and designed to be provocative.” According to the journalist, during Musin’s tenure as head of “Kazakhtelecom,” no open press conferences have been held for media representatives, so journalists are forced to ask questions at public events. Meanwhile, issues regarding the quality of connectivity and the cost of the company’s services remain among the most discussed topics among Kazakhstani citizens.

[The Committee on the Penal System of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan refused to disclose detailed information](#) about the health and conditions of Vladislav Chelakh, who is serving a life sentence, citing personal data protection laws and provisions of the Penal Code. In response to a request from SyrMedia, the agency stated that the convict is serving his sentence pursuant to a final and binding judgment, and that information regarding his whereabouts is provided only to relatives in accordance with established procedures, while personal information is not subject to disclosure.

6. Discrimination and Gender Inequality (Persecution of female journalists, sexual harassment, unequal access to professional opportunities)

April

[Zhanna Baitelova, a journalist for Respublika.kz,](#) reported ongoing pressure against her. According to her, a man she had previously identified as her stalker filed another complaint with the police. At the same time, the “Respublika” publication’s Instagram and Facebook pages were deleted.

May

In May, attention was drawn to the lack of results in the investigation into the cyberattack on Samal Ibraeva, editor-in-chief and founder of Ulysmmedia.kz. During a press conference on cybercrime, [representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were unable to explain](#) why the investigation had been ongoing for nearly a year without identifying the perpetrators or yielding any other results.

If you wish to report violations of journalists’ rights or have any questions, please contact us mediastana@gmail.com