



"БИР ДҮЙНӨ - КЫРГЫЗСТАН" Коомдук бирикмеси
Общественное объединение "БИР ДУЙНО - КЫРГЫЗСТАН"
"BIR DUINO - KYRGYZSTAN" Public Association

Кыргыз Республикасы, Бишкек ш., Сыдыков көч. 258 / Кыргызская Республика,
г. Бишкек, ул. Сыдыкова 258 / 258 Sydykova st., Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

29 May 2026

To: the President of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
Ms. Odile Renaud-Basso

Subject: Protection of Civic Space, Human Rights and Inclusive Participation in EBRD-Supported Projects in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia

Dear Ms. Renaud-Basso,

On behalf of the Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan" ahead of the EBRD 2026 Annual Meeting and Business Forum we would like to kindly express our serious concerns regarding the shrinking civic space, increasing pressure on independent civil society organizations, and growing restrictions on democratic participation in Kyrgyzstan and across Central Asia¹.

As a long-standing human rights organization working on issues of civic freedoms, access to justice, environmental rights, gender equality, and accountability, we believe that sustainable development and successful implementation of infrastructure, climate, transport, and urban modernization projects are impossible without meaningful public participation, transparency, and protection of fundamental human rights².

"Bir Duino" is a member of the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), FORUM-ASIA, Civic Solidarity Platform, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Equality Now and Women Learning Partnership (WLP), Member of Civil Society Working Group on Sustainable Development in Central Asia³.

In recent years, the situation for civil society in Kyrgyzstan has significantly deteriorated. Since the adoption of the Law "On Foreign Representatives" in 2024, which mirrors the restrictive Russian "foreign agents" legislation, independent organizations, human rights defenders, journalists, environmental activists, women leaders, and youth initiatives have faced increasing administrative pressure, stigmatization, intimidation, and legal risks. These developments create an unsafe environment for public participation and weaken democratic governance mechanisms.

In response to these developments, "Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan" has initiated strategic litigation and legal advocacy efforts aimed at protecting constitutional rights and democratic freedoms. Our organization has led multiple court cases defending freedom of association, peaceful assembly, civic participation, and access to justice. However, despite these efforts, systemic challenges remain unresolved and continue to negatively affect civic engagement and accountability processes⁴.

We are particularly concerned that the narrowing of civic space directly impacts the implementation of development projects financed or supported by international financial institutions, including the EBRD. Local communities, especially women, youth, persons with

¹ https://globalevents.ebrd.com/event/170a4685-098a-47bb-a318-bc4a228a3092/programme-live?environment=production-eu&i=N_NCeP2a0-56rigu-xV5g&locale=en-US

² <https://www.birduino.kg/pressaru/strategiya-bdk>

³ <https://civicsolidarity.org/ru/members/turnozhagshvynge-dvzhenye-byr-duyno-k-rh-zstan/>

⁴ <https://www.birduino.kg/czur-13-prinyatie-srochnyix-mer-po-borbe-s-izmeneniyem-klimata-i-ego-posledstviyami>

disabilities, rural populations, and communities living in environmentally vulnerable and climate-risk areas, often remain insufficiently involved in consultation and decision-making processes related to infrastructure modernization, environmental governance, transport systems, and climate adaptation initiatives⁵.

We respectfully urge the EBRD to strengthen its institutional safeguards and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that all EBRD-supported projects in Kyrgyzstan and the wider Central Asian region are implemented in an enabling environment for civic participation and public oversight. In particular, we call on the EBRD to:


- strengthen protection mechanisms for civil society organizations, environmental defenders, journalists, and independent experts participating in public monitoring and consultation processes;
- ensure meaningful, transparent, and inclusive stakeholder engagement at all stages of project implementation;
- prevent retaliation, intimidation, or restrictions against individuals and organizations engaging with EBRD accountability and consultation mechanisms;
- integrate human rights safeguards, gender equality principles, and climate justice approaches into all development and green transition initiatives;
- enhance transparency and accountability in urban modernization, environmental governance, and transport infrastructure projects.

We highly value the EBRD's commitment to democratic values, sustainable development, climate resilience, and inclusive governance. We believe that stronger engagement with independent civil society and local communities is essential to ensuring that development projects contribute to social justice, environmental sustainability, and long-term regional stability⁶.

We would also welcome an opportunity for constructive dialogue with EBRD leadership and relevant departments during the Annual Meeting and Business Forum regarding these concerns and possible avenues for cooperation⁷.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. We look forward to continued engagement with the EBRD in support of human rights, civic participation, and sustainable development in Central Asia.

Sincerely,

Founder and Director of "Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan"  Tolekan Ismailova

Executive Director  Murat Karypov

Gender Expert  Lira Asylbek

For all questions, please contact the Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan team and Executive Director Murat Karypov by email: birduinokyrgyzstan@gmail.com, m.karypov@gmail.com and by phone: +996555422222.

⁵ <https://www.birduino.kg/pressaru/otkryitoe-obrashhenie-komandyi-bir-dujno-kyrgyzstan-v-xode-ezhegodnoj-vstrechi-ebrr-s-grazhdanskim-obshhestvom-g.erevan,-armeniya-14-17-maya-2024-g>

⁶ https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-03/Gender%20sensitive%20communication%20guide%20pdf_0.pdf

⁷ <https://birduino.kg/en/press/otchet-po-itogam-rabochix-vstrech-v-4-soobshhestvax-issyik-kulskoj-oblasti>