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### **Kyrgyzstan: Rita Karasartova detained for 48 hours following a house raid**

On 15 April 2025, woman human rights defender **Rita Karasartova** was detained by an investigator in the Chuy District Department of Internal Affairs in Chuy, Kyrgyzstan, after she had already been taken to police headquarters for questioning. Her detention has been ordered for a period of 48 hours. On 14 April 2025, late in the evening, law enforcement authorities raided the woman human rights defenders' house. Rita Karasartova's attorney stated that, while the authorities have launched a criminal case on "calls for mass civic unrest," they have not accused the woman human rights defender of any wrongdoing, meaning that her detention is arbitrary. The authorities detained Rita Karasartova at Temporary Detention Ward in the city of Kant, Issyk-Ata District.

[Rita Karasartova](#) is a woman human rights defender and an expert in civic governance. She works for the Institute of Civic Analysis, a human rights organisation and a think tank. The organisation works to monitor the selection and rotation process within the Kyrgyzstani judiciary system. The woman human rights defender also provides independent legal expertise to local participatory governance. Rita Karasartova was one of the first women human rights defenders to start publicly covering issues within the law enforcement and judiciary systems in Kyrgyz language.

On 15 April 2025, Kyrgyzstani authorities detained woman human rights defender, after they had previously raided her house the night before. At approximately 9 pm Bishkek time, 12 law enforcement officers, some of whom were allegedly armed, arrived at Rita Karasartova's house in order to conduct a search of the home. While the woman human rights defender was not present, her daughter was at home during the raid. The authorities seized equipment and some documents during the search. Once she returned home on the same day, Rita Karasartova was taken to Chuy District Department of Internal Affairs for questioning by the Kyrgyzstani law enforcement officers, where the investigator sanctioned her detention for 48 hours.

Rita Karasartova's lawyer reported that the law enforcement officers launched an investigation into the alleged "incitement of mass public discord", a criminal offense stipulated by Part 3 of Article 278 of the Criminal Code of Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyzstani authorities have been systemically misusing this Criminal Code in recent years in order to suppress freedom of speech among human rights defenders, media, civil society, and citizens in general. On 14 April 2023, law enforcement authorities in the Chuy Region reported identifying an organised crimes unit, consisting of former politicians, civic activists who planned to "organise illegal protests and other actions on the territory of Kyrgyzstan" with a goal to incite mass civic unrest. Allegedly, the authorities launched a criminal case in relation to these facts on 2 December 2024. The Chuy District Department of Internal Affairs also reported that, aside from Rita Karasartova's detention, it carried out two earlier arrests in relation to the operation of the so-called organised crimes unit.

Following the raid, Rita shared a post on Facebook suggesting that the authorities are targeting her for publishing a letter she received from political activist Tilekmat Kudaibergen uulu, who is currently in exile. He recently disappeared in Dubai, UAE, where he traveled in 2024 to meet with an ex-member of the Kyrgyzstani parliament. Rita Karasartova stated that before he disappeared, he expressed to her that he felt his safety was at risk, and sent her this letter, asking her to publish it in case he goes missing.

Front Line Defenders condemns the raid, interrogation, and subsequent detention of woman human rights defender Rita Karasartova for her legitimate and peaceful human rights work. The organisation demands her immediate and unconditional release, as well as the return of all her seized belongings. Front Line Defender urges the Kyrgyzstani authorities to stop using security laws to suppress freedom of speech and the legitimate work of human rights defenders in the country. The organisation continues to be gravely concerned with the wave of repressions faced by human rights defenders and journalists in Kyrgyzstan. Front Line Defenders believes that targeting human rights defenders has a harmful chilling effect on the peaceful and legitimate work of human rights defenders in Kyrgyzstan.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities of Kyrgyzstan to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release woman human rights defender Rita Karasartova from custody and ensure the protection of her physical and psychological integrity;
2. Cease the acts of censorship and judicial harrasment against Rita Karasartova, as well as all human rights defenders and journalists in Kyrgyzstan;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Kyrgyzstan can carry out their activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in line with Kyrgyzstan's international human rights obligations and commitments.

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