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Dear Mr President,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the arbitrary detention of a group of individuals following peaceful public protests in Kempir-Abad. Some have been charged with the serious offence of “attempting to violently overthrow the government” simply for [organizing and/or participating] in peaceful protests and expressing criticism of the government.

The prosecution has thus far failed to provide any credible evidence against any of the defendants of the serious charges against them. It is apparent that their only “crime” was their peaceful protest and criticism against the government’s decision to cede control over the Kempir-Abad water reservoir to Uzbekistan.

Some defendants are being held in inhumane conditions and have not been allowed to access the medical treatment they need for their deteriorating health conditions.

The Kyrgyz government has an obligation to respect and facilitate the right to peaceful assembly and ensure that any restriction is necessary and proportionate to a legitimate aim. Criminalizing individuals simply for taking part in peaceful protests is a violation of human rights.

I urge you to:

Do everything within your power to ensure that all charges against the defendants that stem solely from their exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are dropped, and that those that are under any form of detention are immediately released.

Yours sincerely,