

Majlis Podcast: In Central Asia, An Unfree Press Continues To Reign

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) released its [World Press Freedom Index](#) for 2019 ahead of World Press Freedom Day on May 3. This year's RSF index ranked all the Central Asian states, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan, among the worst offenders for press freedom. It is not the first time that has been true, but this year, for the first time, Turkmenistan actually ranked dead last in 180th place, dropping two positions from last year.

Out of 180 countries, Kyrgyzstan improved in the RSF rankings, going from 98th in 2018 to 83rd in this year's index. Uzbekistan nudged up from 165th to 160th. Kazakhstan maintained its position in 158th place. And Tajikistan dropped from 149th to 161st.

This week, RFE/RL's Media-Relations Manager Muhammad Tahir moderated a discussion on press freedom in Central Asia: what went right during the last year; and what continues to go wrong.

From Paris we were joined by Johann Bihr, the head of RSF's East Europe and Central Asia desk. Taking part from New York, Gulnoza Said, the Europe and Central Asia program coordinator at the Committee to Protect Journalists. And from Prague, Farruh Yusupov, the director of RFE/RL's Turkmen Service, known locally as Azatlyk, participated. I've been watching the struggles of the press in Central Asia for some time, so I also had a few things to say.

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