

Tajik journalist to be tried this Monday for “extremism”

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls on Tajikistan’s authorities to release **Daler Sharipov**, a journalist specializing in religious issues whose [trial](#) on absurd extremism charges is due to begin on Monday in the capital, Dushanbe.

[Arrested](#) by the intelligence services on 28 January, Sharipov is facing up to five years in prison under article 189 of the penal code for “inciting national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred” and for “propaganda” on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been [banned](#) in Tajikistan since 2006.

The prosecutor-general’s office [says](#) the case against him is based on “more than 200 articles and commentaries containing extremist content” that were published between 2013 and 2019. The charges are surprising as Sharipov has repeatedly [criticized](#) religious extremism and terrorism.

“Daler Sharipov’s arrest ahead of the parliamentary elections in March, unsurprisingly won by the ruling party, and presidential elections in November, is a new warning by the authorities to critical journalists and media,” said Jeanne Cavelier, the head of RSF’s Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk. “We condemn these absurd charges and call for his immediate release.”

Sharipov wrote for the independent news website *Ozodagon* from 2013 until its closure after years of [harassment](#) in 2019, often commenting on violations of human rights and religious freedoms. He was [hospitalized](#) in May 2012 after being badly beaten in a still unpunished attack.

Tajikistan is ranked 161st out of 180 countries in RSF’s 2019 [World Press Freedom Index](#), after falling 45 places since 2015. The situation of its journalists has worsened even more [in recent weeks](#) in connection with the coronavirus epidemic.

<https://rsf.org/en/news/tajik-journalist-be-tried-monday-extremism>