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Statement concerning the detention of Alexander Sodiqov:

The Department of Political Science at McGill University is gravely concerned about the recent detention of Alexander Sodiqov. Mr Sodiqov is a doctoral student in Political Science at the University of Toronto in Canada. He has been held in detention by security forces in Tajikistan since 16 June 2014.

Sodiqov was in Tajikistan conducting research on the topic of "Rising Powers and Conflict Management in Central Asia" under a contract with the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council in the United Kingdom.

The detention of an academic researcher strikes at the heart of academic freedom around the world. The arrest of a graduate student who was conducting legitimate fieldwork places academic research at risk. It undermines the freedom of thought and expression that is the cornerstone of university research.

We understand that, as of 30 June 2014, no formal charges have been laid against Mr. Sodiqov. The Department of Political Science calls upon governmental authorities in Tajikistan to work actively toward resolving this matter. It hopes and expects that the authorities will fully respect the rights of Mr. Sodiqov and treat him in conformity with international standards of justice and law. We encourage further involvement of all parties to resolve this issue.

Sincerely
Hudson Meadwell

Chair
Department of Political Science