

# ALMANAC **No.2**

## The Experience of the Kyrgyz Republic in Crisis Management: Lessons for the Future

Aida Alymbaeva and Todor Tagarev (Eds.)



**DCAF**

a centre for security,  
development and  
the rule of law

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Geneva – Bishkek, 2015

# Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), [www.dcaf.ch](http://www.dcaf.ch)

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# PREFACE

I take pleasure in writing this preface to this second Almanac on Security Sector Governance in the Kyrgyz Republic, written and edited entirely by civil society experts. This second Almanac focuses on recent experience in crisis management, an area in which security agencies are naturally directly involved and empowered. DCAF would like to thank the Ministry of Defence of Latvia for its generous support in making this project possible.

Security sector representatives have their own way of assessing security challenges. They do so in the light of what they deem 'feasible', and they tend to report on their crisis management with utmost discretion. This holds especially true for young democracies.

However, we cannot learn from the lessons of the past experience if we do not spell them out, and encourage public discussion in the light of the security needs and interests of the citizens – tax-payers and voters. It is what this volume seeks to do in a constructive and cooperative spirit.

Thanks and congratulations also go to our Kyrgyz colleagues, most of all to Aida Alymbayeva who diligently organised and edited the articles collected in this volume, and to Dr. Todor Tagarev as her fellow editor.

Philipp Fluri, Ph.D.  
Deputy Director DCAF



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## List of Abbreviations

AF	Armed Forces
ATC	Anti-Terrorist Centre
ATCD	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
AUCA	American University of Central Asia
CADII	Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation
CHSB	Council of the Heads of the Security Bodies and Special Services of the CIS Member States
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMC	Crisis Management Centre (at MES, KR)
CRRF	Collective Rapid Reaction Forces
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
DRCU	Disaster Response Coordinating Unit
DW	Deutsche Welle
EWS	Early Warning System
FANO	Ferghana, Andijan, Namangan, and Osh (regions of the KR)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the UN)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
GRP	Gross Regional Product
GS	General Staff
ICC	Information and Coordination Centre
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IS	Institute of Seismology
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan)
IWPR	Institute for War & Peace Reporting
KR	Kyrgyz Republic

KTR	Kyrgyz Television and Radio
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situations (of the KR)
MNS	Ministry of National Security (of the KR)
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoES	Ministry of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
MSK	Medvedev, Sponheuer, Karnik (scale)
NAS	National Academy of Sciences (of the KR)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTRC	National Television and Radio Corporation
OBON	Separate Special Purpose Battalion
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
OOSN	Separate Special Purpose Detachment
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PF	Public Foundation
RF	Russian Federation
RRF	Rapid Reaction Forces
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
RUz	Republic of Uzbekistan
SCNC	State Committee on National Security
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDPK	Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan
SSG	Security Sector Governance
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USSR	Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics

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UTO	United Tajik Opposition
WHO	World Health Organization



# Introduction

**Aida Alymbaeva and Todor Tagarev**

The security sector in the countries of the democratic world operates under conditions of parliamentary and civilian control. The main purpose of this control is to ensure the effective protection of the interests of society and the individual citizen. Transparency of activities in the security sector, its accountability to parliament and civil society contribute to the effectiveness of this sector, as well as to the better use of limited public resources devoted to security.

In the process of democratization, many countries face serious problems trying to apply these simple principles.<sup>1</sup> Often, for example, representatives of the security sector emphasize that they are definitely oriented to the principle of supremacy of the civil power. However, in their view, neither the Parliament nor the civil society in general possess expertise on key issues related to the development and control of the assets of the ministries of defence, interior, emergencies, special services. This to some degree is true, and therefore it is necessary to take care of the development of the capacity of political parties, non-governmental and academic organisations.

This publication is a product of the efforts of the civil society in Kyrgyzstan, including members of the academic community, as well as individual employees of government agencies. The book is published with the support of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) with the aim of understanding the existing national practices in the field of crisis management, understanding what happened, why it happened and how events developed, to study in detail some aspects of conflict management, discuss possible ways to improve the structure and functioning of the security sector, develop recommendations for an effective response to potential crises situations.<sup>2</sup>

In this regard, in November 2013, DCAF held a discussion with the participation of a diverse group of civil society representatives on major security challenges and threats

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed analysis of the principles of crisis management is not the subject of this paper. For more information, see “States of Emergency,” DCAF Backgrounder series (Geneva: DCAF, October 2005); and Anna Khakee, “Securing Democracy? – A Comparative Analysis of Emergency Powers in Europe,” DCAF Policy Papers 30 (Geneva: DCAF, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Although the words “conflicts” and “crises” are sometimes used herein interchangeably, it must be emphasized that in general the situations studied are regarded as crises, which are closer to the concept of emergencies – they entail human casualties, damage to human health, considerable material losses and deterioration of the living conditions of people. Moreover, they are the result of smaller unresolved conflicts, they are repeated, and undergo recess and exacerbation.

and serious crises that occurred in Kyrgyzstan in the past twenty years.<sup>3</sup> As a result of the discussions, six crisis situations were chosen for subsequent and more detailed studies, the results of which are presented in this book. It should be noted that selection considerations emphasised crisis situations falling under the responsibility of two or more security agencies. Modern crises are too fuzzy, and their scope is not constrained by state borders,<sup>4</sup> while several power agencies are involved in the resolution of conflict. Therefore, in times of crisis and in the decision-making process aimed at the development of the national security sector, it is necessary to focus on the exchange of information between different structures, the coordination of joint actions, and coordination of general plans.<sup>5</sup> The works of the authors represented in this book reflect this complexity.

Each report begins with a brief description of the selected crisis situation and the prevailing view on its sources and causes. In the section in which each author analyses in detail the management of the crisis situation, we asked them to consider the following issues: *early warning*, namely was there an early warning system, and if not, what explains its absence, was there an attempt to prevent a crisis situation, and why did the system of early warning and prevention fail; *operational information* and, in particular, how was the process of gathering, processing, analysing and disseminating information organized, were there sufficient sources of reliable operational information, and was there a process of obtaining feedback; *awareness of the situation* to see whether the authorities were informed of impending events and whether they were able to predict the development of the situation. The author was also asked to examine the issue of *accountability*, to answer questions about whether there was a clear division of responsibilities between the central and local authorities, whether a person responsible for the management of the conflict in question has been appointed, whether this person or other individuals were authorized to take decisions on how to use available resources.

Further on, the analysis had to clarify the *decision-making process* during the conflict, determining whether there was a person who had worked out the rules and way of application of instruments. In cases where force was used, it was necessary to clarify the following: were the decisions on the use of force clearly formulated, how were they formulated (e.g., in a law, order), were the troops and other units well prepared, and was the use of force effectively controlled. Under the criteria of *cooperation and coordination*, it was important to determine: what non-governmental actors (NGOs, volunteers, international organizations, business companies, etc.) were involved in the localization of the crisis; were there mechanisms for cooperation and coordination with them, such as rules, procedures, agreements, channels of communication; did these or other tempo-

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<sup>3</sup> The project also aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society in Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>4</sup> See, Bengt Sundelius, "A Brief on Embedded Societal Security," *Information & Security: An International Journal*, vol.17 (2005), 23-37, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/isij.1702>.

<sup>5</sup> Velizar Shalamanov, et. al., "Civil Security: Architectural Approach in Emergency Management Transformation," *Information & Security: An International Journal* 17 (2005), 75-101, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/isij.1706>; Todor Tagarev, "Capabilities-Based Planning for Security Sector Transformation," *Information & Security: An International Journal* 24 (2009), 27-35, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/isij.2404>.

rary mechanisms ensure the effective exchange of information with them, and what was the contribution of non-governmental actors in crisis resolution.

Exploring the issues of *communication*, the authors needed to determine the effectiveness of dissemination of the decisions taken, the degree of awareness of stakeholders about the decisions and plans, and the links with the local community. Since *logistics* is one of the key elements in conflict management, it was necessary to establish a level of security of the state bodies, including the security and resources (human, material, financial) necessary for the localization of the crisis, and to determine whether there was a need to mobilize additional resources (e.g., call reserve forces, use state reserves).

The next item was to study *international relations*, namely: it was necessary to know whether the authorities had contacted other countries and international organizations in response to the crisis, or why there was not such an appeal, as well as whether they had requested assistance. Regarding *public communications*, it was important to clarify the following: was the society sufficiently informed about the crisis, was the exchange of information between the authorities and the media (foreign and local) effective, as well as while dealing with the media, were the authorities proactive or did they only react to published articles.

The last paragraph of the detailed analysis was devoted to *human rights* in order to find out whether the actors were aware of the regulations for human rights protection, whether they had acted in accordance with these regulations and whether there was effective control over their implementation.

In addition to the above issues, the authors had to analyse the level of preparedness of the security agencies and other government organizations involved in the emergency situations, find out which actors could have possibly participated effectively in the localization of the crisis, but did not participate, what factors had significantly influenced the termination of the conflict, as well as any other important features that could be identified when looking at similar crises in Kyrgyzstan.

In principle, crises experience may help to better prepare for future similar phenomena, but only after a deep analysis of past experience, and if state agencies, including the security sector, could learn their lessons and use them to improve crisis preparedness. Taking this into consideration, the authors also attempted to identify lessons learned from these and other similar crisis situations, find out whether a formal process of conflict study and lessons learned had been launched, were the lessons recognized by the security sector, local authorities and civil society actors, were they incorporated in the list of events of emergency situations management, and what lessons did not bring any changes in the plans for disaster preparedness.

Finally, we asked the authors to formulate their recommendations to improve the regulations, operations, organisation and logistics.

Of course, not all authors were able to answer all these questions, primarily due to the lack of public information, the reluctance of some civil servants to comment on the acts of the authorities in times of crisis, as well as the limited time available to conduct the analysis (it was assumed that the "situation room," prepared with DCAF's assis-

tance, would become operational earlier, with the results of these studies used to enhance its functional framework). However, we must give credit to the authors for their attempt to examine the crisis situations from a management and governance perspective. Indeed, many local and foreign analysts have examined the conflicts presented in this book in the light of their origin, development, engagement of actors, scope and prospect of repetition.

This book includes different in type, time and scope crises in the reaction to which, as stated above, two or more security authorities were involved. Articles in the book are given in chronological order; initially are considered crises that occurred earlier than others. The book starts with a report on the Batken events in 1999-2000. Authors Murat Beishenov and Kairat Osmonaliyev describe in detail the first in the history of Kyrgyzstan external invasion by gangs of Islamic extremists, which turned into a big surprise to the political establishment at the time. The article analyses the level of readiness of the armed forces to oppose foreign intervention and outlines the main problems in the termination of the crisis that prolonged the military operations and resulted in many casualties, especially among the security sector personnel. Although the Batken events occurred 15 years ago, some of the issues related to external intervention still remain relevant to the country in the light of regional developments, primarily with regard to the situation in Afghanistan.

The second article focuses on the Nookat events in 2008, which law enforcement agencies associated with the manifestation of religious extremism. Author Ikbalzhon Mirsayitov was able to cover practically almost all aspects and elements of conflict management, describing in detail the acts of security forces in its localization. The article is also interesting because the selected conflict and its management have been tackled by just a small number of analysts, and thus it raises yet unexplored questions.

Further on, the book studies the experience in the management of political emergency situations considering the events of April 2010. This event is reported widely by local and foreign researchers. However, the advantage of Emil Juraev's work is that using a variety of sources of information, he could fully, impartially and deeply analyse the measures taken by the authorities to control the situation, describe missed opportunities to settle the mass protests that led to tragic consequences, and describe the transformation of demonstrations into an uncontrollable process.

The article dedicated to the events of June 2010 evaluates the actions of local authorities, the Provisional Government and security agencies in the prevention and containment of the ethnic conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Authors Asel Murzakulova and Abdiraim Zhorokulov provided a deep and comprehensive description of the process of localization of the conflict by examining the extensive set of elements of conflict management. They also highlight the lessons learned that are still valid today.

Trans-border conflicts were the next topic studied by Salamat Alamanov and Aynur Umetalieva. The authors give a detailed overview of cross-border conflicts that have often occurred in recent years on the state border between Kyrgyzstan and neighbouring states. More specifically, they analyse the conflicts that took place in the vicinity of the Sokh enclave of Uzbekistan and in the enclave Vorukh in the Republic of Tajikistan.

These two conflicts were separately investigated in terms of their management, and therefore it is possible to trace two different approaches related to the prevention, response and resolution of cross-border conflicts. The authors also paid special attention and formulated recommendations to amend the legislation, improve operations and operational procedures, and to strengthen the capacity of civil servants.

The book concludes with an article on earthquake risk management giving the example of Nura-Alay earthquake in 2008. Natural disasters pose a real threat to the security of citizens due to the geographical location of Kyrgyzstan, and earthquakes are the most dangerous, but still poorly predicted among natural disasters. Dzhergalbek Ukashev and Chinara Berbaeva did a lot of work to collect data for a comprehensive and visual analysis of the Nura-Alay earthquake using the chronology of actions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations. They provide valuable practical recommendations aimed at improving the state system of civil protection and the efficiency in managing the risks of earthquakes and other disasters.

In their works, practically all authors conclude that many of the units and components of crisis management were not effective in the prevention and localization of conflicts. If we look at the most critical of them, the authors conclude that the early warning system was generally irrationally used within the system of public administration, and in some areas it was even absent. The early warning system (EWS), which incorporates the systematic collection and analysis of data to monitor the situation and make recommendations, including risk assessment, was not holistically and harmoniously integrated into the activities of local and state authorities, and did not exist as a separate element. Some components, such as data collection and analysis, function in the system of public administration not as part of the EWS, but under other operational tasks. Moreover, data collection and processing are often carried out inconsistently and chaotically. Consequently, the authors emphasise that the EWS was the first ineffective link in the crisis management system. They also point out that attempts were made by international organizations to implement an early warning system in the conflict-prone areas of the country; however, due to the lack of interest by government agencies, the initiative of donors and non-governmental organizations was not further developed.

The existence of an early warning system, aimed, first of all, to identify the signals and precursors of conflict would have helped to prevent some tragic events or mitigate their consequences. In this regard, many authors have recommended the establishment of a national early warning system to alert both local and central authorities, while the information could enter the situation room for analysis, risk assessment and recommendations to the leaders of the country. The situation room could function as a permanent collective coordinating body for crisis management, control, monitoring and forecasting of situations, information and analytical support to processes aimed to prevent, respond to and mitigate conflicts, as well as to prepare decisions on crisis management.

Certainly, when conflicts break out, the whole process of events cannot be fully controlled by the security sector and other state agencies involved. Yet, the level of readiness of security and other government agencies, the availability of skills required to manage crises, such as the development of a single plan for urgent action to resolve the

situation, as well as a well-designed mechanism for coordination between government agencies can mitigate and resolve the conflict quickly. In this regard, many of the authors point to the next big drawback – poor coordination between local and national authorities during conflict management. Often, heads at rural, urban and regional level are not capable of taking any initiative or responsibility to resolve conflicts. Instead, they prefer to wait for the decision of the central authorities while wasted time and opportunities increase the degree of severity, the scale and pace of developments.

In order to change this situation, the authors recommend that regulations be revised, mechanisms be developed and effective organizational and practical measures be implemented to improve the status, role and responsibility of local authorities in the event of an emergency situation, with a detailed description of the procedure in case of a crisis. In addition, it is recommended to increase the qualification of employees from local structures in conflict management, in particular to improve their competence in the analysis, identification, prediction and prevention of conflicts, to conduct negotiations and resolve conflicts.

The authors also point out the delays in the centralised aggregation and processing of information coming from different sources, its transfer to decision-makers (often the leaders of the country), and in the process of decision-making during conflicts. Consequently, many decisions lag behind the pace of real developments. These shortcomings prove the absence of an orderly and organized process of decision-making in emergency situations and problems in the cooperation and coordination between various state agencies. The authors once again recommend the creation of a situation room as a means to solve these problems: one coordinating body will be responsible for the operational processing of data related to conflicts, as well as for drafting crisis management decisions.

Another vulnerable link in conflict management is the insufficient provision of security agencies and other government agencies with material and financial resources, necessary for the effective crisis management. In some cases, poor resources did not allow the security sector and the forces involved in the conflict to operate effectively. In this regard, the authors propose to establish a stable resource bank for emergencies, to increase the number of necessary products and goods that are to be included in the list of state reserves, to approve the list of state reserves based on 10 essential food products and other goods covering the needs of 200 thousand people for each region.

In times of crises, media coverage of events suffers when the government does not take proactive steps but only reacts to reports published in local and foreign media. If the conflict affects the interests of neighbouring countries, this makes Kyrgyzstan vulnerable on the international arena, and in local conflicts this results in disinformation of the population, emergence of unsubstantiated and often compromising conflicting information. This situation generates distrust of the citizens in the state authorities and slows down the process of recovery in the post-conflict period. Therefore, the authors advise to establish an independent national information policy, as well as to develop a programme of media policy in the event of an emergency.

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Some authors emphasized the positive role of local non-governmental organizations in crisis management. Their involvement in the allocation of resources, humanitarian assistance, dissemination of information and the provision of mediation services during some conflicts has played a positive role.

Kyrgyzstan is still often categorized as a country recovering from a transition period where government institutions and civil society organizations were not established as efficient, sustainable structures. It is well known that such countries are subject to conflicts and crises. The editors and authors of this volume hope that this publication will serve as a useful tool for government and non-governmental organizations in the prevention and containment of crises.



# Chapter 1

## The Batken Events of 1999-2000: Lessons and Conclusions

*Murat Beyshenov and Kayrat Osmonaliyev*

### Summary

August 2014 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invasion of the gangs of radical Islamic extremists in the territory of Batken,<sup>1</sup> Osh region of the Kyrgyz Republic and the special operation to block, contain, liquidate and displace the gangs with the help of the armed forces, military formations (hereinafter – the other troops) and Kyrgyz law enforcement authorities, called the Batken events of 1999-2000 (hereinafter – the Batken events).

Batken events represent the first case when armed forces, other forces and law enforcement agencies were used in the modern history of sovereign Kyrgyzstan to protect the territorial integrity of the country and security of its citizens from foreign terrorist threats. They were extensively covered in the international and national media and became the subject of global, regional and national policy and interstate relations.

Batken events tested the strength of the then existing system of national security, the combat readiness of the armed forces of the republic, as well as other state bodies which should be involved in such crisis situations.

Even long time after these events, there are different assessments of the effectiveness of the special operation. Most of them are not positive.

This study makes an attempt to answer the following questions: why was the system of national security in general and the armed forces in particular not quite ready to repel gangs in August 1999; why were regular troops involved in operations against militants and why were specially trained anti-terrorist units not available in the country; which of the security structures were obliged to carry out the operation to locate and destroy the

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<sup>1</sup> Currently – Batken region. Founded on October 13, 1999 by separation from the Osh region. Batken region is located in the south-western part of the country; 3/4 of its borders are international. The region borders in the south, west and north-west with Tajikistan, in the north – with Uzbekistan, in the east is the Osh region. The area is 17,000 square kilometers, or 8.5 % of the territory of Kyrgyzstan. Batken region is the most complicated geopolitical region of Kyrgyzstan. This is the only area on whose territory are located enclaves of neighboring countries – Uzbekistan (Dzhangayl, Sokh district, Chon-Gara and Shahimardan) and Tajikistan (Vorukh and West Kalach).

gangs; how were the functions between law enforcement agencies distributed and how was their interaction organized; why did the level of training of personnel and, above all, the officers not meet the requirements of fighting armed gangs using guerrilla methods of struggle; why were troops not provided with special weapons and equipment to fight against terrorism at high altitudes and at night, with modern means of reconnaissance, communications and engineering devices; what mistakes led to significant combat losses and hostages; and, finally, what are the lessons learned and conclusions of the Batken events and what changes have been introduced in force development, in the state policy in the field of defence and national security, in the organizational structure and the training of military forces and governance?

Of considerable importance is the answer to the question: Is a repetition of the Batken events possible? The complicated political situation in Central Asia after the withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, the growing influence of the Taliban and radical-minded part of the Islamists make this unfavourable prognosis quite likely.

Accordingly, on the grounds of the analysis of existing expert assessments, the authors formulate recommendations to minimize any possible negative consequences that may occur from situations similar to Batken events.

## Introduction

The Military Doctrine of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR), approved in 2013, states that the events in various regions, especially in the Middle East and in Afghanistan, are characterized by unpredictability of both their size and possible consequences. Still exists the threat of international terrorism, extremism and separatism in Central Asia, whose units quickly adapt to the counteraction and apply new tactics and techniques of subversion.<sup>2</sup> These projections and conclusions in the Military Doctrine are largely the result of the so-called Batken events that took place fifteen years ago.

For the general public, many pages of the Batken events are still “white spots” in history, since no holistic study, analysis and summary of factors and prerequisites that created the conditions for the invasion of foreign gangs in the south of Kyrgyzstan in 1999-2000 was carried out in a timely manner.

It is surprising that no official assessment of the Batken events has been provided. The reasons for this “silence” on the Batken events also require special study. There is some fragmented information, some memories of individual participants, publications by analysts, experts and the media. However, an objective, consistent, complete and impartial coverage of the events in an official governmental document is still lacking.

Today, there is an urgent need for such documents on a variety of scientific and practical, political, social, legal and other topics, to facilitate the military reform in the Kyrgyz Republic, to determine the state policy in the field of defence and military security, to ensure training of government and military leadership and combat troops, ade-

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<sup>2</sup> *Military Doctrine of the Kyrgyz Republic*, approved by Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic no. 165 dated 15 July 2013.

quate financing, procurement, logistics and many other issues beyond the sphere of military security of the Kyrgyz Republic.

It is equally important to consider the impact of the Batken events on the international image of the Kyrgyz Republic, the state and prospects of international military cooperation, the participation of our country in the collective security system and the development of bilateral cooperation of the KR with the leading countries of the world. How did the system of collective security of the CIS function, what was the reaction of the international community, what political and diplomatic steps were taken with regard to the international assistance to Kyrgyzstan in repelling the attacking gangs?

And, above all, how important were the Batken events in Kyrgyzstan in determining the near and long-term strategic development goals and objectives?

Other issues are also of great interest: the dynamics of public sentiment and public reaction to certain moments during the Batken events; the formation of bonds between the army and society; the moral support of the society to the actions of the military command of armed forces manifested in the Batken events.

Equally important are the studies on the effectiveness of the state system for management of military security, cooperation between power ministries and departments, administrative bodies, local state administration, local authorities, and their decisions to support operations to localize, block and eliminate gangs.

The answers to the above questions, relevant recommendations, and—most importantly—their practical implementation will ensure the proper level of national security, minimizing the negative effect from possible aggression of extremists and terrorists.

## **Brief description of the Batken events and counteracting the invasions of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in 1999-2000**

### *a) Prehistory of the Batken events. The influence of the situation in Afghanistan on the geopolitical situation in Central Asia*

Before proceeding to the analysis of the Batken events, it is important to look at the description of the political situation in Central Asia before the invasion of militants across the southern border of Kyrgyzstan.

In the 1990s, in the sub-regions of South and Central Asia there was accumulation of factors that influenced the development of the situation in the region in the short term. First of all, the armed conflict in Afghanistan which continued more than 30 years was a source of the politico-military tensions in the region. The end of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country on February 15, 1989 did not stop the war. After the fall of President Najibullah's regime, which lost the support of the Soviet Union, the civil opposition in Afghanistan became even more aggravated.

“Over time, the Afghan conflict has become a source of generating the process of transforming the country into a base for aggressive actions under Islamic fundamentalist slogans for the entire region. Aggressive reislamization has become a new phenomenon on the post-Soviet Central Asian space, and the occurring fusion of its proponents with militant Islamic forces in Afghanistan marked a fundamentally new status of the

country in terms of the national security interests of the Central Asian countries... The relation between the Batken events of 1999 and the terrorist attacks on the border of Kyrgyzstan with the Afghan situation is obvious.”<sup>3</sup> Terrorism, founded in radical Islamic ideology, turned into a source of threats to the region. The region is the objective of Islamist plans to establish in the Ferghana Valley Islamic state FANO <sup>4</sup> as part of the World Islamic caliphate.

From an interview with Afghan President Burhanudin Rabbani: “On the side of the Taliban are a lot of fighters who came from outside. The Taliban train their militants in Pakistan. The Taliban include many people coming from different countries of the former Soviet Union and other countries. The Taliban give them combat training for future action in their own countries. I have always stressed that the Taliban are a big danger not only for Afghanistan, but also for the entire Central Asian region. They are interested in inciting a major war.”

Radio “Taliban” openly declared their intentions and willingness to “liberate” the entire region, up to Bukhara and Samarkand. They believe that this is their territory.<sup>5</sup>

From an interview with Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Afghan warlord and Afghan Minister of Defence (1992-1996): “There are extremist groups from other countries in the region, now studying in religious schools in Pakistan. Pakistani foreign intelligence (ISI) <sup>6</sup> is responsible for their combat training, and after completing their course of study it ‘exports’ these militants in other countries. We have information that Tohirzhon Yuldash and his fighters are located in Mazar-i-Sharif, Kabul and Peshawar.”<sup>7</sup>

Analysts point to the lack of independence of religious radicalism. Radical Islamic ideology is gradually becoming a convenient tool for defending the geopolitical interests of non-Islamic countries. Gradually and often artificially, a situation occurs where the stability of the whole region is directly dependent on the developments in Afghanistan. “In other words, Afghanistan was, is and in the foreseeable future will remain a major source of threats to the national security of the countries of Central and South Asia, and the entire Middle East,” – claims Alexander Knyazev, expert on Afghanistan.<sup>8</sup>

In 1999, the intensity of hostilities between the warring parties in Afghanistan sharply increased. This was due to the start of a large-scale Taliban offensive towards the positions of the Joint National Liberation Front of Afghanistan.

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<sup>3</sup> Alexander Knyazev, *The Afghan conflict and radical Islam in Central Asia. Collection of documents and materials* (Bishkek: KRSU, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> The abbreviation comes from the names of the regions adjacent to the largest cities in the Ferghana Valley – Ferghana, Andijan, Namangan, and Osh.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Knyazev, *The history of the Afghan war of the 1990s and turning Afghanistan into a source of threats to Central Asia* (Bishkek: KRSU, 2002), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – Pakistani interagency intelligence, the main foreign intelligence service of Pakistan.

<sup>7</sup> Knyazev, *The history of the Afghan war of the 1990s*, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Knyazev, *Afghanistan as a source of religious extremism and terrorism* (Bishkek, 2000), p. 5.

In the summer of 1999, the Taliban once again tried to deprive Ahmad Shah Massoud of his main base – Pandsher gorge. The offensive in August over the Shamoli valley confirmed once again that the Afghan conflict had long gone beyond the size of a Civil War. This attack involved regular units of the Pakistani army. It was in this period that another international player was involved in the conflict – the support to the Taliban by radical Islamists in Central Asia. Later, Ahmad Shah Massoud declared that Afghanistan was only a springboard since in some areas that were under Taliban rule “the people of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, China and other countries were trained. Pakistani special services ISI provided training to them in special camps.”<sup>9</sup> The purpose of this training was to create a global fundamentalist underground movement in Central Asia. The main targets of this activity were India, China and former Soviet states with Muslim populations.

The negotiations, held on July 19-20, 1999 in Tashkent to resolve the inter-Afghan crisis following the “6 + 2” formulae (Iran, Pakistan, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, plus Russia and the United States) with the participation of Afghan warring parties, failed. The Taliban, who controlled 90 percent of the territory of the country, refused to create a coalition government in Afghanistan.

Despite the successes of “Taliban,” there was growing dissatisfaction among the leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)<sup>10</sup> Tahir Yuldashev and Juma Namangani with the “slow” progress of Islamic Jihad in Uzbekistan, therefore, they decided to force the “Islamization” of the Ferghana Valley. The result was a direct intervention in the border areas of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 1999-2000 as one way of conducting “IMU jihad” in Uzbekistan, passing through the southern unprotected region of Kyrgyzstan, which, according to the leaders of the IMU, “shall not hamper our return home.”<sup>11</sup>

Why did Ferghana Valley become the target of aspirations of Islamic radicals? Because it includes the densely populated Ferghana, Namangan and Andijan regions of Uzbekistan, Leninabad (Sogd) in Tajikistan, Osh and part of Jalal-Abad and Batken region in Kyrgyzstan, and is a rather specific area with regard to religion. The geographic, economic and other characteristics of the valley have determined the specific nature of the dynamics of Islam in the region over the past decade. In the early 1980s, the number of illegal private religious schools in the valley increased. Since the second half of the 1980s, the weakened government control encouraged the legalization and the rapid increase in the number of training centres. At the same time, their contacts with foreign Muslim organizations, especially from Saudi Arabia, intensified.

<sup>9</sup> Knyazev, *The history of the Afghan war of the 1990s*.

<sup>10</sup> Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan – the Islamist organization founded in 1996 by former members of a number of political parties and movements banned in Uzbekistan, including “Adolat uyushmasi” (“Justice Society”), “The Islamic Revival Party,” “Islamic Party of Turkestan,” “Islom lashkarlari” (“Warriors of Islam”), and others. The political leader of the movement was Yuldashev, leader of the military unit Juma Hoxha (Namanganiy).

<sup>11</sup> Message from the IMU to the people and parliament of Kyrgyzstan # 1079, Retrieved 16 August 2000.

One of the best-organized and strong organizations of radical Islamists at that time, and now, operating in Central Asia, using the territory controlled by the Taliban in Afghanistan, is the “Hizb ut-Tahrir party.” This party implements traditional and repeatedly tested forms and methods of action. Its members “work with people” in the literal meaning of this propaganda cliché. Propaganda agents began work in the Ferghana Valley as early as 1980 (according to other sources – even earlier). What makes the party a real force is a conspiracy. The organization was founded by analogy of a classic underground organization.

Another radical structure which showed real aggression during the Batken events was the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. According to the classification of the US State Department, it is in the list of the most dangerous international terrorist organizations. Its members include former activists of a number of Islamic organizations of Uzbekistan, whose activities were banned by President Islam Karimov. IMU went underground and its activists decided to leave the country and conduct subversive work against Uzbekistan from neighbouring territories.

In Afghanistan, IMU members stayed in training camps located in the area of Mazar-e-Sharif (Balkh province), near the villages and towns of Ziyaradzha (Herat), Jalalabad (Nangarhar), Dzhalsreza (Vardak), Host (Party), Aliabad and Davr-and-Rabat (Kunduz). In Pakistan, Uzbek Islamists trained in camps “Favi,” “Saad,” “Miram Shah” and “Var-sak” located in the area of Peshawar and Pakistani Punjab. A few camps which provided special training for IMU fighters, including warlord Abduvali Yuldashev (Aziz Khan), who led the initial stage of the invasion of militants in the south of Kyrgyzstan in August 1999, were located to the north-west of the Pakistani city of Quetta and in the neighbourhood Rayvand city in eastern province of Lahore.

In addition to Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Uzbek Islamists gained combat experience from their co-religionists in the North Caucasus, in the training camps of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. The Islamic opposition established links with Chechnya in the early 1990s through the Chechen diaspora in Central Asia, as well as with the assistance of various pro-Islamic organizations coming from the Caucasus and operating in Turkey.

Besides “Hizb-ut-Tahrir” and “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan,” another powerful international terrorist force was expanding its destructive activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan – “Al-Qaeda,” which emerged on the world stage later – on September 11, 2001. In early 1999, Osama bin Laden met in Kandahar representatives of the IMU. During the talks, Osama bin Laden promised to significantly increase the financial assistance to the Uzbek fundamentalists in the near future.

In the spring of 1999, an IMU delegation visited once again Osama bin-Laden’s homeland, Saudi Arabia. This time, the Uzbek Islamists received significant financial aid from the Fund “Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Ibrahim.” A few months later, the Taliban leadership allocated several hundred thousand dollars to the needs of IMU activists and their families residing on the territory of Afghanistan.

The second country close to Kyrgyzstan, used in 1999 for transfer of IMU militants into the territory of our country, was the Republic of Tajikistan (RT), where the overall

situation in July 1999 was characterized as relatively stable. To a large extent, this helped to reach a compromise between Emomali Rakhmonov's government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) on the termination of the civil war and overcoming its severe consequences. However, there are dangerous trends in Tajikistan that have a destabilizing effect on the political situation in the country. This is primarily due to the activity on the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan of armed groups of IMU beyond anyone's control, as well as the presence of Uzbek refugees, some of which are armed Uzbek militants – Islamists, on the territory of Karategin Valley in the Republic of Tajikistan. Secondly, the political and operational situation was affected by numerous unauthorized transfers by drug traffickers and smugglers across the Tajik-Afghan border, often accompanied by fire support from the adjacent side. In July 1999, the issue with the Uzbek refugees resulted in the deterioration of bilateral relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

At the end of July 1999, UTO leaders informed about a possible disbanding of their armed forces, which after the appropriate certification would be subordinated to the power structures of the Republic of Tajikistan. In turn, the Tajik authorities stated that decertified armed formations of the UTO would be illegal and their members will be disarmed by the security forces in Tajikistan. Almost all of the fighters (about 7000) were summoned and disarmed under the supervision of the UN. In 1999, a quick and effective campaign was held to confiscate weapons and ban their illegal possession.

Meanwhile, the government of Uzbekistan retained its policy to stay away from Russia-oriented CIS states. The aggression of IMU in 1999 in Batken region of Kyrgyzstan made the Uzbek leadership consider changing its foreign policy priorities. It was not surprising that Uzbekistan de facto resumed its membership in the Treaty on Collective Security of the CIS, and later in the spring of 2000 participated in the joint military exercises with Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan "Commonwealth Southern Shield – 2000." Subsequently, this course of action changed.

Thus, the complexity of relations between states in the region and the situation in Afghanistan influenced the factors that facilitated the invasion gangs of IMU in Batken region of Kyrgyzstan in 1999-2000. There were no internal reasons and conditions in the form of political actions and decisions by the Kyrgyz side that contributed to the Islamic Jihad in the southern region of Kyrgyzstan. It was a pure external aggression from the IMU who chose the most vulnerable Batken region of Kyrgyzstan as their target.

*b) Status of the Armed Forces and other troops of Kyrgyzstan before the Batken events as a prerequisite for the review of national security system*

Accepted under the jurisdiction of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1992, a small part of the defence complex and disparate military units of the Soviet Union did not meet the requirements of the military security of an independent state. To create a full and effective

system of the armed defence of the country they were required to build their own state security system.<sup>12</sup>

Since the establishment of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan), combining the remaining components of the arms and branches of the armed forces of the USSR on various subordination in the country, and until 1999, the military-political leadership and the Ministry of Defence carried out huge organizational work aimed at the construction of armed forces and, above all, the organization of operational and strategic control of the military.

Taking into account that a management system of any size must include a set of bodies, centres and facilities, it should be noted that on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic there were no structures for strategic or operational level command and management with the appropriate organizational and technical base, although it was preserved in the formations and units at the tactical level.

In the course of building the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic, the central military authority was established – the Ministry of Defence with the General Staff of the Armed Forces, a number of basic legal acts were introduced in the defence sector, whereas the President of the Kyrgyz Republic became the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

At the same time, stationary command centres were built in the Ministry of Defence, under the Government building and in the village of Belovodskiy using command centres from the Soviet era, as well as mobile command centres with communications, command-staff and staff facilities. The material base of these command and control centres was established according to minimum requirements, and the quality of technical equipment and performance were directly dependent on the level of funding from the Ministry of Defence.

Government structures and troops underwent operational and combat training. During the training phase, special attention was paid to the preparation of executive authorities with regard to the stabilization of the political situation in certain regions and in the whole country. In the spring of 1997, exercises were conducted with the state administration of Jalal-Abad and Osh regions, and specifically with the administration of Batken district.

The preparation of organizational and technical basis for Armed Forces management facilitated the organization of command and control in the southern part of the country in 1999-2000. Therefore, we can conclude that the early warning system for crisis situations like the Batken events was created, but did not work effectively.

Safety measures in the southern part of the country prior to the Batken events were undertaken in accordance with the following operational policy documents:

1. Order of the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces no. 226 of 19 June 1996 stipulates that command in the case of destabilization of the

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<sup>12</sup> National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2013-2017. Approved by Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 21 January, 2013 UP no. 11.

situation in Kyrgyzstan should be taken by the Defence Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic through the General Staff of the Armed Forces. This order was valid until the Batken campaign in 1999. Based on it, the “Plan for security and stability in the south of the Kyrgyz Republic” and “Operational Directive of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces no. 003” entered into force on 25 May 1997; they specified the tasks of the security forces, ministries, departments and heads of state administrations in their respective areas.

2. Directive of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic no. 3 of 27 June 1998 “On additional organizational and practical measures to eliminate extremism and terrorism in the Kyrgyz Republic.”
3. The action plan of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic no. 15 of 12 March 1998 on the prevention and suppression of subversive and sabotage activities and possible terrorist acts. Pursuant to the Plan, Ministerial order no. 12 of March 18, 1998 was issued, Plan of May 25, 1997 was updated, task forces, command and control centres and special purpose units were prepared.

The implementation of these documents aimed to enhance the combat readiness of government structures and troops. Permanent combat ready units were dislocated in the regions of Batken and Chon-Alay on the border with the Republic of Tajikistan, especially in the period 1997-1998, where they participated in joint exercises with the involvement of executive authorities, local government administration and reserve units.

However, despite the measures taken to respond to instability in neighbouring Tajikistan in 1997-1998, and despite the fact that command authorities and troops received training to cover the state border, in August 1999 state and military administration were not ready to repel the invasion of IMU gangs. The system’s inability to effectively repel aggression from outside, in our view, was proved by the fact that exactly one year later, in 2000, the militants once again invaded the southern borders of Kyrgyzstan. It should be noted that the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic remain the main factor for military security.

## **Main factors that deteriorated the situation during the Batken events**

### *Lack of an effective system for early warning of threats to the military security in governmental structures*

1. Despite the ongoing efforts in providing security in the south of the Kyrgyz Republic, the level of preparedness of the state system to control the Armed Forces was not high and did not meet the new demands in terms of terrorism counteraction.

2. Insufficient funding for the real needs of national defence undermined the weak development of the national defence potential and combat capability of the armed forces. The government leadership did not put enough efforts to improve the practical skills of officials in ministries, state committees, administrative departments and the lo-

cal administration regarding the management of their subordinate structures in case of emergency.

Certain senior government officials believed in the priority of reforms in the economic sector of the country, assigning secondary importance to military reform. Pacifist views claimed uselessness of the Ministry of Defence, the need for radical downsizing of armed forces, and the use of released budget funds to meet the challenges of macro-economic stabilization.

These views were summarized by one Member of Parliament, when in October 1996, at a meeting in the House of Parliament, he asked the question to the Minister of Defence Myrzakan Subanov: "Who is going to attack us and why do we need an army?"<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (MoES) was in the Security Council proposing to disband the Ministry of Defence and transfer its formations, units and institutions to the subordination of MoES.

3. One of the main reasons for the invasion of militants was the unsettled state border with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and the lack of border guards in this section of the state border of the Kyrgyz Republic. This resulted in the fact that in the course of several years militants penetrated easily the unprotected territory of Batken district and created bases, warehouses and caches of weapons, ammunition, combat gear and carried out the preparation of terrorists.

4. Another factor for the invasion of gangs was the poor socio-economic situation in Batken region, the lack of a state development programme for one of the poorest areas of the country. For example, even after gaining the status of an independent region in October 1999, the overall quality of life was much lower, and the level of gross regional product (GRP) per capita was lower than the average national level nearly 2.9 times (according to data from 2007).<sup>14</sup>

### *Significant deficiencies in the military command system*

The main problem in the development of armed forces at the time was the lack of a Military Doctrine of the Kyrgyz Republic – the main strategic document constituting the basis of the government's military policy, development of the armed forces and organisation of national defence. In this regard, the Ministry of Defence experienced some difficulties due to the insufficient training of troops, as follows:

- procurement of military equipment and weapons (that, according to an article from 1992, was chronically underfunded);
- creation and stockpiling of material and technical resources for the armed forces in wartime;
- formation of the necessary forces and maintenance of high combat capability, combat and mobilization readiness;

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<sup>13</sup> Proceedings of the meeting of the Chamber of SNP LCD KR, October 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Programme for the Development of Batken region for 2008-2011. Available at [http://gov.btour.kg/batken/?page\\_id=109](http://gov.btour.kg/batken/?page_id=109) (10 June 2014).

- strategic and operational planning;
- practical implementation of established measures to prepare the first defensive operations;
- organisation of all types of support and management;
- moral and psychological training of troops;
- development of military science and military art.

The following problems have not been resolved fully or partially by the Ministry of Defence:

- equipping mobile command centres with weapons and modern command and staff vehicles;
- timely funding to pay for telecommunications services, which causes disconnection of phones and disruption of the operational command;
- effective manning of the army due to a significant decrease in the level of organization of recruitment, ineffective interaction between internal services and the authorities responsible for the registration of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, disengagement of local state administrations from the issues related to accounting and recruitment procedures;
- replacement of combat and wheeled vehicles, as combat equipment and weapons are obsolete, 80-90 percent of them cannot be restored due to the lack of resources and repair facilities;
- procurement of fuel and lubricants to meet the needs of the troops. Due to the lack of fuel and lubricants for training of pilots and specialists from other combat services, maintaining combat capabilities at the proper level is not possible. Most pilots have not flown for 2-3 years, airfields and aircraft have not been repaired for 5-7 years;
- inventories and reserves remaining after the collapse of the uniform procurement system in the USSR have been exhausted, and no new supplies have been procured;
- more than 50 percent of the armoured vehicles require regular maintenance. Combat training and transport equipment has exhausted its resource. Batteries have also exhausted 96 percent of their resources. Transport vehicle tires need replacement;
- the main source of recruitment for the Armed Forces is the mobilization of officers and warrant officers from the reserve. Their professional level in many cases is lower than that of cadre officers;
- due to socio-economic and political problems, the laws regulating the work of the military, do not work. Officers, warrant officers and other military personnel, workers and employees are not protected in a market economy environment;

- benefits for military personnel and their families concerning payment for accommodation and utility services have been cancelled;
- an acute problem is the inconsistency between the current level of remuneration of military personnel and constantly rising prices at the consumer market;
- different remuneration of servicemen in the various law enforcement agencies. Salaries in the Ministry of Defence and law enforcement agencies significantly differ from each other;
- exacerbation of the housing problem;
- under the influence of socio-economic factors, there has been a growth of social tension in the army and decrease of motivation for military service. The number of accidents and crimes has increased among all categories of military personnel.<sup>15</sup>

At a meeting of the Government on 17 December 1996, the Chairman gave five minutes to the representative of the Defence Ministry, General Essen Tope, who was ready to brief all Government members on the acute problems in the Armed Forces; however, it was impossible to do it in such a short time. Then, Essen Tope spoke the words which were later repeated by all the officers, "If you think that you are paying for the service, then consider that we will serve in the same way!" This episode clearly characterizes the government attitude at that time to the army, whose inadequate preparedness emerged during the Batken events. Perhaps, if the senior government officials had taken responsibility for the security of the country in 1996, it would not have been necessary later in 1999-2000 for the army to correct the artificially created by the Government "hardship and privation of military service." In fact, during the remaining three years the government did nothing to assist the armed forces. The situation only worsened in August 1999, when the army was seen by the country and the world incapable to repel even a few gangs of international terrorists.

The mistakes of the Government were then blamed on the leadership of the Ministry of Defence. The government had to take emergency measures and attract more resources to neutralize the terrorist threat, although this could have been done well in advance, as it normally happens in any civilized country in the presence of a real state policy and political will in the area of defence and security.

## **Batken events in 1999 – a test for the national security of Kyrgyzstan**

As already mentioned, the Batken events preceded the processes taking place in the countries of Central Asia – Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In the period 1997-1999, these countries accumulated preconditions and factors for military and political

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<sup>15</sup> Reference on the first issue of the meeting of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic December 17, 1996 "On measures for development of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthening the social and legal protection."

tension which exploded in the southern part of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1999-2000 with the invasion of gangs of international terrorist organizations and movements, coming from neighbouring countries, due to the unprotected Kyrgyz border and the insecurity in its southern region. To some extent, this confirmed the statement of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan dated 6 October 1999, which stated: "Our holy war is not directed against the Kyrgyz people ... Our goal is to overthrow Karimov regime."<sup>16</sup>

At this time, in the framework of the policy of national reconciliation, Tajikistan leadership took measures to disarm and oust IMU armed gangs from Tajikistan. The deadline was 1 July 1999, when IMU had to leave the temporary centres and other areas of residence.

In 1999, the work of government and military bodies of the KR was completely dependent on the prevailing situation as far as data from intelligence and special services allowed; therefore, advance planning of antiterrorist operations in the initial period was not necessary. Intelligence agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic did not realize that the events in Tajikistan would have possible consequences in the KR.

On May 25, 1999, in the town of Hoit, at a meeting with warlords of Karategin zone, IMU leader Tahir Yuldashev was given an "ultimatum" to withdraw all Uzbek armed militants from the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan. Paragraph 8 stated that the Uzbek people, located on the territory of temporary collection centres in Romit, Darband, Tavildara, Hoit, Djargital, Tadzhibokbad (Tajikistan) had to leave by 1 July 1999. According to item 10, Government Tajik forces were to execute the Decree of the Tajik President on disarmament in these regions until July 10, 1999.

This and some other information was presented by the Secretary of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic on July 2, 1999 in a memorandum to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the question of the situation in the Republic of Tajikistan in mid-June 1999." In addition, suggestions were made by the Secretary of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen the Chon-Alay, Batken, Lyaylyaksk regions, while at a meeting of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic in September 1999 it was proposed to review the situation.

Kyrgyz President gave guidance on the agreed measures under the Directive of the Commander-in-Chief of the Kyrgyz Armed Forces no. 3 of June 27, 1998 "On additional measures to fight terrorism and extremism."<sup>17</sup>

Thus, it can be summarized that certain decisions on the early prevention of negative developments in connection with the possible emergence of militants on the southern borders of the republic had been taken. However, specific measures were not taken, despite the fact that the "Plan of organizational and practical measures for the prevention and suppression of subversive and sabotage activities, and possible acts of sabotage" was approved with decision of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic no. 15 of March 12, 1998 on the basis of which Order MO no. 012 of March 18, 1998 was is-

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<sup>16</sup> Information received by fax to the agency "Kabar" having registration number 746.

<sup>17</sup> Directive of the Commander of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic no. 3 cc. from 27 June 1998.

sued and a Plan for cooperation with other law enforcement structures was elaborated. In general, the state authorities did not attempt any real measures to prevent the crisis.

Thus, as already stated, on July 23, 1999, IMU military formations penetrated into the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic Batken district and deployed in the upper Zhylu Suu – 20 militants, Korgon – 10 militants, Zhylu Suu – 21 fighters, Zardaly – 14.

On August 1, 1999, at 9 pm the Batken police department was visited by the chief of the village of Zardaly Tagaev Akmurza and the resident of Korgon Koshkeev Burkan, who reported that on July 31 at about 11 pm, 14 unknown persons of Tajik-Uzbek nationality, bearded, unshaven, dressed in military camouflage, armed with small arms, asked for food. Then they ordered 100 kg of wheat and four sheep. For this, they paid the amount of 100 US dollars. They asked to buy food for the remaining amount of money and promised to come and take it on 2 August. They behaved peacefully, without threats and violence against the locals, and then they left.

According to information received by the General Directorate of Military Intelligence of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic jointly with the police of Batken district, operational work was carried out on 2-3 August 1999 to confirm the presence of 21 armed fighters in a mosque in the village Zardaly led by warlord named Abdulaziz. They declared they had no claims to the locals but were awaiting reinforcement of 200 people and intended to go to Uzbekistan to fight against its government.

The operation on countering IMU in 1999 can be divided into three phases:

*First* – 4-9 August 1999, characterizing the initial unprofessional approach of the Operational Group to fulfilling tasks and combat operations.

*Second* – 10-23 August 1999, characterizing the beginning of understanding the seriousness of the current situation in the Batken region, change of leadership of the Operational Group, organization of planning, preparation and conduct of complex operations in the presence of hostages, as well as serious errors in the assessment of the situation.

*Interim* – 24-28 August 1999: second change of leadership of the Operational Group, assignment of a new commander, increase of forces and resources.

*Third* – 29 August – October 1999: uncoordinated aviation attacks on Kara Teyit, renaming the Operational Group into Combined Group of the power structures of the Kyrgyz Republic, appointment of the new Minister of Defence, confirmation of the status of the commander, assignment of a working body for grouping, planning, preparation and conduct of operations to the General Staff.

Here is a brief outline of the first phase of the operation, as its example clearly manifested significant shortcomings, and sometimes the unprofessional work of national security players – the security forces of the Republic.

On August 4, the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, Amengeldi Muraliev, conducted a meeting with the heads of the Defence Ministry, the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence to plan measures for the situation in the Batken region. In the course of discussions, it was decided to create an Operational (Task) Group from the Ministry of Defence, the National Security Ministry, and the Ministry of Interior with special forces. The Group included:

from the Ministry of National Security Major-General Valery Verchagin – head of the Group, from the Interior Ministry – Major-General K. Sadiev, and from the Ministry of Defence – Colonel M. Djumagulov with a group of officers. Thus, the Task Group became the coordinating body between law enforcement agencies in the Republic.

On August 5, the Task Group arrived in Batken and began to study the situation in the areas Caen and Zardaly. Division 26 OBON<sup>18</sup> and group of the Ministry of Interior were deployed in the area of Zardaly and Korgon for protection and defence of the region. The fighters were in the upper Zhylu Suu.

After taking defence positions southeast of Malyi Korgon, between 17.00-18.00 on August 5, a 4-member group of officers and civilians: Lieutenant Colonel Kurmanakun Matenov, Lieutenant Colonel Nurbek Kalkanbaev, akim of Batken district Abdrakhman Mamataliev, and the head of department from the National Security Ministry responsible for Batken district Bakaev decided to set a new frontier for defence and advanced deep into the gorge Archa-Bashi, where at a distance of 1.5-2 km were ambushed by militants and taken as hostages in the region of Lower Jets-Suu (11 km south-east of Zardaly). The militants seized the initiative and hampered the action of the Operational Group. The capture of this group was noticed by military group 1, 26 OBON which, without using weapons for safety reasons traced the militants up to their base in lower Jets-Suu.

After taking defensive positions south-east of Malyi Korgon, a group of four officers and civilians—LTC Kurmanukan Matenov, LTC Nurbek Kalkanbaev, the akim of Batken region Abdrakhman Mamataliev and the MNS department head for the Batken region Bakaev—decided to determine themselves a new, more advantageous defensive line and moved up the gorge Archa-Bashy where, at a distance of 1.5-2 km were ambushed by the militants, taken hostage, and moved to the region of lower Djety-Suu (11 km south-east of Zardaly). This allowed the militants to take the initiative and guarantee conditions for hindering the activity of the Operational Group. The capture of this group of officers and civilians was noticed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Group of 26 OBON which, in order not to endanger the captives, tracked them to the very base in lower Djety-Suu.

On the same day, at 15:00 the Task Group flew to Batken to report on the phone its proposals to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of the Security Council and the ministers of Defence, National Security and Internal Affairs. On their return to Zardaly, the Task Group heard of the captured officers and akim of Batken district, prepared a defensive plan and contacted parliamentarians to organize negotiations.

On August 6, a group of parliamentarians entered the area of militants to address the presence of militants on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic and the liberation of the hostages. The militants had very strict claims to the Operational Group: give them the opportunity to enter the Republic of Uzbekistan, and in the case of use of force by the Kyrgyz Republic, the hostages would be killed. The negotiations failed. Initially, only one person from the group of parliamentarians returned to Korgon, and then three more negotiators were released: the head of Batken Department of Homeland Security Ak-

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<sup>18</sup> OBON – separate special purpose battalion.

matov, the head of Isfana Ibraev, and the head of the police department of Batken Sultanov.

The Operational Group arrived in the town of Batken to report to the leadership and to meet with representatives of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

A company for special purposes of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Uzbekistan arrived in Batken.

The Task Group arrived in Isfara to hold negotiations with representatives of the Republic of Tajikistan and report to the Prime Minister Amangeldy Muraliyev. A Task Group from the Republic of Tajikistan started work in the Batken region.

Meanwhile, on August 6, 17 people arrived in Batken from 25 OOSN<sup>19</sup> and 10 persons from Special Forces teams “Kalkan” from the Ministry of National Security, who moved to the Korgon area, and those from 25 OOSN occupied upper Zhylu-Suu (1.5 km southwest of Shudman).

On August 7, a Task Force from the Ministry of Defence, led by Defence Minister Myrzakan Subanov, with group 25 OOSN, 2 AGS-17 arrived in Batken. Along with them came the Security Council Secretary, Esen Topoev, and the Ministers of National Security and Internal Affairs. They flew in Zardaly where they checked the work of the Operational Group, headed by General Verchagin.

On August 8, the Security Council Secretary worked with the ministers and representatives of the power structures of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

On August 9, a new group of 13 men was sent to conduct negotiations. They had a letter with a proposal from the Ministry of Defence: 50 thousand US dollars in exchange of hostages. But the militants kept as a hostage another man – the chief of department for Osh region in the Uzbek Ministry of National Security.<sup>20</sup> They put forward a new claim for 200 thousand US dollars, as well as products that had to be delivered by 13.00 on August 10. Otherwise hostages will be killed.

In a report to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Security Council Secretary reported the results of the Task Group work:

1. “At 12.00 on August 8, 1999, the head of Task Force had no single plan (idea) for the actions of law enforcement agencies to manage the situation, as of 7 August 1999, with a set of documents developed as an implementation of the Directive of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic no. 001.
2. The units from the Ministry of Defence, the National Security Ministry and the Interior Ministry did not receive any tasks to fulfil, therefore the hostage situation occurred, while the militants got hold of secret maps, information about the combat strength (number of personnel, weapons, and other means).
3. There was no interaction between the units from the Ministry of Defence, the National Security Ministry and the Ministry of Interior, including the units from the Ministry of Defence of Uzbekistan.

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<sup>19</sup> 25 OOSN – separate special purpose detachment.

<sup>20</sup> UMNБ – Department of the Ministry of National Security.

4. Command of units in the area Zardaly was not organized; there was no connection between the units placed at Zardaly and Batken. No command system was established along the chain: advanced control centre Zardaly – command post Batken – ministry – Government and Administration of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The order of reporting information was not clear.
5. All instructions and tasks assigned by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic were brought to Major-Generals Valeriy Verchagin and Kalmurat Sadiev and Colonel Dzumagulov.”<sup>21</sup>

In turn, the Secretary of the Security Council suggested that the forces and resources of the power ministries of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan be focused to prevent the withdrawal of armed groups from the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the most important period—the first stage of the operation—was accompanied by failures and lack of readiness of the power structures to act in a coordinated manner.

These serious deficiencies in the work of the state national security command and control system became visible in the following acts of the first Task Force of power structures established by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to counter the invading terrorists in July-August 1999:

1. The members of the Interagency Group were not authorized to make decisions. The task of the Operational Group was not clearly stated? Who took the key decisions on military operations? A fully equipped control centre was not set. The lack of organization of the Task Group resulted in the fact that, on the first day of their arrival in the villages Zardaly and Korgon, four members of the Operational Group were captured by insurgents, which allowed them to take control of the situation and to dictate their terms.

2. The lack of combat planning documents, such as decisions, orders and instructions, plans for combat and technical support, protection and defence of the command centre and other important objects, significantly reduced the effectiveness of the interagency Task Group. Officials from the security forces, united in the Operational Group by decree of the Prime Minister, were unified by the principle of unity of command: each commander acted in accordance with the normative and legal acts relative to the agency they represented.

3. There was no radio communication due to lack of the required number of communication links and professionally trained specialists, which impaired the efficiency of command and control.

4. The commanders and staff of the Operational Group, the special units of the Ministry of Defence, the National Security Ministry and the Interior Ministry were not ready morally and psychologically to fight armed groups.

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<sup>21</sup> A report by the Secretary of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic Esen Topoev to the President on the results of the inspection of the Operational Group led by General Valery Verchagin.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

5. Imperfection of the intelligence in law enforcement agencies, bad interaction with the intelligence agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the lack of operational and tactical intelligence, including in the military, the lack of reliable monitoring devices, especially for night vision, communications, radar and electronic intelligence, resulted in the fact that intelligence information was brought to the command 1-3 days later, it was wrong, unproven, controversial and sometimes false (each structure had its quantitative and qualitative intelligence data, totally different from the other).

6. Existing portable radio communications were mostly VHF radio, the use of which was impractical in the mountains, they were worn out and obsolete, their shape and weight were cumbersome in mountainous terrain, and generally did not contribute to the organization of stable and continuous control in the units. For these and other reasons, the Operational Group commanders did not receive a complete picture of the status of militants, which ultimately led to making the wrong decision on the allocation and withdrawal of troops during the first stage of the operation in 1999.

7. The lack of a legal framework, facilitating the creation of a single advance governing body for conflict prevention in peacetime on the principle of unity of command, combining public authorities in charge of national security, hampered the responsiveness to abrupt changes in the situation, made it difficult to organize a continuous interaction between the security forces and, in general, the performance of tasks.

A more detailed analysis of the armed forces in this period was presented in reference to the first question of the meeting of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on December 17, 1996 "On measures for development of the armed forces of the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthening the social and legal protection." The situation in the armed forces, described in the reference, remained unchanged until the beginning of the Batken events of 1999. In particular, the information reported as follows:

The Ministry of Defence has faced some misunderstanding by state authorities, local self-government and individual officials regarding their role to ensure the readiness of the state to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Kyrgyz Republic. ... This is due to the fact that until now public authorities were not in control of the work of subordinate ministries, committees and agencies concerning national defence, and commanders were not held liable for the violation (failure) of legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic and their duties related to defence.<sup>23</sup>

The lack of a unified and well-functioning system of interaction between national law enforcement structures had a negative effect on the public authorities' management in relation to the protection of territorial integrity and determined the course and results of anti-terrorist operations in 1999 and 2000, i.e. throughout the Batken campaign.

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<sup>23</sup> A reference to the first question of the meeting of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic December 17, 1996 "On Measures for Development of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthening social and legal protection."

## **The attacks of militants in 2000 – recurrence of the events from 1999**

It was obvious that the risk of recurrence of the Batken events in 1999 was very high since IMU members did not receive a crushing defeat from the troops of Kyrgyzstan, who suffered from the weak coordination between law enforcement agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic. In 1999, the rebels retreated mostly due to meteorological reasons: autumn came and it got cold. Thus, we can assume that the military operation was not completed. This was a time-out period for both sides.

In 2000, safety measures in the south of the country were organized taking into account the mistakes and lessons of 1999. The main task of the military and political leadership of the country was to ensure readiness of the armed forces to repel any possible re-invasion of IMU militants in the southern region of Kyrgyzstan.

To this end, in the winter of 2000, the Ministry of Defence was actively preparing the Southern group of troops for the upcoming fighting: in January, in the area of Aikol Lyailyak in Batken province, and in April, near the village Karamyk in Chon-Alay district of Osh region, tactical exercises were conducted, which were personally observed by President Askar Akayev. The units were reinforced with armoured vehicles and artillery, and an aviation group was created.

On June 26, 2000, Bishkek hosted an international seminar on national security of the Kyrgyz Republic, where the Security Council Secretary, Bolot Djanuzakov, stated the need for action by the government to ensure the protection of Kyrgyzstan from the threat of international terrorism. Seminar participants noted the rise of strategic political tension in Central Asia between state traditional and non-traditional missions and religious extremist organizations and movements; they discussed the need for a conceptual approach to the problems of security and neutralization of threats, measures to build the armed forces and conduct a military reform, allocation of financial and logistical means to ensure the security of the Kyrgyz Republic from real and potential military threats. Commander of the National Guard, General Abdygul Chotbaev, stressed the need to study the experience of military conflicts in Afghanistan and neighbouring Tajikistan.

In the period 15-22 March 2000, units from the Southern Division deployed in the mission areas. The strength of the Southern Division was 6,675 men: from the Ministry of Defence – 6,253, including 1,915 from the southern border detachments of the Main Directorate of Border Guard of the Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Southern Division included representatives from other ministries and departments of the Kyrgyz Republic.

However, as subsequent events showed, during the preparation for operations the military and political command structures and the armed forces commanders did not take into account the importance of factors that led to the combat losses in the first phase of the operation.

Insufficient preparation for “the war on terror” had serious consequences in the form of unjustified losses of personnel and disproportionate involvement of state resources to

repel the attack of militants. It turned out that government troops did not have enough time to prepare “to meet uninvited guests.” This was the justification for the errors and problems.

On June 22, 2000, the commander of the Southern Division, Assylbek Ormokoev, spoke about the shortcomings in personnel training. In his report to the Minister of Defence, he reported on the preparation of operations, the situation in government, communications and intelligence agencies. The following specific issues were discussed:

- battalion (division) commanders had poor knowledge of the field manuals and requirements for the preparation of documents;
- time for decision-making was not sufficient due to their weak preparation;
- insufficient staff culture when developing graphical and textual combat documents;
- lack of a unified system of warning signals and instructions;
- insufficient attention was paid to the security and secrecy of all events;
- interaction with law enforcement agencies remained weak;
- tactical level command was still a problem (especially at battalion, company-battery, platoon levels);
- unit and formation commanders did not react adequately to prepare their troops to march;
- most of the group, platoon, company and battery commanders were from the reserves, so their role in the training and education of subordinate personnel was lower, and their role was only to appoint their senior teams and groups;
- many commanders believed that soldiers on contract service were already prepared by experts in their field and they did not need to teach them the techniques and methods of warfare in mountainous and night conditions, taking into account the experience of last year’s campaign;
- the state of military discipline caused serious concern, and especially fatalities and personnel injuries;
- the personnel was not trained to act in the mountains;
- absence without permission was a serious problem;
- lack of a single approach to calculate remuneration and term of service.

Thus, in spite of the work carried out to optimize and redeploy forces and resources, in general, the level of combat readiness was not significantly increased.

As of 5 August 2000, 800 militants were concentrated in the area of Tavildara and at the same time in Tavildara arrived groups of militants of 10-15 men from Shaartuz and Vanches; the number of militants in Tajikistan border regions with the Kyrgyz Republic was determined between 600 and 800 people, including the following areas:

- Batken – up to 180 militants, including possible penetration of 80 militants through passes Touro and Tilba;

- Lyailyak – up to 250 militants;
- Chon-Alay – up to 100 militants.

On August 8, 2000, the Chief of the General Staff of the Republic of Tajikistan informed by phone the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic that in the area Samozhdon, Zarafshan Valley (at the border with KR) there was a group of IMU fighters (up to 38 men) with the intention of penetrating into Uzbekistan through KR. Penetration into the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic was only possible through the nearest pass Touro, located 5 km west of peak Pyramid (peak height 5,509 m).

In addition, operations were carried out in Tajikistan to localize and eliminate groups of IMU militants traveling to the north in the areas Komsomolbada (up to 80 militants with warlord Abdul Mulo) and in the area of the pass Pakshiv (up to 40 militants). Perhaps these groups pulled out of areas adjacent to the Tawil-Dare settlement (base camps of the former United Tajik Opposition).

This information was sent by cable to the Southern Division headquarters and reflected on the map (see “Information of the Chief of GS, AF Republic of the Tajikistan on the movement of a group of militants through Touro pass at 13.00 on 7.08.2000” in the appendix).

Starting on 8 August 2000, militants actively attacked Kyrgyz checkpoints and units and brutally treated soldiers who failed to resist. Four US mountain climbers were taken hostage, later they were released.

In the evening of August 16, Defence Minister Esen Topoev held a meeting with the leadership of the Defence Ministry and set the task: to carry out operations in the direction of Ak-Tube and along the Orto-Chashma river to destroy gangs coming towards Ak-Tubek, Ozgorush and Vorukh. Commanders were ordered to destroy the rebels in the vicinity, clear up the area and chase them out. Defence Minister demanded that staff officers carefully check the incoming information.

According to intelligence reports, a formation of more than 150 militants was located near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. Another 800 fighters were stationed in the area of Tavidara and Jirgital (Tajikistan). About 100 well-armed and trained men were waiting in Komsomolbad.

According to official reports, the situation on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border remained tense. Effective fighting at an altitude of 3,500-4000 meters is highly complex. The military units continued training for high-altitude combat.

According to the Central Asian media, the army of neighbouring Uzbekistan lost 12 soldiers. The armed forces of Uzbekistan continued operation to destroy militants invading Surkhandarya region, using helicopters and missile attacks on places where militants had gathered.

The second invasion of militants was significantly larger than the first one in 1999, and the territory of aggression had already spread in three states – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

On August 20, a summit on the security issues in Central Asia was held in Bishkek. It was attended by the presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Russia was represented by Russia's Security Council Secretary, Sergei Ivanov. Discussions of the heads of states of Central Asia finished at 21:00 local time. The presidents were shown a unique video of a gang defeated by the Kyrgyz forces, indicating the infiltration of armed terrorists in Kyrgyzstan from Tajik territory. The presidents made an agreement on closer cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, religious extremism and organized crime. They also appealed to Russia with a request to join the Tashkent Agreement on joint struggle against terrorists and criminals. In addition, a decision was made to turn to the UN Security Council.

On September 26, 2000, Uzbek President Islam Karimov arrived on a two-day visit to Bishkek. The main purpose of his visit was to discuss fighting the IMU militants. The two parties diplomatically remained silent about the incident during the Batken military campaign of 1999 when the village of Kara-Teit was bombed by mistake by Uzbek Air Force.<sup>24</sup> Presidents of the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on military cooperation between the two countries against international terrorism. President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, made a speech in front of Kyrgyz government TV channels. He said: "I want to express my great satisfaction with the fact that today the Kyrgyz army is fighting back various attacks of international extremists who are a risk to all residents of the region."

At the beginning of October 2000, militants started to leave the territory of Kyrgyzstan, suffering heavy losses (for details see info in appendix).

On October 4, 2000, Commander Major General Assylbek Ormokoiev informed local media that in the near future the Southern Division headquarters will begin a planned withdrawal of the special purpose battalions and will move them to their places of permanent deployment. At the same time, border checkpoints were strengthened for the coming severe winter: construction of warm barracks, equipment, food, warm clothing and ammunition. It was decided to move some ministries to the southern capital of Kyrgyzstan, in particular the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and to set up offices of the Ministry of Defence.

On October 7, 2000, the situation in the south of the country was under the full control of the Southern Division. Most of the passes were completely closed by the snow. The units started their normal duties. Planned redeployment of forces started. According to information from the Kyrgyz Security Council, more than 120 rebels were killed and about 200 were wounded during the Batken events the same year. Many caches of weapons, abandoned during the retreat, were discovered. "The acts of the government troops in the Batken campaign this year demonstrated the highest level of combat training of our soldiers," – declared Security Council Secretary Bolot Djanuzakov at a meeting with journalists.

On October 11, 2000, the regular session of the CSTO took place in Bishkek; it was attended by the heads of most States Parties to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The proposal of the President of Kyrgyzstan to hold the Bishkek session on military and political stability in Central Asia was discussed in the first days of Octo-

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<sup>24</sup> See App. Information about the coordination between the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan.

ber 2000 in Moscow, at a meeting of the Committee of Security Council Secretaries of the States Parties. This meeting, initiated by the Russian Security Council Secretary, Sergei Ivanov, recorded the decision of CSTO members to oppose any manifestation of extremism, terrorism and separatism, as well as to provide immediate assistance in the military-political sphere to states subject to aggression. As mentioned in the statement of the six Presidents of the Eurasian Economic Community at the end of the session of the Collective Security Council, any attempts to violate the territorial integrity of the Central Asian States Parties to the Treaty “will be strongly suppressed by our joint efforts.”<sup>25</sup>

It should be noted that the CSTO, established in 1992 as a military-political alliance, has never participated in combat operations. However, over the decade following the Batken events, CSTO has regularly conducted exercises with Collective Rapid Reaction Forces (RRF) in the State Parties, including operations to eliminate terrorist threats. Thus, from 19 to 25 September 2013, Belarus hosted an exercise with military contingents of the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces of the CSTO, “Interaction-2013.” It was attended by task forces and troops from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, a total of 600 people, about 60 pieces of equipment and 15 aircraft and helicopters, including transport IL-76, fighters Su-25 and combat helicopters MI-24.

CSTO is associated with high expectations in Kyrgyzstan – in case of a threat of repetition of the Batken events CSTO will use the capabilities of RRF and ensure security.

## **Lessons learned and conclusions after the Batken events**

1. The Kyrgyz national security system was not prepared for immediate reaction and repulsion of the terrorist aggression.

Prior to the Batken events, relevant state bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic were not able fully, timely and adequately to assess the nature, level and scope of danger and threats posed by international gangs and work out proposals for the country leadership to take the necessary measures to prevent and neutralize them. Therefore, measures to counter the acts of terrorism were taken by the Armed Forces’ military and political command at the immediate threat of invasion; however, they were late and insufficient to safeguard the country’s south.

The state military policy and strategic management of national security of Kyrgyzstan shall be based on a permanent mechanism for objective study and analysis, assessment and prediction of the development of military-political situation in the Central Asian region, the development and adoption of timely and appropriate measures of force development and military reforms.

2. A joint response system to combat terrorism was not created, and the structures in charge of security had no practical experience in its organization.

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<sup>25</sup> Official site of the CSTO, <http://www.odkb-csto.org>.

Kyrgyz state management and power agencies did not organize the practical and systematic coordination of all structures and elements of national security on the same algorithm of actions, agreed plans and documents in a single command centre using a unified state system of communication and connectivity and information sharing. Defence minister Esen Topoyev reported to the members of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic: "One of the major issues is the lack of interoperability and coordinated command of the formations and units of the security forces in joint operations."<sup>26</sup>

In the interest of rapid response, interaction and combat missions deputy commanders for national security, internal affairs, emergency, transport and communications were appointed, in accordance with the organizational structure of South Division. "The lack of such positions imposes additional burden on the organization of the operation, teamwork, and effective completion of tasks to ensure a successful outcome of joint operations."<sup>27</sup>

Military command and control system should eliminate departmental selfishness, subjectivism and voluntarist approaches in planning and implementing measures to provide military security, ill-conceived "reformism," corruption, imitation of vigorous work of officials from the security forces, and ensure the effective use of public funds and resources, real and qualitative assessment of work, incentives and motivation of military service.

The management system should be based on an efficient, sustainable and constantly evolving technical and logistical infrastructure and make full use of modern scientific and technological advances and information technology. Its development requires relevant research and public support of independent analytical centres conducting research in the interests of the Armed Forces under government orders.

Armed forces and other military formations shall be commanded by a single public authority of the state and military leadership and make full use of the state funds and resources. These considerations dictated the decision of President Almazbek Atambayev on the formation of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic. In the context of Kyrgyzstan and due to the lack of public funds, this is the most optimal scheme of military command and control. This required the development of an appropriate legal framework, well-prepared and implemented military reform of the state.

The creation of a regulated management system based on a strict one-man management will allow not only in the military, but also in any other emergency/crisis situations, the timely use of complex necessary forces from security and other agencies to address urgent national tasks: information, finance, material and human resources, aviation, engineering, communications, unique equipment, weapons, ammunition, etc.

3. The lack of an adequate system of protection and defence of the state borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan created conditions for easy invasion of militants in the

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<sup>26</sup> Esen Topoev, Defence Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. Report on the implementation of the plan to repel the invasion of international gangs in Batken and Osh regions in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

southern territory of the country. Border security requires active military and political relations with neighbouring countries in order to reduce and overcome the existing contradictions, to provide coordination and integration of efforts and resources against common threats to the region.

On the other hand, the experience from the Batken events of 1999 and 2000 showed that it was not necessary to rely on military aid from neighbouring countries and partners in the system of collective security (CST, today CSTO). The mechanism of collective security in terms of declaration and legal procedures for making decisions on joint military operations and the participation of national armed forces beyond the partner countries may not work. Kyrgyzstan must be ready to meet the challenges of armed gangs and counter international terrorism gangs.

4. Armed forces and other military units were not prepared for specific military operations against the armed gangs of international terrorists. The nature and focus of training of military command and troops did not meet the requirements of anti-terrorist struggle. Training of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic was carried out according to the classical scheme: preparation for war against regular troops of a possible adversary. The leadership of law enforcement agencies and the command and staff of regular units were not aware of the tactics of armed gangs and were not psychologically prepared for combat operations against militants in the initial period of operation in 1999 and 2000, which led to the unjustified irreversible loss of lives and taking hostages from among senior soldiers and civilians.

Particular attention had to be paid to the moral and psychological support of armed forces, social protection and social security to combatants, killed soldiers, their families and those who lost the ability to work as a result of combat injuries and diseases, received in the performance of military duties.

5. Insufficient funding of the armed forces resulted in lack of special weapons, modern small-size intelligence and communications equipment, night vision devices and equipment to ensure high level of effectiveness of combat operations against gangs of international terrorists. Material resources were not provided in the required amount. Therefore, it was necessary to turn to the international community and partner countries with a request for military and technical assistance and become dependent on foreign donors.

6. The underdeveloped social and economic infrastructure of the southern region of Kyrgyzstan, including roads and telecommunications, had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the armed forces with regard to elimination and destruction of foreign armed groups.

7. To counter terrorism, the country needs special professionally trained and equipped anti-terrorist structures and forces. Special anti-terrorist structures of the Kyrgyz Republic were not sufficiently developed prior to the Batken events (anti-terrorist unit "Kalkan" in the Ministry of National Security was disbanded), were still inexperienced and could not oppose the gangs.

8. Weaknesses and problems of providing support to operations. The effect of insufficient supplies in the Southern Division on the preparation and conduct of operations is evident from the report of the Minister of Defence to the Council of Defence: "In order to provide information support to operations, the Ministry of Defence has established a press centre in the Southern Division that in general is coping with its tasks. National, regional and foreign media receive timely information about the situation and progress of operations."<sup>28</sup>

The report also stated that the analysis of the work of the public administration and the national media of the Kyrgyz Republic showed that these institutions were not effective in creating a positive public attitude in the countries in CIS, Central Asia and the Kyrgyz Republic concerning the acts of the Southern Division of the Armed Forces, neutralizing the influence of negative information by international terrorist centres, providing assistance to troops by local populations, creating favourable conditions for fulfilling the tasks assigned to the Southern Division.

The main reason was the lack of a single government body to coordinate the objectives, tasks and deadlines of the information and propaganda measures implemented in the Kyrgyz Republic and abroad with the assistance of media, following a carefully crafted scenario.

Thus, in the course of the operation against gangs in August 2000, there was a sharp increase of the number of media publications and speeches by politicians who demanded a struggle without losses, trying to turn soldiers' death into a scandalous sensation. Some Russian and Western media imposed the idea of the inability of the Kyrgyz army to ensure the security of its southern borders and confront militants. Due to underdeveloped telecommunications infrastructure, national radio and television signals were not received in the area of operations.

To ensure the security of the south of the republic, it was imperative to provide adequate and timely funding to operations until the complete destruction of gangs.

According to the plan, in 2000 the Ministry of Defence was to receive 705 441 500 Som, but in fact they got 520 038 000 Som (underfunded by 185 402 600 Som).

In accordance with the plan approved by the Chairman of the Defence Council – the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, in 2000 the Ministry of Defence needed for preparation of operations in the south the amount of 145 429 600 Som. As of September 1, 2000, the amount allocated was 115 421 700 Som. Underfunded amount was 30 700 900 Som.

In general, it should be noted that certain elements of early warning before the Batken events existed. However:

- operational information was insufficient. The Task Group in the Batken military campaign in 1999 had no information about how far militants could go;

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<sup>28</sup> Esen Topoev, Report on the implementation of the plan to repel the invasion of international gangs in Batken and Osh regions in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2000.

- awareness of the situation was also insufficient, otherwise the danger of the situation would not have been underestimated to result in taking hostages;
- responsibilities (duties) of the central and local government, in principle, were not clearly delineated (local authorities were guided by a simple principle: listen and follow the guidance of representatives of the central authorities);
- there were no clear guidelines in the decision-making process as to how to approach violations of the state border, no restrictions were set. Major decisions were recorded, but these related only to general, non-specific measures. It was in the second military campaign when extremely understandable commands were given, for example: to destroy insurgents totally;
- logistic solutions to the problems associated with the Batken events, as noted above, were also subject to criticism. Mechanisms for mobilizing additional resources need further improvement.

Finally, government authorities in Central Asian countries must also learn from Batken events: only when nations are united in the face of the threat of extremism and terrorism, it is possible to minimize danger. In 1999-2000, interaction was uncoordinated, or it existed only in a declarative form.

## Conclusion

Fifteen years have passed since the Batken events. During this time, the format and nature of cooperation in Central Asia changed significantly. Intergovernmental relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan seriously deteriorated. Deterioration of the relations between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to some extent was the result of unsolved problems of demarcation and delimitation of state borders, systematic cross-border conflicts with casualties numbering several dozens. In addition, there were differences related to the supply of gas from Uzbekistan to southern Kyrgyzstan, which were completely terminated in the spring of 2014. If in 1999 the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov arrived in Bishkek to attend a meeting to discuss issues of combating IMU, today it is impossible to imagine Islam Karimov visiting Kyrgyzstan.

The so-called Osh events of 2010—inter-ethnic slaughter between Kyrgyz and Uzbek, in which several thousand people suffered—had a particular effect on the geopolitical situation in the region. As a result, hundreds of young ethnic Uzbek—citizens of Kyrgyzstan—were attracted by radical islamists, moved to insurgents' training bases in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and are ready to move back to the Ferghana Valley to fight against secular regimes in the states of Central Asia. The likelihood of recurrence of the Batken events is significant. On June 9, 2014, IMU fighters organised a terrorist act in the Jinnah airport in Karachi, Pakistan, thus sending a clear reminder of themselves.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan: revival of the threat – DW, available at <http://korrespondent.net/world/3378530-yslamskoe-dvyzhenye-uzbekystana-vozhrozhdenye-uhrozy-DW> (15 June 2014).

In the opinion of Günter Knabe—German expert on Central Asia and Pakistan—the attack on such a large international airport as Jinnah is an alarming signal not only to Islamabad, but also to the republics of Central Asia; first and foremost, to the powers in Tashkent, who consider IMU as their “sworn enemy.” IMU, as stated by Knabe, demonstrated their readiness to conduct operations in the space from Karachi to the northern provinces of Afghanistan and, possibly, further on the territories of the Central Asian republics. “IMU sent a signal that it is ready to fight for a significant role in the political and military future of the region, that will be re-shaped after NATO’s withdrawal from Afghanistan,” – stated Günter Knabe in an interview to the German information agency Deutsche Welle (DW). In the assessment of various experts, for example the expert from the Russian Centre for the Study of Contemporary Afghanistan Andrey Serenko, “in the past two decades IMU succeeded in recovering its status in the hierarchy of the “Terrorist International.” Traditionally, the personnel strength of IMU is estimated at 10-12 thousand fighters. Many have experience of fighting in Syria.”<sup>30</sup>

Assessing resource allocation to the military security of Kyrgyzstan and the level of readiness, one could accept the fairly direct statements in a key conceptual document – the National strategy for sustainable development of the Kyrgyz Republic in the period 2013-2017: “So far Kyrgyzstan has not been able to achieve significant results in defence development. As of today, practically all components of the defence system are in an unsatisfactory condition. The command and defence support systems need to be reviewed, and radical measures need to be undertaken.”<sup>31</sup>

However, now work to strengthen the defence is already underway. It is appropriate here to recall the recent decisions of the Supreme Commander – Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev, aimed at optimizing the management and coordination of the armed forces and other special units of the security forces of Kyrgyzstan – the establishment of the General Staff. The National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Kyrgyzstan for 2013-2017 pointed out the need to form a Unified command and control centre of the Armed Forces of the country, which will be entrusted with the following tasks:

- professionalization of the army to the required level. As a result, we need to get the optimal combination of contract and draft recruitment;
- strengthen territorial defence forces, including through the establishment of an effective system of military mobilization and reserve. They should in fact be an effective means of ensuring military security of the country, as more fully conforming to the principles of self-defence. Similar measures need to be undertaken in the field of civil protection.

The Unified centre for armed forces command and control was established in February 2014 – the General Staff. Time will tell how effective the initiative of the President of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2013-2017. Approved by Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 21 January 2013 UP no. 11.

the Kyrgyz Republic will be. It is also clear that the establishment of the General Staff was facilitated by the lessons from Batken events.

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## Appendices

### *General information about the Batken events 1999-2000*

#### 1. Hostilities started:

- in 1999 – 5 August;
- in 2000 – 11 August.

#### 2. Losses:

##### *a) irreversible:*

- in 1999 – 20 men, out of them Ministry of Defence KR – 15 (officers – 4; ensign – 1; soldier, sergeants – 10), Ministry of Interior – 3, civilians – 2;
- in 2000 – 31 men, out of them Ministry of Defence KR - 29 (officers – 7; soldiers, sergeants – 21, missing without any information – 1), Ministry of Interior – 2.

##### *b) sanitary:*

- in 1999 – 43 men (combat – 33, non-combat – 10);
- in 2000 – 39 men (combat – 18, non-combat – 21).

#### 3. Losses by gangs of international terrorists:

- in 1999 – officially not stated;
- in 2000 – 64 destroyed, 2 captured.

#### 4. Hostages:

- in 1999 – 9 men, out of them from KR – 5, from Japan – 4;
- in 2000 – 16, out of them from Russian Federation – 3, from Uzbekistan – 2, from FRG – 6, from Ukraine – 1.

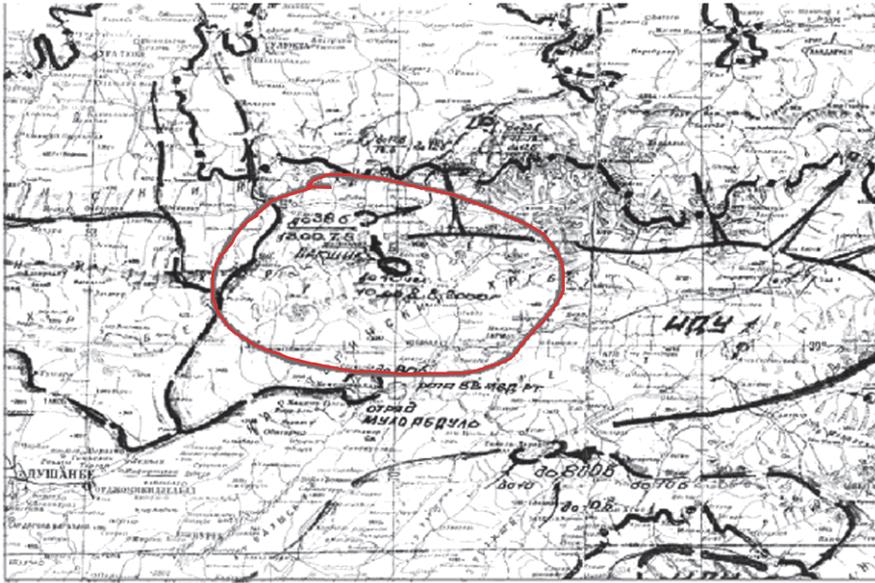
#### 5. Awarded:

- in 1999 – 264, out of them with order “Manas 3rd degree” – 29, medal “Erdik” – 118, Certificate of Merit of the President of KR – 117;
- in 2000 – 181, out of them with order “Manas 2nd degree” – 2, “Manas 3rd degree” – 22, medal “Erdik” – 95, medal “DANK” – 13, Certificate of Merit of the President of KR – 46;
- in 2001 – 5, out of them with Certificate of Merit of the President of KR – 5.

In the period 1999-2001, a total of 447 persons were awarded.







Information of the Chief of General Staff of the Republic of Tajikistan on the movement of militant groups through Touro pass at 13.00 on August 7, 2000.

# Chapter 2

## Religious Extremism and the Example of the Nookat Events in 2008

Ikbalzhan Mirsayitov

### Summary

Following the well-known Nookat events that occurred on October 1, 2008 and the acts of the official authorities (State Commission for Religious Affairs, Ministry of Interior, National Security Committee) performed after the incident, the activity of the illegal extremist party Hizb ut-Tahrir<sup>1</sup> significantly declined. On October 1, 2008, in the town of Nookat, Nookat district of Osh region, mass disorders of the local population erupted against the ban by local authorities of public celebration of the Muslim holiday Kurban Ait. Offended Nookat residents (mostly women and young men) came to the district administration for a clarification. After some of the activists were arrested by police officers, they began throwing stones at the administration building and beating officers. The massive clash between the local population of Nookat<sup>2</sup> and the local state administration was the starting point for encouraging law enforcement bodies to take precaution against Hizb ut-Tahrir across the country.<sup>3</sup>

The hard actions of law enforcement bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) against the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir gave results. According to the deputy chief of the Osh region-

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<sup>1</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (Islamic Party of Liberation) was established in Jerusalem by Sharia court judge Takyuddin Nabhani in 1956. Subsequently, the ideas and programme of the party began to spread in post-Soviet territories. Most Muslim countries do not recognize the Hizb ut-Tahrir, considering it being divisive and harmful for Islam. By Decision of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic from August 20, 2003, Hizb ut-Tahrir was declared an extremist organization and its activities were prohibited in the country.

<sup>2</sup> Nookat is located in the north-eastern part of Osh region, 43 km south-west of the regional centre of Osh. The nearest railway station is located in the city of Osh at a distance of 46 km from the town. The distance to the nearest airport, which is also located in the city of Osh, is 48 km. Highway Osh – Batken – Isfana passes through the city.

<sup>3</sup> Lists of members of Hizb ut-Tahrir were compiled on 4 pages. See “Report on human rights monitoring,” written by the Commission in connection with the events in Nookat on October 1, 2008 (the report was written on February 24, 2009, by the Commission for monitoring Nookat events under the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic).

al police Shakir Zulimov, "... the reaction of the police in the riots made some party members quit. They publicly declared their withdrawal from Hizb ut-Tahrir. In Nookat region, 18 members gave up their membership from Hizb ut-Tahrir, and in Karasu region – 11. About 50 men from Jalal-Abad region also announced this in public, he said. – Thus, our tough actions are justified and have already given the first results; supporters of the party will no longer appear in public, as they did before."<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that initially the ideology and programme of Hizb ut-Tahrir were spread among ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, and leaflets contained messages against the policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In 1998-2007, the illegal organization actively pursued its goals among the local population: carried out propaganda in favour of their candidates for the parliament, local councils; engaged in polemics with the official Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan on various issues of the Islamic faith and claimed its right position. The organization also tried to change the imams and to discredit the current religious leaders, and actively spread their ideas among young people (leaflets, books, CDs).

After the Nookat events and the implementation of strict measures by police, the leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir<sup>5</sup> went deep underground, their activity decreased, most members of the illegal party went abroad.

However, instead of accusing Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders, who initiated Nookat events on October 1, 2008, ordinary believers were charged. Hizb ut-Tahrir leadership admitted later that only one member of Hizb ut-Tahrir went to court.<sup>6</sup> A total of 32 people were convicted, including two women and two minors.

First, an interagency plan to combat extremism and terrorism was worked out jointly with the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan. The population started work to combat (prevention and suppression) the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir at local level.

Law enforcement agencies in cooperation with local authorities for the first time made a general list of members of Hizb ut-Tahrir with specific data about the leaders, strength and hierarchy of the illegal organization.<sup>7</sup>

But at the same time, not all law enforcement officials and local authorities could identify members of Hizb ut-Tahrir.<sup>8</sup> Very often those who wore a beard or had some knowledge about Islam were called "hizbutchik" or "Wahhabi." In the years following the events of Nookat, the studies of the extremist party activities, the analysis of its structure

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<sup>4</sup> Venera Sultanova and Ruzadorova Dilbar, IWPR Online RCA no. 572, 8 April 2009, available at [http://stopdictatorkarimov.com/Citadel\\_zhestokosti.htm](http://stopdictatorkarimov.com/Citadel_zhestokosti.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir does not seek to become a legal party. On the one hand, the KR Constitution prohibits the establishment of political parties based on religion, but on the other – with the legalization of the party it loses its opposition character as an instrument of pressure.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Vitaly Ponomarev, *Kyrgyzstan: human rights violations in connection with the case of "Nookat events,"* <http://prava.kloop.kg/files>.

<sup>8</sup> Report on human rights monitoring, carried out by the Commission in connection with the events in Nookat on October 1, 2008. (Report prepared on 24 February 2009 by the Commission for monitoring the Nookat events under the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic), p. 15.

and opportunities both in-country and abroad encouraged law enforcement agencies to change the tactics of work concerning the illegal party. Preventive work was carried out among the population and among the clergy of the country jointly with the State Commission for Religious Affairs.

Repression and punitive measures led to the fact that whole groups of Hizb ut-Tahrir followers were sent to prison and began recruiting other prisoners. Conviction and imprisonment had temporary positive effect on reducing the activity of Hizb ut-Tahrir, but forced the party leadership to go underground, leave their residence and start searching for allies among other Muslim jaamats throughout Central Asia.

The Nookat events of 2008 and their consequences displayed the problem of extremism from another perspective. To start a debate or discussion with Hizb ut-Tahrir members was useless, but to detain them along with other prisoners was not advisable, because their ideas spread fast in prison. At the moment, the law enforcement agencies and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan need to develop a program of ideological opposition to the ideas of religious extremism.

State authorities, represented by the State Commission for Religious Affairs and 10<sup>th</sup> Main Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, along with local government departments did not have early warning indicators of crisis. Government authorities dealt with the consequences of the crisis, but not with the reasons.

Public authorities had enough timely information on possible protests of Nookat residents. Information was collected from all possible sources: Ministry of Internal Affairs, local government, the State Commission for Religious Affairs, independent experts. Data processing and analysis of operational information were completed, but under the guise of combating religious extremism ordinary believers who were not related to Hizb ut-Tahrir were accused.

State authorities and the local population were informed of the celebration of the festival Orozo Ait: the local administration received a notice from the organizers of the event and took steps to make the people celebrate at home and not go outside. But no one knew of the impending confrontation, and nobody expected that the confrontation would grow into an open clash between the population and the local government.<sup>9</sup>

Immediately after the collision in front of the regional administration, an operational staff was set up. An interagency investigation team was also formed. Each of the law enforcement agencies (Ministry of Interior and State Committee on National Security) performed its functions. The operation was led by the Osh region governor Aaly Karashev, and supervised by the Security Council Secretary Adahan Madumarov.

Right after the open clash, law enforcement agencies and local authorities organized an additional contingent of militia in Nookat. The leadership of Osh region mobilized all police departments (Patrol Service, Special Forces, Mol departments), operative groups from SCNS and the Prosecutor's Office in Osh district. However, additional forces, both human and state reserve stocks, were not involved.

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<sup>9</sup> The national security system has certain anti-crisis plans and activities ("interception," "Siren"), but it all depends on the initiative of the central authorities and institution management.

The protesters were treated with batons and tear gas. They were dispersed; later those who had been identified on the video footage during the riots, and those on the lists of the Ministry of Interior, were arrested and charged.

The government of Osh region and the law enforcement agencies involved experts, village elders, respected imams, but all they were organized only after the events of October 1. Force methods used by the Ministry of Interior and trial processes caused the negative reaction of international organizations, local NGOs and the population.

It was decided to change the leadership of the Nookat district, since they had not made any attempts to prevent possible ethnic clashes. However, according to human rights activists, "none of the interviewed representatives of the local authorities knew who coordinated the actions of the security forces and ordered to disperse the crowd near the district administration, except for Nookat District Attorney who said that such orders were only issued by the militia."<sup>10</sup> Public authorities tried to show and present to the world that Nookat events of 2008 were a provocation by the illegal extremist party Hizb ut-Tahrir. The version of the state authorities and the security forces was spread by many news agencies in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and China.<sup>11</sup>

The information sources before and after the Nookat events were divided into two camps. State television and radio channels and Internet portals showed Nookat as "mass disorders" and an attempt to incite religious hatred, violent change of the constitutional order. Independent and human rights Internet sites and channels showed violations of human rights during arrests, prosecution and trials. Prior to the Nookat events, none of the media provided information about the upcoming events because no one had been warned in advance: provocation and clashes took place on the festive day.

According to human rights organizations and the Office of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, all the actions of law enforcement agencies were of punitive repressive nature. The arrested were tortured for information.<sup>12</sup>

Detainees were not aware of human rights protection norms. Neither the government, nor the law enforcement agencies exerted effective monitoring and supervision on lawfulness.

On April 26, 2010, due to the efforts of human rights activists and international experts, 32 people from the "Nookat case" were amnestied.

## **Summary of the crisis situation**

The Nookat events of 2008 were unexpected for many people in the region. Muslim holidays Orozo-Ait and Kurban-Ait are state holidays and people celebrate them every-

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<sup>10</sup> A brief report of the Commission under the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, Public Information Centre, <http://newcpi.wmtest.ru/2009/03/03/2560>, p. 11. This report is on the official website of the Ombudsman's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic.

<sup>11</sup> "Barrier to extremism," *Echo of Osh* no. 43 (152830), 11 June 2011, available at <http://kp.kazpravda.kz/c/1274128991>.

<sup>12</sup> A brief report of the Commission under the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, Public Information Centre, available at <http://newcpi.wmtest.ru/2009/03/03/2560>, p. 12.

where. If from 1991 till 2000 these were limited to holidays at home, since 2001 the celebration has become widespread and of public nature.

The role of Hizb ut-Tahrir in preparation of these holidays is described in their publications and videos (2000-2006).<sup>13</sup> According to their publication "Entry into society"<sup>14</sup> in order to convince the population of their rightness (Hizb ut-Tahrir), you must either "open the doors to society" or "force" them to open the door.

On September 25, 2008, a group of residents of Nookat district of Osh region appealed to the district administration with a request to hold outdoor events in Nookat on the occasion of the Muslim holiday Orozo-Ait.<sup>15</sup> There was going to be free food (pilaf) for the participants and a free lottery. It should be noted that the costs of the event were always taken by the organizers.<sup>16</sup>

Starting from 2003-2004, such events were held annually in the central town park with the involvement of local officials. The group that submitted the request included about 30 people (including 25 women). The appeal was signed by 1 300 residents from Nookat and adjacent villages.

Akim (head) of the district administration, Abdygany Aliyev, summoned the leaders of the local police and the National Security Committee, and asked them to dissuade the group members from celebrating. Aliyev, in particular, told the organizers that in Kyrgyzstan religion was separated from the state, and therefore "if you want, celebrate at home," while the chief of the police department offered to hand out pilaf and lottery prizes to the disabled. Upon hearing the words that "people want to celebrate the holiday," Aliyev replied: "Those who signed are not the people."<sup>17</sup> It is obvious that this meeting was attended by the organizers of the upcoming event.

The reasons why in 2008 local authorities tried to prevent the celebration of Orozo-Ait in Nookat were driven by political considerations. In 2000, Hizb ut-Tahrir started actively celebrating these holidays. One of the most powerful and branched cells of the illegal organization was located in Nookat. Hizb ut-Tahrir activists became a parallel structure to the official clergy, and the popularity of extremist party grew among the population. They openly criticized the actions of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan regarding the beginning and end of the holy period. It is known that the Muslim calendar corresponds to the lunar calendar and, according to it, the start and end of holidays in Kyrgyzstan do not coincide with the dates in the central Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt). The difference is one day. It is this day that is the subject of

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<sup>13</sup> The author of this article has a number of publications on the activities of the banned party and therefore has seen and studied their video and audio released earlier in 2000-2008 years.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Orozo Ait (Yid al-Fitr) – A holiday which marks the completion of fasting in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

<sup>16</sup> According to an interview with an employee of the Ministry of Interior, the costs of the event were covered by the treasury of Hizb ut-Tahrir, whose members contribute monthly into this treasury.

<sup>17</sup> See: Report "Memorial" at <http://prava.kloop.kg/>.

fierce criticism on behalf of Hizb ut-Tahrir to the Muftiat. In the period 2000-2008, special leaflets were regularly distributed among the population:

The beginning and the end of the month are defined neither by the mufti, nor by the state leader. The beginning of the month is determined by natural phenomena. If the mufti and the head of state do not take into account the beginning of the month, and do not obey the Sharia law, they cannot be trusted and obeyed. In this case, every Muslim must make the mufti and the head of state observe Sharia canons. If they do not obey the Sharia canons, they must be removed and replaced by those who will abide by the rules. Those Muslims who believe that each person is responsible to God for their sins they are sadly mistaken. In this case, everyone who agrees with the Mufti and the head of state is sinful too. During Orozo-Ait, Salat should be practiced by the heads of state and Mufti together with the people. If they do not want to pray, then others must do it.<sup>18</sup>

In recent years, the police have tried to prevent celebrations in some places, claiming that members of the banned Islamic party "Hizb ut-Tahrir" often play an active role in their organization. However, since the events were attended also by ordinary worshippers, according to human rights activists the authorities violated their civil liberties.<sup>19</sup>

The attempts of law enforcement agencies to stop such events in previous years (2006-2007) failed. For example, in 2007, the police tried to remove cauldrons for cooking pilaf but, faced with the indignation of scores of participants in the festival, were forced to permit the street celebration.<sup>20</sup>

The actions of Nookat district state administration were not systemic and anticrisis in nature. On the one hand, the head of the Nookat district promised "to discuss the issue with local activists" and provide an answer later, but on September 27, 2008 the members of the initiative group were informed that since there was not going to be an official celebration of Orozo-Ait in the area they should contact the local authorities. On the other hand, on the same day Nookat town authorities passed a resolution prohibiting the celebration of the holiday in the central park.<sup>21</sup> After a second request by the initiators of celebration, the head of the district stated that the celebration is allowed on the stadium outside the town (a few hundred meters from Nookat centre), located on the territory of "Gulistan." The initiative group members were informed about the decision by word of mouth.<sup>22</sup>

Later, during the trial, Abdygany Aliyev said: "Having had negotiations with relevant officials, I made the decision to permit the celebration of the Day of Elderly People in the town park, and the initiative group will be authorized to celebrate on the stadium." On

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<sup>18</sup> Similar leaflets were distributed because followers of Hizb ut-Tahrir wanted to read namaz on a festive day together with other Muslims from the Arab world, but it was not planned by Muftiat.

<sup>19</sup> Article 13 of the Kyrgyz Constitution guarantees equality of all people before the law, "no one shall be subjected to discrimination or violation of rights and freedoms based on ... religion, political or religious beliefs, or any other circumstances of personal or social nature."

<sup>20</sup> See: Report "Memorial" at <http://prava.kloop.kg/files>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

September 29, 2008, the authorities “summoned all imams” from the district and informed them of the decision. Contrary to the instructions given by the head of the district, his deputy Zaidzhan Abidjan advised the initiative group to insist on their request. Perhaps it was his position as deputy head that signalled action on the part of the attendees.

On October 7, 2008, Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev dismissed the head of the Nookat district Abdygany Aliyev “in connection with his transfer to another job,” as well as his first deputy Zaidzhana Abidjanova. Thus, the state leadership indirectly took responsibility for the incident in the local administration.

## **Chronology of events**

On October 1, 2008, following the Ait Salat prayer at the stadium “Gulistan” about 500 people gathered for the festive events in the town of Nookat, Nookat district. Most participants were adolescents, young people and women with children.

After the Ait prayer, at about 09.30 a.m., people started to get together on the square near the local administration building of Nookat district. They expressed their discontent with the authorities of the Nookat district concerning the ban<sup>23</sup> of celebrations on the occasion of “Orozo-Ait” in the theme park with cooking and dispensing food.

The crowd of 100-150 people organized a spontaneous rally and insisted that the Akim give arguments for the ban on their celebration. Most of the audience consisted of adolescents and young people aged 12 – 20 who shouted the phrase “Allah Akbar” after each speaker. “Hizb ut-Tahrir” activists attracted minors, including schoolchildren, to these mass events. As it turned out, two of the most active participants in these events had worked for many years in Nookat district secondary schools as teachers of physical education and Kyrgyz language.

In the course of investigation, three minors were prosecuted and—after a trial—convicted.

By 10.45 a.m. the crowd had reached 400 people. They started throwing stones and smashed several windows of the district administration building. Then, the regional Akim, Abdygany Aliev, turned to the crowd and said that the events in the town park were banned; this made the aggressive and indignant crowd once again throw stones at the building. As a result, the windows of the first, second and third floors were broken. The police officers prevented the penetration of the crowd in the administration building.

At 11.00 a.m., additional police forces from Osh district arrived. Part of the crowd, about 100 people including 23 women wearing the hijab (full head covering) and a number of young people headed for the ring road in the centre of Nookat, shouting obscene offensive words against the police officers. They did not obey the appeal to stop these illegal actions and started throwing stones at the policemen. In the course of this action, the windows and lights of two patrol buses of Osh district were broken. As directed by the police leadership of Osh district, special equipment was used. Later, as a result of

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<sup>23</sup> Resolution of the mayor of Nookat no. 116,319 from 27 September 2008.

negotiation between police officers and “Hizb ut-Tahrir” leaders, at 13.30 p.m. the crowd dispersed.

Police officers took measures to prevent an ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, as during the riots ethnic Kyrgyz residents arrived from nearby villages and there were cases when they were met with stones.

During the riots, the local administration building was damaged, as well as two police buses from Osh district, and the owners of private cars “VAZ-2105” and “Hyundai Streaks” were injured. Five police officers were injured during the conflict.

The scene of clashes was visited by Osh governor Aaly Karashev and his deputies, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Dzhemishbek Dzhakipov, the Head of police in Osh district Usup Tashkaraev, the Head of National Security in Osh district and the town of Osh Orozbek Opunbaev, Nookat district prosecutor, investigating police department operations groups from Osh area and Nookat police.

At 16.30, there was a meeting of Nookat district leadership with the governor of Osh district Aaly Karashev, first deputy governor of Osh district Aytmamat Kadyrbaev, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Dzhemishbek Dzhakipov, chief of Osh district police Usup Tashkaraev, chief of national security in Osh district and the town of Osh Orozbek Opunbaev, heads of local government, elders and influential citizens of the district. The meeting stressed the prevention of conflicts among the population of the district and the launch of a preventive campaign.

In this incident, a criminal case no. 140-08-178 was instituted on article 233 part 1, 2, 3 (Mass riots), article 174 part 2, 3 (Intentional destruction or damage to property), 156 part 1 (Involvement of minors in the commission of a crime), 341 part 2 (Use of violence against government representatives, accompanied with violence dangerous to life or health), 259 part 2 (Establishing a religious association whose activities involve the infliction of harm to health or to urge citizens to refuse to fulfil their civic duties or to commit other illegal acts, as well as the leadership of such a union, participation in the activities of these associations, as well as propaganda acts, described in the first part of this article), article 295, part 1 (Violent seizure of power or forcible retention of power in violation of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, aimed at overthrowing the constitutional order of the Kyrgyz Republic), article 297 part 2 (Public appeals to violent seizure of power or violent change of the constitutional order), article 299 part 2, paragraph 3 (Actions aimed at inciting religious hatred, as well as propaganda of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens based on their attitude to religion, when these acts are committed by an organized group) of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic.

To investigate the incident, an interagency operational team was created from the staff of the Internal Affairs, prosecutors, National Security in Osh and Osh district.

During the riots, police officers made video recordings and in the course of the initial operations they identified the organizers and participants. Thus, 32 organizers and participants in the riots were identified and arrested (10 leaders of “Hizb ut-Tahrir”: five

“Naqib,” the rest “Mushrif”<sup>24</sup>) and 22 active members (all members of “Hizb ut-Tahrir”). Of all the detainees, six were previously convicted for committing religious extremist crimes.

On November 27, 2008, in the town of Osh the trial of criminal case no. 140-08-178 concerning the riots in Nookat region was completed.

On 26 April 2010, a special decree of the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic gave amnesty to all convicted on the Nookat case.<sup>25</sup>

## **Prevailing views on the sources and causes of the crisis**

There are different controversial reports on the events that took place in Nookat on 1 October 2008.

According to official government bodies, the incident was the result of a complot of “Hizb ut-Tahrir” members who had earlier agreed on the organization on the day of “mass disorders” in Nookat and attracted minors to commit serious crimes “in order to implement their criminal ideas.”<sup>26</sup>

On October 1, 2008, around 9.30 a.m. approximately 100-150 people, gathered fraudulently, “spread false information that the local authorities did not permit and without any reason prohibited the distribution of food and lottery tickets, encouraged mass disorders and violent change of the constitutional order,” brought stones to attack, did not obey the appeals of the authorities and threw stones at the building of the district administration and at the security officers.

As a result, police officers Rustam Asanov, Khayrulla Sultanov, Akzhol Egenal uulu (district Kok-Bel), Satybaldy Abdyrazakov (video recording), Omurbek Kylanov (Nookat district), Akylbek Saitov, Asilbek Beknazarov (policeman patrol regiment, Osh region), Abdysh Turdukulov (Traffic Police Chief, Nookat district), Orunaly Ergeshov (Chief of 9<sup>th</sup> Division of Osh district), a member of the National Security Committee Zhenish Prатов, advisor of kazyyat Osh region Anarbek Zhusupov received different types of injuries. Equipment and the windows on the three floors of the administration building were smashed, three buses of Osh police and the personal car of a peasant from Karatas were damaged. The total damage was worth 535 592 Som (about 13 400 USD).<sup>27</sup>

According to the words of law enforcement officers, the head of the district administration, the head of traffic police and some prominent men from the region addressed the crowd, but the crowd did not listen and shouted “Allah Akbar.” After Akim spoke and informed the people about the ban on the celebration in the city centre, the crowd including many teenagers and women began to throw stones, which they had brought in their pockets, at the administration building. At least five of the security officers were injured with stones (Rustam Asanov’s arm was broken), two men and the chief of 9th divi-

<sup>24</sup> Nakyb and Mushrif – heads of cells in Hizb ut-Tahrir, at regional and district levels, respectively.

<sup>25</sup> Decree of the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on April 26, 2010 VP no. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Interviews with law enforcement officials involved in the clashes in Nookat.

<sup>27</sup> Resolution on convicting Ilgorzhon Saydaripov dated 6 October 2008.

sion of the regional police department received blows after having been “dragged into the crowd.” The clash in front of the building administration did not last long. Fleeing from the stones, the policemen retreated into the building, taking inside the head of the district administration.<sup>28</sup>

Arriving less than an hour later, a special unit from Osh<sup>29</sup> repelled the crowd of 250-300 teenagers who threw stones at the police buses.<sup>30</sup> The young people threw stones at the kaziyat representatives coming from Osh together with the police, and called them “unbelievers” and “puppets in the hands of the authorities.” Kazyyat adviser Anarbek Zhusupov was hit by a stone in the head.

After a while, officials from kaziyat and the local administration managed to take about 300 teenagers to the stadium and after treating them with pilaf, they went home accompanied by their parents.<sup>31</sup>

According to the version of human rights organizations (Human Rights Centre “Memorial,” “Kylm Shaamy,” the Ombudsman’s Office of the Kyrgyz Republic) the number of participants in “the forbidden feast” who at the beginning of the collision were close to the building of the district administration was not 100-150, as indicated in the verdict of the court and the Ministry of Interior press release, but several times more. The decision to open a criminal investigation refers to 1 000 protesters.<sup>32</sup> Some of them were at the entrance to the building, others – at a short distance. Minimizing the number of demonstrators was probably necessary to authorities to underestimate the significance of the incident, presenting it as a provocation of a small group of “Islamist conspirators” who did not enjoy the support of local residents.

Questioning more than 100 witnesses during the investigation and trial, as well as reviewing six video recordings did not provide any evidence that the gathering sought to change the constitutional order or put forward any extremist slogans.<sup>33</sup>

However, according to lawyers, some poorly versed in Islam witnesses from among the police described as “extremist” the words “Allah Akbar,” shouted by demonstrators during the speech of the district administration head. Equally questionable is the assertion that the participants came to the administration building with stones in their pockets.

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<sup>28</sup> Verdict of Nookat District Court dated 27 November 2008, pp. 7, 10 (testimony by Aliyev, Ismailov, Tilekova et al.).

<sup>29</sup> According to unofficial data, in Nookat were transferred 35 of the 105 employees stationed in Osh special anti-riot unit, equipment and training used for participation in the OSCE. A second similar unit was stationed in Bishkek.

<sup>30</sup> Verdict of Nookat District Court dated 27 November 2008, p. 10 (testimony by Bekenov et al.).

<sup>31</sup> Verdict of Nookat district court from 27 November 2008, pp. 7, 10, 11 (testimony by Zhusupov, Abidjanov, Abduvahidov, Teshebaev).

<sup>32</sup> Decision to open a criminal case on October 1, 2008. According to information, published in Bishkek newspaper “Delo №,” the number of teenagers in the crowd was at least 300-400 (“Delo №” from October 8, 2008). Witnesses among police officers, questioned in court, mentioned the number of 200-300 people, perhaps referring to only those participants in the forbidden celebration that stood directly at the entrance to the administration building.

<sup>33</sup> Interview of “Memorial” with lawyer Ulugbek Usmanov, Osh, 18 December 2008.

Apart from the assumptions of some police officers, there was no evidence in the course of investigation.<sup>34</sup> According to an eyewitness, the stones teenagers were throwing at the police were picked up from a nearby construction site.<sup>35</sup>

Surprisingly, official documents lacked the required detailed description of the start of the collision. It can be understood from the testimony of witnesses that the demonstrators got angry with the refusal of the head of the district administration to permit the celebration of the holiday and after his speech they started throwing stones.

According to Nookat residents, questioned by Human Rights Centre "Memorial," the clashes began after security forces unexpectedly detained several demonstrators and tried to clear the approaches to the district administration building. After local activists had put forward their demand that "the Akim gave an answer as to why Muslims cannot celebrate the holiday in the town centre, while they were free to do that earlier, and it was celebrated in other Kyrgyz towns," the traffic police chief tried to speak but the crowd would not listen to him, participants wanted the akim.

The mayor appeared 15-20 minutes later and said that Orozo-Ait shall be celebrated at home, and asked everyone to leave within half an hour.

A few minutes later, he ordered the police to clear the area. Security officers tried to arrest several activists and drag them into the building of the district administration. Five men were detained. People began to protest, the police started to clear the approaches to the building, there was a clash with women standing in the crowd, they began to shout, scores of adolescents 15-17 years old started throwing stones. There were a few elderly people. Part of the police and administration officials took refuge in the building, while others retreated. Policemen, scared by what was happening, released the detainees. Then the chief of the traffic police announced, "Akim has permitted the celebration in the park." People started distributing pilaf. "However, less than an hour later, police reinforcements from Osh arrived, they began firing tear gas and kicked out all people from the park ...."<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, the head of the district administration Abdygany Aliyev and his first deputy Zaidzhan Abidjanov were so confident in the stability of the situation in the region that they congratulated the elders in the mosque at about 9 o'clock in the morning and went home.<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, the media could not provide accurate information about the event. The prevailing view of the official media was that the Nookat riots were provoked by reli-

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<sup>34</sup> Verdict of Nookat district court from 27 November 2008, p. 7 (testimony by Beknazarov).

<sup>35</sup> Interview of "Memorial" with a Nookat resident (unknown name), Nookat, 17 December 2008. The district administration building of pro-president party "Ak Jol" is under construction close to the venue of events.

<sup>36</sup> Interview of "Memorial" with a Nookat resident (unknown name), Nookat, 17 December 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Verdict of Nookat district court from 27 November 2008, p. 7 (testimony by Abdygan Aliyev, Zaidzhan Abidjanov).

gious extremists. Foreign media began to exaggerate the information and provided even more controversial information.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, by analysing two opposing versions, it could be concluded: first, activists among the local believers wanted to hold the event in the town centre; why in the centre, and why on a large scale it was unknown; secondly, why were women and adolescents in the centre of protests; third, why did public authorities not prevent any violence; fourth, even if the authorities had not banned the Nookat event, there would have been a conflict between supporters of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the police, but only on a larger scale: the illegal organization grew up to the level of organizing protests and Nookat events showed their ability to provoke people to protest, but did not realize the consequences for ordinary citizens.

## Detailed analysis

### *Early warning*

There have not been any real attempts to systematize and collect information about the forthcoming events. For the security forces, this was the first real encounter with the local population which due to religious reasons turned into a protest. No one thought there would be a collision and riots. Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Dzhenshibek Dzhakipov said at the time that the incident was a “test of muscles” between government agencies and unnamed “performers of this provocation,” “the state will respond firmly,” and not “the manipulated youth” but “the party “Hizb ut-Tahrir” will be held responsible.<sup>39</sup>

An early warning system was not available. Analysis of indicators was not carried out. Everything depended on the political will of the government. It is worth noting that the law enforcement system easily perceived the celebration of Orozo-Ait in Nookat as an initiative of the supporters of the illegal party Hizb ut-Tahrir, but feared that any action against them might be perceived as pressure upon the Uzbek part of the population, as most of the members of Hizb ut-Tahrir were ethnic Uzbeks.

It should be noted that Nookat events were a kind of test for the security forces, for their maturity and ability to carry out adequate crisis management operations. After these events, Interior Ministry officials for the first time began to collect data about members of Hizb ut-Tahrir with a clear description of the hierarchy, structure and social base of the illegal party. Collection of information was carried out in two directions: first, instructions were given to local government departments to compile a list of people involved in the illegal party and a list of the protesters; second, lists were written by the

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<sup>38</sup> “In the south of Kyrgyzstan 1.5 thousand members of Hizb ut-Tahrir seized the building of the district administration,” *IA “Kazakhstan Today,”* 1 October 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Artur Isaev, “Power has shown its teeth,” newspaper “Delo №” ([www.delo.ktnet.kg](http://www.delo.ktnet.kg)), 17 December 2008.

police officers (9<sup>th</sup> MIA Division).<sup>40</sup> Criteria for writing the lists were not known. As a result, lists of names involved in the illegal party were drawn, as currently the law enforcement agencies possess more information, a tracking system and the required skills. If in early 2008 an ordinary employee from 9<sup>th</sup> department in MIA (currently 10<sup>th</sup> Main Department of the Ministry of Interior) had no clear idea who was a “hizbuttahrir” and how he differed from other active Muslim believers, now virtually all officers from 10<sup>th</sup> Main Department of the Ministry of Interior were familiar with banned Hizb ut-Tahrir literature, the tactics of their activities and methods of work among the population.

Based on the operational data from employees of the 9<sup>th</sup> Department of the Ministry of Interior,<sup>41</sup> it can be concluded that riots could have been avoided during the Nookat events, provided that the local administration in Nookat, after banning the holiday, had not started flirting with the population, and the prosecutor’s office had issued a warning to the initiators.

During the Nookat events, there was no evidence of coordinated tactical work to prevent the crisis. The Ministry of Interior was initially left alone with the crisis situation, and only the intervention of regional and central authorities in the face of the governor of Osh region and the Secretary of the Security Council prompted local authorities to negotiate with the protesters, but time was wasted and the situation became explosive. The conflict occurred and the culprits were only initiators and participants in the riots, but not the power structures that could have avoided the clashes through negotiations.

### *Operational information*

According to operational information from the Ministry of Interior of KR, in the period 2000-2008, Hizb ut-Tahrir activists tried to conduct Muslim holidays Orozo-Ait and involve Kurban-Ait residents *en masse*. Such events became common in the towns of southern Kyrgyzstan – Osh, Uzgen, Jalal-Abad, Kara-Suu, Aravan. In 2006, Hizb ut-Tahrir activists in the city of Jalal-Abad organized celebrations in secondary schools involving teachers from the town.<sup>42</sup>

The efforts of 9<sup>th</sup> Department of the Interior Ministry (currently 10<sup>th</sup> Main Directorate of the Ministry of Interior) were aimed at drawing up a list of the members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Nookat region.

The trend of religious extremism at that time: Registered in the police department – 171 members of extremist religious organizations (including unemployed – 115 and 43 with previous indictments), including 142 members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, 22 – Vakhob and 7 – Akromiya. Just two employees in Nookat police department are involved in combating extremism.

On September 27, 2007, a petition was received in Nookat local administration from residents of Nookat district to hold the religious holiday Orozo-Ait in Nookat park. On the

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<sup>40</sup> In April 2011, by order of the Minister of Interior, 9<sup>th</sup> Department was transferred into 10<sup>th</sup> Main Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, which took the responsibility for countering extremism and terrorism.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with an official from 10<sup>th</sup> Main Directorate of the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

same day, a refusal was issued by the district administration and sent to the police of Nookat district requesting public order on 1 October 2008.

The resolution consisted of five items:

1. Imams and local committees are to organize the celebration of Orozo-Ait in their locations (all informed).
2. Illegal acts are not allowed.
3. In case of any unauthorized acts (without permission) to take appropriate administrative action by the police department.
4. Prohibit the distribution of any leaflets except for those published in due course.
5. Control over the implementation of the decision to be entrusted on the municipality staff.

On September 29, 2008, the elders of the district addressed the Akim, Abdygan Aliyev, for permission to conduct this campaign, and received a verbal positive response. This fact and the indecisive behaviour of Akim (he could not firmly refuse due to the previously adopted resolution) resulted in the discontent of the crowd on October 1, 2008.

Police officials in Nookat district were confident that the organizers of this event were the supporters of "Hizb ut-Tahrir" and on 30 September 2008 the Nookat district police department chief offered the district prosecutor to issue an official warning to the leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir to avoid such acts. However, the prosecutor's office refused with the argument that they would take action only in the event of a violation of public order during the festivities. Thus, due to the refusal of the Prosecutor, no official warning was issued to the leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The current situation was reported to the management of Osh district police department and reinforcement was sent to the area.

According to the words of Nookat residents, starting on September 29, 2008, security officials visited all houses of initiators and those who submitted the request for the event. Policemen asked them to give up their plan to celebrate. In response, they received a refusal. It looked as if this event was a "necessary precondition" and a very important event for the organizers that they could not give up. Sometimes the question arose why the massive celebration was so important and what was the reason for the refusal? Why celebrate in the city centre and not outside the city limits?

### *Situation awareness*

All were aware of the current situation: local public authorities, law enforcement agencies, special services, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan. But each party perceived these events and the evolving situation differently, based on their own interests and concerns, as well as on the attitude towards these events and the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the region.

The initiative to hold the festival *en masse* in the centre of the towns (Osh, Kara-Suu, Uzgen, Aravan) belongs to the leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir. In the course of several years (2000-2008), Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders mobilized their resources (people, finance) for the organization of two Muslim holidays (Orozo-Ait and Kurban-Ait) as a clear

example of their own possibilities and prospects. Demonstrations and mass events were accompanied by free dinners and lottery to enhance the credibility of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the eyes of the local population, and to diminish the level of trust in the authorities and official clergy. Until 2008, the official clergy and local authorities were actively involved in the festivities, but only as guests of honour, and not as organizers. Mass celebrations attracted a flow of young people into the ranks of Hizb ut-Tahrir, as the population saw their activity and popularity.

The Ministry of Interior and the National Security Committee were aware of the situation, but their initiatives to terminate the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir did not meet the approval of the local authorities. The law enforcement agencies raised the questions: How can people be accused of celebrating? What violations can they be held accountable for? Even if it is an activity of Hizb ut-Tahrir, how do we know their anti-constitutional work during the holiday? Law enforcement agencies were just gathering information and, after the crisis in Nookat, were able to make allegations.

Public authorities (local authorities) were aware of the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir by law enforcement agencies, but they could not stop their activities and prohibit mass celebrations. During the holidays, legislation was not compromised, but the mass consciousness of people was influenced by the positive perception of Hizb ut-Tahrir. It was not possible to declare that the holiday was cancelled due to the fact that the initiator was Hizb ut-Tahrir because it would bring consequences for the bodies themselves: Orozo-Ait was a universal Muslim holiday and it was impossible to ban it; banning it, the state would ruin its reputation in the eyes of the public.

The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, as a public organization and an institution for management of the Muslim community, was also aware of the involvement of followers of Hizb ut-Tahrir, but believed that the counteraction to their activities was purely the prerogative of law enforcement agencies and local authorities. The Kaziyat together with the regional government tried to persuade the protesters to disperse and to celebrate the holiday at home. Carefully analysing the "Nookat events," it becomes clear that the Spiritual Administration of Muslims was on the side of the government and law enforcement agencies and understood that the emerging crisis was the result of confrontation between Hizb ut-Tahrir with muftiat, since in the early 2000s Muf-tiyat issued a special fatwa (decree) on "Prohibition of the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir" and ordered all imams to prevent strictly the penetration of members of the illegal party in the mosques of the country.

Thus, each of the parties to the Nookat crisis situation was aware of the actions of the other, but they did not meet each other in order to resolve the situation.

### *Responsibility*

The Nookat events demonstrated that government authorities, each one within their prerogatives, did not bear any responsibility.

The local district administration in the face of Akim Abdygan Aliev and his deputy Zaidzhan Abidjanov got away with dismissal, but suffered no administrative or criminal liability for the clashes. In fact, the riots began only because of the connivance of district

leadership, which could have prevented the crisis through dialogue with the local population.

According to experts, the conflict could have been avoided. "It all started because of cauldrons with pilaf, but they are certainly not the main reason. The threat was in the lack of action of low and middle level officials who were unwilling to take any decisions. At the same time, they did not take into account that 98-99 % of the population in the south of the country identified themselves as Muslims. If officials had pre-planned the celebrations together with the official clergy, such a crisis would not have happened at all. Indeed, in this crowd, only a few were members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, perhaps they were provocateurs. The others had come to celebrate their Muslim holiday and once in the crowd they began to resent the ban, which they probably regarded as empty carping. They started to sympathize with Hizb ut-Tahrir and turned into potential supporters."<sup>43</sup>

According to law enforcement agencies, responsibility fell on the shoulders of the 9<sup>th</sup> Department of the Ministry of Interior, which took account of all the members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, and on October 1 tried by force to influence the members of the initiative group during the rally. But later, according to human rights activists, members of Hizb ut-Tahrir were arrested, and not protesters.<sup>44</sup>

From October 1, 2008 to April 2010, the central authority insisted that the main culprits of the crisis and unrest were supporters of Hizb ut-Tahrir, and only on 26 April 2010 by a special decree of the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, all convicted 32 people were amnestied.

On the one hand, civil society and human rights organizations accused local authorities and law enforcement agencies of the escalation of tension and crisis in Nookat on October 1, 2008; on the other hand, government and law enforcement agencies accused Hizb ut-Tahrir of the riots and blamed their leadership.

However, Hizb ut-Tahrir is not as active as it was in the period 2000-2008. At present, more and more people are convinced of the error of their ideas. Mass folk festivals organized by Hizb ut-Tahrir are not observed. The Spiritual Administration together with other Islamic organizations have taken the initiative in their hands, and the population celebrates Muslim holidays in their neighbourhoods, mosques and organizations.

### *Decision-making process*

The decision-making process is a question that many mid-level officials fear. For any decision you need to take personal responsibility; therefore, the district heads often turn to the governors, who report to the central authorities and wait for a decision.

The situation in the Nookat district was known to many mayors in the country. On the one hand, if the Akim had allowed the festive event, he would have received a sanction from the central authorities; on the other hand, a ban on the event would have a negative impact on the image of Akim in the eyes of the local population. In such a situ-

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<sup>43</sup> "In Kyrgyzstan participants in Nookat events have been amnestied," 12 May 2010, <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-24210.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

ation, it would be most comfortable for him to wait for the decision of the central government, represented by the Governor, or the Prime Minister and the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, i.e. one of the top officials was to take responsibility, while the mayor should be responsible for the direct implementation of the decision.

Analysis of the events from 27 September to 10 October 2008 showed that the decision to ban the event was taken by the central authorities, and the crisis management was also in the hands of the central government, represented by the Security Council Secretary Adahan Madumarov. Power structures implemented the decisions made at the top, and later even the judiciary officials informally referred to the central bodies.

It was decided that members of the local police department negotiate with the leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Meanwhile, it was decided to carry out pre-emptive work among the population to prevent an ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, as during the riots residents of Kyrgyz nationality arrived from nearby villages, and there were cases when they were met with stones.

After the incident, it was decided to organize a meeting of Nookat region leadership with Osh district governor Aaly Karashev, Osh district first deputy governor Aytmamat Kadyrbaev, deputy minister of Internal Affairs Dzhenushbek Dzhakipov, chief of police of Osh district Usup Tashkaraev, the head of National Security in Osh district and Osh Orozbek Opunbaev, heads of local government, elders and influential citizens of the region. The meeting pointed out the necessity to prevent a conflict among the population of the district and to launch a campaign to avoid mass disturbances.

To investigate the incident, an interdepartmental team of investigators was set up comprising employees of the Internal Affairs, Prosecutor's Office and National Security Committee in Osh and Osh district.

Police officers made a video recording during the conflict. However, if the law enforcement agencies worked to raise awareness, why did the riots still take place, and what was the reason for the collision? According to human rights activists, policemen dragged the initiators into the administration building and beat them; when the crowd saw this, of course, they stormed into the building. Thus, the decision-making process, on the one hand, is a long process for public authorities, but on the other hand, it is also a responsibility to make decisions, therefore, no one wants to take over the responsibility.

### *Use of force*

From the moment the citizens submitted their application to hold the upcoming event, police officers tried to dissuade the initiators to hold the event, although it was difficult to explain why it was impossible to hold an event, which had taken place every year.

If initially the spontaneous meeting was attended only by members of the Nookat police, later it was decided to mobilize additional security forces from the Osh region. A special purpose police detachment was mobilized. The crowd of people was dispersed with tear gas and batons. Force was applied later on as well.

A state of emergency was not declared, but there were mass arrests and searches. "Special reports" and "orientations" were organized for all law enforcement officers with

regard to suspects and members of Hizb ut-Tahrir. An interagency operational investigation group from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Security Committee and the Prosecutor's Office was formed.

Initially, 70 people were detained. In the early days, 6 men were placed in a detention centre in Osh police department, 7 – in Karasu police department, 5 – in Aravan police station, 22 – in the Office of the National Security Committee in Osh and Osh district.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, relatives of suspects were also arrested. According to Nookat residents, some police officers used the ongoing operations for personal gain. Some of the suspects' families and relatives were under pressure to pay a bribe. The price of "redemption" to avoid criminal charges was up to 100 thousand Som (about 2,500 USD).<sup>46</sup>

According to official information, the interdepartmental investigation group identified 67 secondary school students from the city of Nookat who participated in the riots and were subject to "preventive work."<sup>47</sup> The police press centre in Osh region reported 23 women who participated in clashes with the police (two of them had been previously charged).<sup>48</sup> According to the Office of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, a commission revealed some facts about torture against the arrested. The authorities stated: "We should not expose the Kyrgyz leadership as Muslim enemies...." Nookat residents were condemned "not for the fact that they were believers or "hizbutchiks" but rather for organizing the riots. We will inform people about this through the respective centres and Muslim communities, work in this direction is under way."<sup>49</sup>

Still, there were moments in October when the local population of Nookat did not go out after 18.00 for fear of being caught by police officers. Thus, the question remains: was it possible to avoid the austerity measures and the use of force (tear gas, batons). It seems that there was an opportunity to do without force intervention, but only with the help of the active work of local authorities together with the muftiat and police.

### *Cooperation and coordination*

In order to stop the crisis, the government cooperated with the following non-governmental organizations:

1. The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, represented by imams and kaziyat in Osh region. By Resolution of the district administration on September 27, 2008, it was offered to imams and neighbourhood committees to celebrate the Orozo-Ait fest in their neighbourhoods, mahallas, nearby villages. The

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<sup>45</sup> Information from defenders of Osh Sadykjan Makhmudov, Public Fund "Ray of Solomon," and Izzatil Rahmatillaev, Human Rights Centre "Law & Order," 20 October 2008.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> "During the riots in Nookat district of Osh region in Kyrgyzstan 32 members of "Hizb ut-Tahrir" were arrested," *IA "24.kg,"* 13 October 2008.

<sup>48</sup> "Kyrgyzstan. Authorities are in conflict with the population because of the location of the Muslim holidays," [www.ferghana.ru](http://www.ferghana.ru), 2 October 2008.

<sup>49</sup> "VoxPopuli," August 2009 – By the example of Karimov.

events on October 1, 2008 show how the imams and neighbourhood committees completed the order of the district administration. Osh region Kazy was injured during the riots and evacuated.

2. Non-profit non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were not involved, although they could have been used as mediators between the protesters and the government, which would have helped to reduce the tension.
3. Elders of the town and surrounding villages. The district authorities together with law enforcement agencies and the elders of the city informed the population in order to prevent the escalation of tension after the Nookat events.

Cooperation between government bodies and non-governmental organizations could be traced in the case of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic. Human rights organizations (“Kylym shaamy,” “Open Position,” “Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society”), together with the Ombudsman’s office formed a special commission to investigate the events in Nookat on 1 October 2008. Thanks to the efforts of human rights organizations and the Office of the Ombudsman, the international community protected the rights of detainees.

It is worth noting that special mechanisms developed for cooperation between public authorities and civil society did not exist. Public authorities in the face of law enforcement agencies and local authorities did their best to provide civil society with as little information as possible about the arrested.

The only civil organization which for a long time raised awareness and prevention among the population to combat extremism was the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan in the face of local imams and kazyiat. All their activities were carried out jointly with the State Commission for Religious Affairs and local law enforcement agencies.

The main problem for both government agencies and civil society was the preservation of inter-ethnic stability in the region. The main protesters were mostly residents of the centre of Nookat – Uzbeks, who perceived negatively the residents of nearby villages, mainly of Kyrgyz origin. Therefore, perhaps, for public authorities it became important to present Nookat events as an act of “extremists” and reduce the intensity of the disturbance of the Kyrgyz population. Inter-ethnic relations in the south had always been an acute problem, and often a ban was imposed by government authorities.

Thus, the cooperation and coordination of all stakeholders were established. But it was only after the Nookat events that the civil society stood up to protect the rights of convicts and detainees, and public authorities turned into prosecutors. Assisted by state authorities, however, the civil society could have become a mediator in negotiations and prevented the escalation of tension.

### *Communications*

Decisions were not announced efficiently. Not all actors and stakeholders were informed of the decisions taken. On September 27, 2008, a Resolution of the district administration to ban the celebrations in the city centre was issued. The resolution was brought to

the attention of heads of district committees and the Department of Internal Affairs, but it did not specify how to implement it and how to explain the ban on the celebration. That decision should have been justified and motivated, but no one considered the justification.

As the decision lacked justification, the information was not thoroughly spread among the population. People learned about the refusal after they had come to the square. The system of informing the population did not meet modern standards. Rumours and speculation prevailed among the population and they played an important, but negative role in the escalation of tensions and crisis situations which later grew into riots. The lack of reliable information and clearly motivated position of the local administration became the reason for the clashes.

Communication with the local population often goes through selected people, who allegedly, according to state officials, have an impact on the local population. Ordinary citizens perceive these individuals as pro-government and avoid them. Neighbourhood committees, elders and imams from the mosque belong to this category.

The communication system is not organized properly. The population receives the latest news by rumours ("word of mouth"), distributed in the central markets or neighbourhoods, and does not trust completely the official government information because this information lacks arguments. People have additional questions which generate personal interpretations and amendments that can completely modify the original information and influence the behaviour and attitude of the individual.

In the case of "Nookat" the local population and the initiative group did not hear any arguments from the state authorities to turn down the celebration and perceived their attitude as an insult to Muslim feelings.

Initially, media were not involved. There was no effective system of communication; therefore, in the early days before and after the collision there were various interpretations that failed to reflect the essence of the event. On the one hand, government media talked about religious extremism, on the other hand, independent media in the absence of reliable information copied state media or kept silent, which also created information blackout and misunderstanding. The first news reports influenced negatively the attitude to the "Nookat events" and untied the hands of police and local authorities for repressions over ordinary faithful Muslims.

Thus, the events of October 1, 2008 proved that the public authorities were unable to manage crises. One of the most effective mechanisms for crisis management was to repel the crowd and use force. Local authorities believed that force would solve the problem. However, as practice showed, the inability to communicate with the local population and to establish a dialogue has led to distancing the population from the authorities and decreasing their confidence in the state institutions.

### *Logistics*

From September 27, 2008 till October 10, 2008, additional security forces from the Osh region arrived in Nookat district. The town of Nookat is connected to the centre of Osh district by direct route 48 km long.

To effectively suppress the crisis, additional special forces were moved to use tear gas and batons. It was not necessary to mobilize additional material and social resources from the central republican forces. According to government and law enforcement agencies, there was no need to declare a state of emergency or mobilize additional reserves.

The crisis did not last long – from 1 October to 10 October 2008. During this period, Nookat was cordoned off by special checkpoints and entry was allowed only with an ID. To inspect the population and conduct search operations, employees from the central regional agencies were involved: the police in Osh district, the Prosecutor's Office in Osh district and Osh, the Office of the State Committee on National Security for Osh region and the town of Osh.

In the wake of the events of October 1, 2008, the number of media and non-profit organizations workers in Nookat increased attempting to figure out what had happened, but for the most part the independent civil society (experts, journalists, NGOs) sought to learn details about the events. The aspirations of human rights organizations "Memorial" (Moscow), "Kylym shaamy," and "Open position" were perceived by the population with fear.

### *International relations*

For many international organizations (e.g. OSCE) Nookat events became known from the media. The Kyrgyz Republic did not prepare any special statements and diplomatic notes for the international community, as the events were part of the internal affairs.

But at the same time, violations of human rights and freedom of religion were recorded by the OSCE, as well as by other international organizations and embassies of Western countries.

The case at the Nookat District Court began on November 21, 2008. Meetings were held in the building of Osh regional court; in the first days they were closed for the public under the pretext of insufficient capacity of the hall. Admission to the hall was severely restricted and regulated by authorities. On the opening day, admission to the court room was not allowed to representatives of OSCE, non-governmental organizations, as well as journalists (except for representatives of government TV channels). Human rights activist Zhenish Toroiev, who managed to enter the hall, was kicked out. The presence of only one defendant's relative was permitted.

In the middle of the third day of the trial (November 25), the defendants expressed mistrust in the judge and demanded an open process in Nookat central square. Only then a journalist from radio "Freedom," representatives of the OSCE and human rights organizations were admitted.

In conclusion, the international community was not fully informed about the Nookat events. Subsequently, with the assistance of international organizations the convicted persons received the long-awaited amnesty on April 26, 2010.

### *Public relations*

The population of the country, including people in the Nookat district, was informed about the events after the riots. Events were broadcast on government channels and presented as a manifestation of extremism and terrorism.

Right after the events, the media spread controversial and highly inaccurate description of what had happened, based mainly on information received from officials. The most incredible report came from “Kazakhstan Today” agency saying that 1,500 members of “Hizb ut-Tahrir” had seized the building of the district administration.<sup>50</sup>

The authorities and the press service of the Ministry of Interior portrayed the situation as an act of the members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, but not as riots, and accused them of “mass riots and threat of violent overthrow of the constitutional order.”

An anonymous letter was published on the website “Kavkaz-Centre” on October 16, 2008 according to which Uzbek security services were present at the detention of Nookat residents in October and some detainees were allegedly taken to Uzbekistan, while doctors at the local hospital refused to accept the injured.<sup>51</sup>

In the same letter, it was reported that on October 8, 2008 the bodies of several Nookat residents who had died of torture were delivered in a local mortuary. According to some data, there was one deceased. Initially, a rumour was spread about the death of Holdorzhon Isakov, who had been arrested by the police, but later it became clear that the victim was not a local resident, probably an Uzbek citizen, who died of acute heart failure during an interrogation at the local police station. Three days later, the body of the unknown was removed from the morgue by police to be buried in Karasuu region.<sup>52</sup>

In general, public relations were one-sided and not systematic. The majority of the population perceived the message from police departments and public authorities as an act of religious extremists who had to be severely punished.

### *Law and Human Rights*

According to human rights defenders, initially all arrested were charged under three articles of the Criminal Code (CC) of the KR: Art. 174 (Intentional destruction or damage to property), Art. 233 (Riots) and Art. 341 (Use of violence against a government representative). However, at the end of October 2008, the charge was supplemented by four “political” articles of the Criminal Code: Article 259 (United encroaching on the person and the rights of citizens), Art. 295-1 (Separatist activities), Art. 297 (Public calls for the violent change the constitutional order), Art. 299 (Inciting national, racial, religious or interregional hatred), and 13 accused men were imputed to Article 156 (Involvement of a minor in the commitment of crime).

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<sup>50</sup> “In the south of Kyrgyzstan, 1.5 thousand members of Hizb ut-Tahrir seized the building of the district administration,” *IA “Kazakhstan Today,”* 1 October 2008.

<sup>51</sup> See: Report “Memorial,” p. 8.

<sup>52</sup> See: Report “Memorial,” p. 10.

According to lawyers, for the last five articles there was no evidence in prosecutions. Neither video recordings, nor the testimony of witnesses mentioned any appeals for violent overthrow of the regime, national or religious enmity, or separatism (i.e. separation of Nookat district from Kyrgyzstan).

None of the prisoners had been detained before or after the events of October 1, 2008 during the distribution of prohibited materials. Some prisoners were indeed members of "Hizb ut-Tahrir" (six of them were previously prosecuted by Art. 299 of Criminal Code KR – for distribution of materials of this organization), others were not (some did not even pray). There was no evidence linking the accused to the banned organization (not considering references to the "operational information" that had no value). There was no evidence that minors were involved in the crime.

With regard to the charges associated with participation in the riots, according to the verdict, at least 10 convicts generally denied their presence in the centre of Nookat during clashes with the police, which was supported by the testimony of witnesses. At least nine were identified on video frames, which in most cases recorded the fact that the person was present at the holiday that did not take place, but not his participation in any violent acts.

According to the state authorities, criminal case no. 140-08-178 was launched under the following articles of the Criminal Code: Art. 233 parts 1,2,3 (Riots), Art. 174 parts 2,3 (Deliberate destruction or damage to property), 156 part 1 (Juvenile involvement in crime), 341 part 2 (Use of violence against a representative of power, combined with the use of violence dangerous to life or health), 259 part 2 (Creating religious associations whose activities involve the infliction of harm to health or to urge citizens to refuse to fulfil their civic duties or to commit other illegal acts, as well as the leadership of such a union, participation in the activities of these associations, as well as propaganda cases specified in the first paragraph of this article), Part 1 of article 295 (Violent seizure of power or forcible retention of authorities in violation of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, aimed at violent change of the constitutional system of the Kyrgyz Republic), Art. 297 Part 2 (Public appeals to violent seizure of power or violent change of the constitutional system), Art. 299 part 2 par. 3 (Actions aimed at inciting religious hatred, as well as propaganda of exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens on the basis of their attitude to religion, if these acts are committed by an organized group).

On November 27, 2008, in Osh finished the trial of criminal case no. 140-08-178 on the riots in Nookat region.

Later, the convicts from November 27, 2008 were granted amnesty by the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. It is clear that if the events of April 2010 had not taken place, it is unlikely that the convicts would have received amnesty. After the Nookat events, Hizb ut-Tahrir became idle; this was reported both by law enforcement officials and representatives of the expert community and the Muslim clergy.

According to experts, currently the adherents of Hizb ut-Tahrir are recruiting young people in the southern regions of the country to send groups to Syria to fight on the side

of Jihadists.<sup>53</sup> To recruit young people, Hizb ut-Tahrir supporters use specially prepared movies downloaded from the Internet space “about the atrocities of Assad soldiers.”

## Conclusions

1. An early warning system for an upcoming crisis has not been established yet. Attempts by the police to inform the local authorities and the prosecutor’s office about possible conflicts with members of Hizb ut-Tahrir have encountered misunderstanding and neglect. The local authorities were in a difficult position: on the one hand, they did not want to take responsibility for the events, and on the other hand, they were unwilling to lose their reputation in the eyes of the Muslim population.

2. Level of preparation for the crisis was low. No one was ready to predict the riots and clashes. According to information from the Interior Ministry, Hizb ut-Tahrir members were those who provoked the events, but Ministry officials did not know how to prove it and what measures to take in addition to strong pressure.

3. The system for warning and crisis response was used solely in the interest of national security, and therefore special services were involved.

4. Kyrgyzstan first encountered riots on religious grounds when the population demanded their legitimate rights to celebrate Muslim holidays. Law enforcement agencies could have prevented the unrest if they had possessed the ability to communicate with the local population, as well as the skills of mediation and conflict resolution. Not all state and police services had reliable information about the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir, its structure and activities. It is still unknown where Hizb ut-Tahrir supporters get their funding from.

5. Non-governmental organizations could have played the positive role of a mediator to resolve the crisis since they are capable of acting as mediators between conflicting parties. At that time, only certain individuals and NGOs possessed the skills of mediation diplomacy, and it was necessary to bring them to the scene.

6. The main factor for the termination of the crisis was the use of force against protesters. Strong pressure had a temporary effect, which gradually turned into panic among the local people and their refusal to cooperate with the authorities and the law enforcement agencies. Most of Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders left Kyrgyzstan and applied for refugee status in foreign countries.

7. Another factor that played a positive role in resolving the conflict was the intervention of local human rights organizations and the Office of the Ombudsman, which managed to prove the innocence of the convicts and asked the Provisional Government to grant them amnesty.

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<sup>53</sup> From the conversation with expert Qadir Malikov it became known that the leadership of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the commanders of military groups in Syria have agreed that they will jointly build a caliphate in Syria after their victory over the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

## Lessons Learned

1. Important lessons were gained from the Nookat events. Most experts have acknowledged that the instigators of the riots and provocateurs were left behind, while innocent people suffered. On April 26, 2010, all 32 convicts from the Nookat case were amnestied by Decree of the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The leaders of Hizb ut-Tahrir were declared wanted by the police.

2. The clashes occurred because of the uncoordinated actions and confusion of local authorities. On the one hand, the Akim forbade the celebration of the holiday, while his deputy encouraged the organizers to defend their rights.

3. Some organizers of the unrest in Nookat on October 1, 2008 fled from the country and participated in armed clashes in Syria and Afghanistan.

4. Law enforcement agencies and local authorities recognize the danger and the threat of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the country and continue their campaign. The leadership of the Ministry of Interior believes that convicts from Hizb ut-Tahrir must be separated from the total mass of prisoners in order to avoid the emergence of new members of the extremist organization with criminal past.

5. Law enforcement agencies have launched the process of interaction with civil society and international organizations in combating extremism and terrorism. The interaction between the local administration and law enforcement agencies is of utmost importance in the struggle against extremism and for prevention of inter-ethnic conflicts.

6. Local administrations do not possess reliable information about the ethno-religious situation; there is no functioning system for monitoring religious organizations;<sup>54</sup> work with the local clergy and their leaders is insufficient.

7. The system for prevention of extremism and terrorism features a number of problems related to the improvement of interaction between organizations combating extremism on mutually agreed activities. In principle, the organization for combating these negative phenomena should be in line with the effective work of government structures in the Kyrgyz Republic.

8. Foreign radical religious organizations and centres continue to provide active financial support to local extremist groups.

9. Funding extremism remains beyond the control of the competent state bodies. There is no effective financial monitoring of religious organizations, religious educational institutions and persons receiving religious education outside the Kyrgyz Republic to establish a possible link with individuals and organizations involved in terrorist and extremist activities. Furthermore, information about these individuals and groups is not submitted in a timely manner by authorized state bodies.

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<sup>54</sup> The lack of financial and material resources does not allow the full implementation of the monitoring system.

10. Inter-confessional or state-confessional relations are primarily the responsibility of the State Commission on Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic. However, it has moved away from the issues of cooperation between government agencies and the clergy, and its regional structures are indifferent towards the activities of religious organizations.

11. Still waiting to be completed are monitoring and the creation of a database with individuals who have travelled abroad for religious education, a list of foreign educational institutions with their basic characteristics and trends. Moreover, there is no systematic approach to the integration of young people studying abroad in religious schools. Often, instead of obtaining theological education young people become proponents of extremist organizations and radical movements. The formation of anti-extremist and anti-terrorist ideology among the youth requires joint efforts between government, religious and community organizations, as well as the media.

12. There is a lack of a single information management system of government bodies and civil society institutions, cooperation between government agencies and the official clergy, specialized training of officials, teachers in educational institutions and representatives of civil society in countering the spread of extremist ideology among the young people.

13. The education system today hardly uses educational tools to influence the minds of students, and deals only with the transfer of knowledge and skills, leaving the upbringing in the prerogative of the family. In addition, during the educational process educational institutions do not teach the younger generation intellectual and behavioural skills of tolerance towards other religious schools or representatives of other ethnic groups. Here it should be noted that the importance of training and educating tolerance and culture of ethno-religious dialogue in the secondary schools is more important than anything else, as the consciousness of the individual develops mostly during the school period. The success and effectiveness of these activities depend on the degree of integration of specialists from different branches in the development of theoretical foundations and practical recommendations on the organization of care for children, parents and teachers. To realize such integration, there should be competent authorities in the field of education and youth in close contact with social institutions and law enforcement agencies.

14. Currently, extremist and terrorist groups are equipped with modern facilities with high technical characteristics: modern computer technology, communication tools, the latest developments in the field of armaments and even modern explosive devices. Therefore, it is out of the question to achieve effective results in combating extremism and the prevention of terrorism with the existing logistical support to law enforcement and intelligence agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic.

## **Recommendations**

1. The campaign against extremism and terrorism should unite the efforts of all state institutions, NGOs and social circles interested in addressing this very important issue. All activities must be coordinated, along with measures of general social nature conducted by government authorities, public and other non-governmental organizations, institutions and their representatives.

2. Young people and their organizations have a special role in the campaign against extremism and terrorism. It is clear that lately religious extremists and international terrorist organizations have relied on the youth. Therefore, all the destructive organizations (Islamic or Christian) are trying to attract young men. In this context, it is important to create such environment in society, especially among young people, which would exclude the possibility of manipulating people through extremist and anti-social attitudes, and would shape the personality with positive social qualities, positive value orientation and perspectives.

3. In this case, it seems reasonable to take the following steps: provide various forms of recreational and leisure activities to young people; create conditions for a large selection of professions; spread campaign materials and works of art with anti-extremist orientation; prevent the proliferation of offensive materials and information on religious and nationalist groups through the media. The implementation of these measures will contribute to the prevention of all kinds of extremism and terrorism, and warn young people against participation in extremist and terrorist organizations.

4. The effectiveness of preventive measures of general social nature could be improved with the support of traditional religious organizations. Orientation to the traditional religious organizations would disconnect the extremist movement from the religious community. To create a system of inter-confessional tolerance and dialogue must become a priority and a prerequisite for strengthening the unity of the people of different nationalities and faiths in Kyrgyzstan. This will help avoid the activation and propaganda of extremist ideology.

5. Involving traditional religions in the prevention of extremism creates the conditions for interaction between different religions and enhances the level of education. This will eliminate the deficit of theologian and jurisprudential literature which is currently compensated by works of foreign authors, which often promote extremist and terrorist ideas. The state should be as open as possible with respect to traditional religious communities, and vice versa.

6. In the fight against extremism and terrorism it is important to have good interaction between the local administration and law enforcement agencies in their joint control over the observance of religious activists' legislation concerning the relations between the state and religion. It is this partnership that gives fruitful results in the resolution of various conflicts of national or religious character. Therefore, it is necessary to create organizations capable of attracting the most authoritative and respected people who are ready, together with the state and law enforcement agencies, to resolve inter-ethnic, in-

ter-religious and other conflicts. It is necessary to take into account that religion-based extremism is a multifaceted phenomenon and each of its branches shall be confronted by a specific authority or a group of public authorities with the relevant competences. For example, extremist acts with clear anti-constitutional orientation that present public danger shall be countered by national security agencies, prosecutors and police. The settlement of inter-confessional or government-confessional relations will be the responsibility of the State Commission for Religious Affairs.

7. All manifestations of extremism must be under control and provoke a reaction from opposing government agencies. It is important that the actions of government agencies are in coordination. They must comply with the state policy on combating extremism.

In order to prevent extremism and terrorism, and to promote and maintain social stability, the constitutional system of the Kyrgyz Republic and inter-religious peace and well-being, the government and the public need to do the following:

- elimination of the causes and conditions facilitating the emergence and intensification of extremism and terrorism in the republic;
- prevention of the involvement of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in religious-extremist and terrorist groups and organizations;
- combating the spread of information and literature aimed at inciting sectarian conflicts and the humiliation of people of other faiths;
- creating an atmosphere of tolerance and peace between ethnic and religious groups;
- improved coordination between state and local authorities to combat extremism, enhancement of forms and mechanisms of their interaction with public and religious associations in the specific area;
- prevention of political, ethnic and religious conflicts in the country;
- theological and religious expertise should be implemented on the basis of the Regulation approved by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Within the framework of international cooperation to combat extremism and international terrorism, training and retraining of government employees have a special place, in particular law enforcement agencies involving foreign experts. In this regard, it is important to organize short-term courses for qualification and retraining of government officials and representatives of civil society in near and distant countries. Similar courses shall be organized with the participation of leading experts from anti-extremist and anti-terrorist units of foreign countries and relevant UN and OSCE agencies for training through exchange of experience in the field of anti-extremism and anti-terrorism.

As a result of international experience, as well as taking into consideration the specifics of extremist and terrorist threats to our country, it is necessary to develop a set of teaching aids, reference and information materials for those leading the campaign against current threats.

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# Chapter 3

## The Events of April 7, 2010: Managing a Political Emergency Situation

Emil Dzhuraev

### Summary

The events of April 7, 2010, known as the “people’s revolution,” are one of the most important examples in the history of independent Kyrgyzstan of managing a political emergency situation. The April events led to the termination of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s reign, which by that time had acquired the character of the so-called “family rule,” a corrupt and predatory regime<sup>1</sup> in economic terms, and authoritarian and repressive politically.

This report, however, is not focused on a political analysis of the past regime and evaluation of the April events. The purpose of this paper is to analyse events from the perspective of emergency situation management. How did the events on April 7 occur? How did authorities act to control and resolve the situation? What happened that made a mass protest become uncontrollable and ended with dozens of deaths, several hundred wounded and the fall of the government?

Analysing the available information, including materials from the published reports on these events, news articles, excerpts from court testimony, as well as the author’s personal interviews with several participants and witnesses of the events (anonymous, at the request of the interlocutors), adhering to the principle of objectivity and avoidance of opinion with political overtones, it is possible to make a few conclusions.<sup>2</sup> These

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<sup>1</sup> “Predatory” not in the emotional sense, but in the sense of a widely used term in political science. See, e.g., Boaz Mozelle and Benjamin Polak, “A Model of a Predatory State,” *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* 17, no. 1 (2001).

<sup>2</sup> A few words about the methodology of this study. The events of April 7, 2010 remain a difficult subject for study, including the perspective of crisis management, due to a number of objective reasons: many of the details and facts remain disputable; the factor of non-formal, and hence never formalized control over the security forces during the events; the events officially called “people’s revolution” have a strong political overtone; and participants in the events, especially government officials, are not predisposed to openly discuss what they know. What is important, still ongoing are trials of special squads (“Alpha” and “Arstan”) and several high-ranking officials, including President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, his two sons and brother. At the end of April 2014, when this report was prepared, the trial was coming to an end. In view of these dif-

findings, as well as the discussion, is limited to the actions of the authorities until its fall in the evening of April 7, 2010. After its fall, the responsibility shifted to the new Interim Government when the situation became extraordinarily complicated, and for some, it finished with the end of the ethnic conflict in June 2010 in Osh and Jalal-Abad.

In short, three general conclusions could be made.

Firstly, the willingness of a large number of people to participate in the protests was provoked by the nature of Bakiyev's rule, including usurpation of state power by the president's family, the persecution of the opposition and critics of the government, and last but not least, the policy in the economic sphere, in particular, the rise in prices of public utilities, as well as the privatization of several important strategic enterprises. It can be assumed that these circumstances were a necessary precondition for people's discontent; however, they were not sufficient for the development of the events on April 7.

Second, for all its repressive acts and use of power structures as a tool of intimidation, Bakiyev's regime had serious shortcomings in the management of political crises. Namely: weaknesses in the situation analysis, communication and use of intelligence, lack of clarity in the division of roles and responsibilities between institutions and their leaders, as well as the fact that until the last minute power relied on force to resolve the situation, which consequently affected the lack of alternatives. To some extent, many of these problems can be associated with the strong informal role of Kurmanbek Bakiyev's brother, who at that time was the chairman of the State Security Service. Judging from various sources, he was *de facto* the leader of the security forces, including the suppression and persecution of the opposition and government critics.

Third, to some extent as a result of the first two points, the situation developed very rapidly and the power structures acted only *post-factum* and soon lost the ability to control the course of events. In this sense, the use of weapons in front of the "White House" could be seen (even if it was a legitimate method to protect a strategic object) only as a desperate solution that could not reverse the events.

The government and particularly relevant institutions should draw some important conclusions from the tragic experience of managing the crisis on April 7, 2010. It can be assumed that the most important lesson for Kyrgyzstan was the rejection of the highly centralized presidential form of government in favour of the Constitution, which gives a much more important role to Parliament. However, in addition to the reform at the constitutional level, it is necessary that the leadership of Kyrgyzstan pay attention to the problems of operational, functional and coordinating nature regarding crisis management, which determined the outcome of the April 7 events.

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facilities, this paper was compiled using different kinds of information sources, including several anonymous interviews with participants in the events, namely with officials from Bakiyev's government, public and government reports on these events, news articles, interviews, quotes from court testimony and texts of the relevant laws. The author also relies on his views and conclusions, and where appropriate refers to generally accepted public opinion.

## A short description of the events on 7 April 2010

This analysis reviews the “events of April 7,” 2010, which are also known as “second revolution,” “April revolution,” “the overthrow of the Bakiyev regime.” As a result of mass protests on 7 April and lightning developments, President Bakiyev lost his power and was replaced by the Provisional Government, constituted by the leaders of the opposition at the time, led by Roza Otunbaeva.

Events that took place literally in less than two days—from the morning on April 6 in Talas until the evening on April 7 in Bishkek and across the country—were one of the most difficult episodes of critical situations that have occurred in the country. A full analysis of all aspects and the whole cycle of events that make up “April 7” requires much more resources in all respects as compared with what is studied within this paper. The task gets complicated by the relative ambiguity and uncertainty to date of different moments in the events, evidenced by four years of trial.<sup>3</sup> Because of this complexity, as well as in the interest to study the issues of crisis management on the part of the authorities, this analysis is limited to the acts of the previous government until its fall in the evening of April 7, starting on April 6 in Talas.

Crisis management on April 7 was obviously weak and ineffective. In the course of less than two days, there were different possibilities when the government could have acted differently, and hence the result of the events could be different. To a large extent, the crisis on April 6-7 was determined by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s regime, which became particularly repressive, corrupt, and intolerable to the opposition. In this broad aspect, April 7 can be regarded as a natural culmination of Bakiyev’s regime. Summed up, all problems related to the regime in general, as well as to the specific acts on April 6-7, led to the downfall of the regime and the rise of opposition.

Events on April 6 and 7 developed quickly and unexpectedly: on April 6, they started with the mobilization of people unhappy with the arrest of opposition leader Bolot Sher (Sherniyazov) in Talas. Due to misconduct of the authorities, events quickly escalated into numerous and uncontrolled actions of protesters in Talas and especially in Bishkek.

In particular, Talas authorities lost control of the situation in the evening of April 6, when the governor of Talas district, who had been taken hostage, was set free and the police arrested Bolot Sher for second time in front of the numerous protesters. Later, in the morning of April 7, the protest gained such a pace that its suppression headed by the Minister of Internal Affairs Moldomusa Kongantiev was doomed to failure. The arrival of several reinforcement detachments in Talas from Jalal-Abad and Osh can be regarded as “adding fuel to the fire,” given the fact that public attitude in Talas about regional inequities of Bakiyev regime was negative – namely the appointment of non-local

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<sup>3</sup> For example, almost four years after the beginning of the trial on the murder of demonstrators, it is still not clear who shot them. See: “Who are these unidentified armed men who were shooting at the White House and the people on April 7?” *“Jany Agim” Gazeta*, 22 November 2013, available at <http://www.gezitter.org/politic/25673/>.

staff, mostly people from the southern areas, on leading positions.<sup>4</sup> In Bishkek, the arrest of almost all major opposition leaders on the day when the Kurultai was summoned<sup>5</sup> provoked people to protest and the attempt to disperse the crowd by threats gave only an additional incentive for the protesters, prompting them to clash with the police and special squads and, subsequently, to disarm them.<sup>6</sup>

By the end of April 7, the outcome of the crisis in Kyrgyzstan was: 80 dead, more than 1,000 injured,<sup>7</sup> a large number of confiscated weapons, damage to a significant amount of state and private property, the complete surrender of police forces, and the beginning of looting and violence on a large scale. The loss of power by President Bakiyev and his close circle was just one element of all losses which resulted from the impotence of the government to deal with the crisis.

## Basic assumptions about the causes of events

Considering the potential and existing causes of the current events of April 6-7, it is necessary to outline two categories of arguments. Firstly, there were relatively long-term political reasons for the critical situation that resulted in the events of April 7. These reasons are most often cited, and therefore they are widely accepted in society. On the other hand, there are more specific, immediate causes of the failure of the situation management, or, in other words, the authorities made mistakes in their attempts to control the situation. These reasons were not made public, therefore less often considered.

The first group of reasons for the crisis includes the following political phenomena:

*Corruption and the role of the family in governance.* One of the most serious weaknesses of Bakiyev's presidency was the unrestricted participation of many members of his family in government. The president's younger son, Maxim, for whom a special

<sup>4</sup> Developments in Talas are described with quotations from participants in the events in "Conclusion of an Independent public commission to investigate the events of April 6-8, 2010" (hereinafter: "The conclusion of a public commission"), available at [www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1272720300](http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1272720300).

<sup>5</sup> The word "Kurultai" in the Kyrgyz language means a traditional public meeting. It is comparable with the Afghan "Jirga" or "shura," for example. In modern Kyrgyz politics, "kurultais" often seem to be more legitimate than formal, but corrupt institutions. However, if for the opposition kurultai is an alternative for unavailable formal grounds, for the authority it is often only a controllable and ceremonial tool for legitimizing its actions.

<sup>6</sup> A detailed and quite objective description of the events on April 7 in Bishkek, especially in front of the "Forum," with a focus on the role of special squad "Alpha," is to be found in Vitaly Ponomarev's report "The role of management of special operations "Alpha" in the events of 6-7 April in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)." Moscow: Human Rights Centre "Memorial," November 2010.

<sup>7</sup> The exact number of those killed (87 people) and wounded (about 1500) remains one of the disputed elements of a troubled and protracted litigation on "the April events." These numbers are found, for example, in the Report of the Temporary parliamentary commission, which, in general, is a highly politically biased document (p. 6). In the trial "on April events" victims are 77 dead and over 300 wounded. See for example "Tomorrow, April 7 victims ..." 1 April 2014, available at <http://www.tushtuk.kg/society/16116/>.

agency was established – Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation (CADII), conducted predatory economic policy in the country. The president's younger brother Janysh Bakiev, who at the time was Chairman of the State Security Service, was considered the key person for the security sector, law enforcement agencies and, especially, for the control over opponents and critics of the government. The president's eldest son Marat and his five brothers also participated in the government in different ways.

*Authoritarian regime and chasing of critics.* After consolidating his power with the adoption of a new constitution and the election of improvised parliament in late 2007, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's regime became authoritarian. The pursuit of opposition politicians, the use of court cases, often fabricated or aggravated for political purposes, the murder of some people inconvenient for the authorities (the most famous and particularly brutal murders of Medet Sadyrkulov and Genadiy Pavlyuk), and other punitive measures made people totally reject the regime.

*Social and economic discontent.* Right before the events citizens complained about the higher prices for electricity, hot water and heating,<sup>8</sup> corrupt sales of important infrastructure projects in the national energy and telecommunications sectors, as well as additional 60 tyiyns they had to pay for each call claimed by mobile operators.<sup>9</sup> On April 1, 2010, a week before the event, exported petrol from Russia to Kyrgyzstan was duty taxed – news which added the last drop to the people's rage.

*Ignoring the opposition and disregarding a dialogue with it.* In the presence of the above reasons for citizens' discontent, if the government had realized, one potentially effective approach in maintaining stability could become a more open dialogue with the opposition and listening to their criticism. Even if the government was not going to meet many of the demands of the opposition, public discussions, defending positions and an open dialogue could have the effect of reducing political tensions.

The above factors shall not constitute an explanation of why the events on April 6-7 developed precisely in this way. They illuminate the problematic political environment in which attitudes appeared that encouraged the mobilization of people and their involvement in the April events. Other circumstances could be considered here as well, such as the dissatisfaction of the Russian government with Bakiyev's decision to extend the presence of US air base in Kyrgyzstan, the increased sense of regionalism among the population (perceived domination of southern politicians during Bakiyev's rule), persecution of the press and the closure of a number of independent media, etc. These and other similar factors are closely linked with the above four main reasons for the emergence of the crisis, or are part of them.

<sup>8</sup> "Daniyar Usenov: the government will not cancel the prices for electricity, hot water and heating," 16 March 2010, <http://www.kp.ru/daily/24456/618787/?geo=61>. When analysing, it can be concluded that the increase of these prices is likely to be justified since such increase is required nowadays for the economic viability and sustainability of the energy sector. However, the political impact of such measures remains a serious threat to the government.

<sup>9</sup> "In Kyrgyzstan, there are new prices for mobile communication," 1 February 2010, <http://www.azattyk.mobi/a/1944769.html>.

However, successful management of the crisis with fewer losses was possible even in this political atmosphere. The successful management of the crisis does not imply a mandatory liberal democratic government, which President Bakiyev's regime did not pretend to be.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, even if these factors were necessary for the protest to emerge, they are insufficient to explain the nature of the crisis.

The focus here is on the immediate causes of the crisis, as well as a description of the events on the critical day. Below are a number of potential reasons for unsuccessful crisis management:

*Lack of public awareness about the situation in the regions and the mood of the population.* According to the reaction of previous government officials, made public after the events, in their opinion nothing suggested this scenario.<sup>11</sup>

*Unorganized and non-constructive actions by the authorities to forestall protests.* Negotiations with the protesters took place only twice, and in both cases they did not refer to the protests. Thus, on April 6, Akyzbek Zhaparov negotiated for the release of the governor of Talas district, who was taken hostage by protesters in Talas. And prior to the events, Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov with several other members of the government held talks with the opposition about his prerogatives and to be granted a way out of the Government building. In all other cases, the government responded to the opposition rallies, both in Talas and in Bishkek, with force to suppress them.

*The arrest of opposition leaders.* It is obvious that the government hoped to disrupt the work of the opposition People's Assembly (Kurultai) arresting their leaders. The first one, Bolot Sher, was arrested in the morning of April 6, when he arrived in Talas. After his arrest failed due to the pressure of the opposition and the developments in Talas, which took place throughout the day on April 6, the authorities had a good reason to give up arresting opposition members in Bishkek. However, they did not do that. During the night of April 7, the main opposition leaders were detained, including Omurbek Tekebayev, Almazbek Atambayev and Temir Sariyev. These acts of the government neutralized the most effective mechanism for the peaceful settlement of the situation – talks with opposition leaders.

*Attempt to disperse the rally in front of the "Forum" building.*<sup>12</sup> Bishkek opposition rally started in the morning on April 7 at the building of the "Forum." The news of the ar-

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<sup>10</sup> Although the idea of "deliberative democracy" was one of Bakiyev's key messages to the Kurultai of Consent. See, e.g., "Kurmanbek Bakiyev's 'Deliberative democracy,'" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 26 March 2010, [http://www.ng.ru/cis/2010-03-26/6\\_bakiev.html](http://www.ng.ru/cis/2010-03-26/6_bakiev.html). Of course, this idea has almost nothing to do with the "deliberative democracy," popular among Western theorists of democracy, such as Jurgen Habermas.

<sup>11</sup> In "Interview" in *Moscow Echo* on the day after the event, Kurmanbek Bakiyev repeatedly emphasized how it all happened suddenly, and how just two weeks earlier Kurultai of Consent unanimously supported his reforms. Available at [www.echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/670374-echo/](http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/670374-echo/).

<sup>12</sup> The building of the "Forum" or "Media Forum," located just east of the city centre, belongs to the current president; during the events it belonged to one of the main opposition leaders, Almazbek Atambayev; it hosts the head office of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan

rest of opposition leaders was the first topic of discussion. It is worth noting that Atambayev's arrest took place in his home in the presence of a large number of his supporters who gathered in the morning at the "Forum" and were the most motivated and active participants in the events. Attempts by the authorities to disperse the rally using militia and special services with special equipment were even more provocative.

*Seizure of weapons by protesters and its use.*<sup>13</sup> During the clashes between protesters and law enforcement agencies in the "Forum" building, where the latter, according to the leadership orders<sup>14</sup> did not use weapons, the protesters seized their weapon, which was later used in the central square. Due to physical clashes at the "Forum" and, especially, after seizure of weapons, the peaceful resolution of the conflict was impossible.

*Losing control of the situation.* If at some point events still could take a different direction, as a result of the "victory" of protesters in the clashes at the "Forum," as well as due to protests and seizure of power in Chui, Issyk-Kul and Naryn districts, including cities and areas near Bishkek, the ability of the authorities to control the situation was lost. This was facilitated by the mass arrival in Bishkek of highly anxious people from outside the city, including Talas, the presence of some drunk people<sup>15</sup> (thus their instincts of fear and rational behaviour could be blunted), and the demoralization of law enforcement officers after the events in the "Forum," the news about beating their Minister and colleagues in Talas and in view of the rapidly growing crowd.

*The speed of events.* Finally, in addition to all of the above errors and tactical situational circumstances, and partly due to such errors, there was a very rapid development with very little opportunity for reflection and manoeuvres on the part of the authorities in the course of events.

## A detailed analysis

### *Early warning*

Based on the information available to date, there have been few reasons for the development of events in such a radical and lightning manner. If the authorities had behaved slightly differently in certain moments, the outcome could have been quite different,

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(SDPK); this is where the events began on April 7 in Bishkek before they moved to the Ala-Too Square in the city centre.

<sup>13</sup> One of the most controversial and important moments in the series of events was that a national security forces' special truck approached the "Forum" equipped with many different types of firearms, which was seized by the protesters. It is said that this was done on purpose to provoke people to illegal acts (this is mentioned in the report of the Public Commission), but others deny this version giving arguments with the lack of time to unload it and the possible omissions of relevant commanders in the turmoil of events. See Ponomarev Report, pp.3 and 4.

<sup>14</sup> In particular, the command of the State National Security Service, according to Ponomarev Report.

<sup>15</sup> There is a lot of evidence, including the testimony of First Aid personnel, materials collected during the "April events" trial, although mentioning this fact often provokes accusation of blasphemy and disrespect to the memory of the revolutionaries.

even with the gradual increase in mobilization of the opposition and peaceful protests. Bloodshed could have been avoided. However, according to the new tactics of the authorities against the opposition, namely judicial, law enforcement and violent methods of prosecution, the use of compromise, peace and negotiation techniques were not considered by them.

The most important events in the political life of the country before the events of April 2010 were "People's Kurultai" of the opposition forces conducted on March 17 of the same year, as well as "Kurultai of Consent," organized by the authorities on March 23-24 on President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's personal initiative.<sup>16</sup> The opposition kurultai, which took place under the close supervision and partially obstructed by security forces, made a number of claims to the authorities, which later formed the citizens' discontent to Bakiyev's regime. At the same kurultai, participants elected Roza Otunbayeva, who was the main opposition deputy in Parliament from the Social Democratic Party, leader of the executive committee of the opposition. It is worth noting that in this "alternative kurultai," as it became known,<sup>17</sup> the opposition stressed the need for a gradual, not fast, action avoiding violence and direct confrontation with the authorities.<sup>18</sup>

A week later, a two-day "Kurultai of Consent," initiated by Kurmanbek Bakiyev took place aimed at the institutionalization of this People's Assembly as a regular ritual of direct democracy.<sup>19</sup> "Kurultai of Consent" was attended by about 800 delegates from all regions of Kyrgyzstan, including representatives of state and municipal authorities, community leaders and ordinary citizens. Except for a small number of critical statements, the government kurultai proceeded according to a scenario. The result was the adoption of a resolution which had been obviously prepared in advance and therefore did not reflect many of the themes raised by the Congress, and expressed general approval of the activities of government, headed by the President.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Authorities are interested in holding a national kurultai," *Azattyk*, Russian edition, 1 February 2010, Available at [www.azattyk.org/archive/ky\\_domestic\\_News\\_in\\_Russian/20101218/3462/3462.html?id=2292878](http://www.azattyk.org/archive/ky_domestic_News_in_Russian/20101218/3462/3462.html?id=2292878). Both dates are symbolic: March 17, 2002, tragic Aksy events considered the beginning of the fall of the regime of first President Askar Akayev, and March 24, three years later, the anti-Akayev opposition culmination that had led to the "Tulip Revolution," leading to Bakiyev's rule.

<sup>17</sup> "Alternative" because Kurultai of Consent, organized by the authorities, was announced earlier than the Kurultai of the opposition, though it was held later.

<sup>18</sup> "Kyrgyzstan: At the opposition kurultai, a package of demands to the government was adopted (updated)," *Ferghana.ru*, 17 March 2010, available at [www.ferghananews.com/news.php?id=14241&mode=snews](http://www.ferghananews.com/news.php?id=14241&mode=snews).

<sup>19</sup> "Kanibek Jorojev: Reform Uchun zhakshy sharttar tuzuldu," *Azattyk*, 30 January 2010, available at [http://www.azattyk.org/content/Kyrgyzstan\\_Reforms\\_Jorojev/1943322.html](http://www.azattyk.org/content/Kyrgyzstan_Reforms_Jorojev/1943322.html).

<sup>20</sup> While the unanimous approval of the resolution criticizing the government is seen as Kurultai of "Consent," Bakiyev himself considered this unanimity as a strong indication of popular support for his work. Also, Bakiyev said that the first day of the kurultai was very critical, "which was something," while others did not. See Bakiyev's "Interview" in *Moscow Echo* and "Kyrgyzstan: Kurultai of "Consent" completely agreed with the president," available at <http://www.ferghananews.com/news.php?id=14290>.

It should also be noted that some noticed Kurmanbek Bakiyev's remark about the adverse information innings in the Russian media, as well as their relation with Moscow. In July 2009, Bakiyev signed an agreement with the United States on the location of the Transit Centre in Manas airport – a decision obviously contradicting earlier agreements between Bakiyev and the Russian leadership, and therefore regarded as a major cause for the discontent in Moscow.<sup>21</sup> In his speech at the Kurultai in March, Bakiyev said there were parties claiming that the alleged power in Kyrgyzstan did not have the support of the people, and that these actors were interested in the deterioration of the Kyrgyz-Russian relations.<sup>22</sup>

These two kurultai were the main political events in Bishkek until 7 April. Therefore, in the course of events leading directly to the change of government on April 7, it is reasonable to consider these two meetings the beginning of this round of events. In line with the intentions reached as a result of the first opposition kurultai and in view of the total disregard of all its power requirements, the opposition appointed on April 7, 2010 regional kurultais across the country. This was announced on March 30, a week after the government kurultai.<sup>23</sup>

The expectations of the authorities of the possible scale of regional opposition meetings and their consequences appear to have been low. In view of the way in which events unfolded, perhaps such low expectations were originally founded. The sudden burst of protests was provoked by the authorities in the course of events. This turn of events occurred as a result of an extraordinary situation – the detention of opposition leader Bolot Sher in Talas on April 6, followed by deterioration of the situation with the arrest of almost all opposition leaders who were in Bishkek.

Thus, the activity of opposition was growing after March 17, but the authorities continued to ignore the situation. A dialogue with opposition leaders at that time could turn the course of events in a different direction, but the leadership of the country was not ready for this. The authorities became active on April 6 and arrested the chief organizer of the regional kurultai in Talas Bolot Sher, which led to a uncontrolled reaction of the protesters. The government repeated the same tactical mistake during the night in Bishkek. Like in Talas, the police in Bishkek could not keep under control the scores of protesters. These errors on the part of the authorities, namely the structures responsible for public order and safety and the bloody turn of events in Bishkek were not expected, and took all parties by surprise.

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<sup>21</sup> Some details of the process concluding an agreement on TSC, including remarks about Moscow attitude, shown in a secret telegram from the US Embassy in Bishkek, published later in WikiLeaks: "Sarbaev and Ambassador sign agreements; Sarbaev urges phone call from President Obama to Bakiyev," 13 May 2009, available at [www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BISHKEK462\\_a.html](http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BISHKEK462_a.html).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, "Kyrgyzstan: Kurultai of "Consent" completely agreed with the president," <http://www.fergananews.com/news.php?id=14290>.

<sup>23</sup> "Kyrgyzstan: April 7, the opposition will hold kurultais in all regions of the country," *Fergana.ru*, 31 March 2010, available at <http://www.fergananews.com/news.php?id=14328>.

### *Operational information*

Although it was not possible to provide information in advance about exactly how events would unfold on April 6-7, it is worth noting that an effective system for operational information was not available at that time. The 9<sup>th</sup> Directorate of Internal Affairs was an odious structure, created to combat religious extremism and illegal migration, engaged in persecution of the opposition and other critics of the government. The new government disbanded this structure in June 2010.

In the course of events, information was obviously passed on the phone between the centre (the country's leadership in the Government House) and decision-makers. This form of transferring operational information, of course, could not be effective nor available to all persons who needed it, nor convenient to analyse and make decisions.

Even if there was some intelligence information, the authorities were not capable of using and analysing it and making a decision. Decision-makers, especially the president, were totally unaware of the nature and speed of events, hoping to the last moment that they would be able to suppress the protests, and if need be, use force.

### *Situation awareness*

Government, according to available information, was not aware of the scope and potential scenarios, and therefore could not predict the possible course of events. The public was discontent with some of the government acts, including higher prices for electricity, hot water and heating, as well as the decisions by private telecom operators to introduce new fees for mobile communication. However, the government was confident of its ability to control the protests by suppressing them with the help of police.

There was also some concern about Moscow's negative attitude to Bishkek, which, in particular, could affect the political mood in Kyrgyzstan through the news media coverage. In March, in his speech at the Kurultai of Consent, Kurmanbek Bakiyev mentioned some negative reports on the political situation in the country in the Russian media, seeing in them an interest in undermining the relations between Moscow and Bishkek. Shortly after the Kurultai, on April 1, 2010, Russia imposed duty taxes on imports of gasoline in Kyrgyzstan, followed by increased selling price of gasoline to Kyrgyzstan. This fact is one of the possible reasons for the people's protests.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, the government also had information about the opposition kurultais in the regions, announced on April 7, but hoped that there would be no consequences.<sup>25</sup> As Janysh Bakiev later told a Russian journalist: "You know that in Talas they were given the opportunity to work. Please organize your activities in other places, in Naryn."<sup>26</sup> Ob-

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<sup>24</sup> For example, see "Russia has restored taxes on export of petroleum products in Kyrgyzstan," *Public Rating*, 12 March 2010, available at <http://www.pr.kg/news/kg/2011/03/12/19441/>.

<sup>25</sup> "Elmurza Satybaldyev, "No one in the Government House was prepared for the April 7 events," available at <http://www.for.kg/news-193171-ru.html>.

<sup>26</sup> "The head of the State Guard Service of Kyrgyzstan: My conscience is clear," *RIA Novosti*, 11 April 2010, available at <http://ria.ru/interview/20100411/221016540.html>.

viously, as noted above, the government did not expect these meetings to be a serious threat and relied on its ability to keep everything under control.

The government and relevant services did not expect the turn of events on April 6 in Talas, therefore, they could not be prepared in advance. This is indicated in Janysh Bakiev's words: "There is the National Security Service, the Ministry of Interior; unfortunately they missed the moment. We had to be proactive, but the situation seemed to be normal and there was no reason for this."<sup>27</sup> Was it possible to expect Talas developments? Looking back, it is clear that we could have expected citizens' strong dissatisfaction and therefore radical behaviour. By that time, feelings of "regional" injustice were expressed in Talas clearly—though not always based on facts—that Kurmanbek Bakiyev gave power to his relatives everywhere, including Talas.

### *Responsibility*

This issue is most fundamental and at the same time the most problematic in this case. It has been raised at the ongoing (April 2014) trial "on April events." By early 2010, Kurmanbek Bakiyev's regime already had those characteristics, designated by the term "family rule."

According to the Law "On internal affairs," the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Minister Moldomusa Kongantiev were responsible for public order, including the prevention of events on April 6-7.<sup>28</sup> The State National Security Service and its chairman Muratbek Sutalinov were responsible for fighting extremism, terrorism, the threat to the constitutional order and crisis management. These two structures, together with their special units – Special Purpose Directorate "Alpha" and Special Purpose Directorate "Arstan" ("Lion") from the State Security Service with their commanders were active actors in these events.<sup>29</sup>

According to the testimony of former defence minister Bakytbek Kalyev, military personnel was also involved to maintain the security of public facilities: 200 cadet officers and 100 men from the special forces "Scorpion" from the Ministry of Defence.<sup>30</sup> According to the ex-minister, they were not armed and he did not give them any orders to shoot.<sup>31</sup> Defence Ministry personnel did not participate in the "April events" trial in any

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>28</sup> Article 1 of the Act states: "Interior structures of the Kyrgyz Republic are state armed law enforcement bodies performing executive and administrative functions to ensure public order and security of the individuals and society, and the fight against crime."

<sup>29</sup> Severely beaten in Talas, Minister Kongantiev could not get to work in Bishkek on April 7.

<sup>30</sup> "Bakytbek Kalyev: 200 cadets and 100 special forces arrived to protect the 'White House'," *IA "Evening Bishkek,"* 31 October 2012, available at [www.vb.kg/doc/204317\\_bakytbek\\_kalyev:\\_ohraniat\\_belyy\\_dom\\_pribyli\\_200\\_kyrsantov\\_i\\_100\\_specnazovcev.html](http://www.vb.kg/doc/204317_bakytbek_kalyev:_ohraniat_belyy_dom_pribyli_200_kyrsantov_i_100_specnazovcev.html).

<sup>31</sup> Bakytbek Kalyev, ex-minister: "I am a fellow countryman to Bakiyev, but I did not secretly communicate with him," *IA "Super-Info,"* 2 November 2012, available at [www.gezitter.org/society/15599\\_bakytbek\\_kalyev\\_eks-ministr\\_ya\\_zemlyak\\_bakieva\\_no\\_s\\_nim\\_tayno\\_ne\\_obschalsya/](http://www.gezitter.org/society/15599_bakytbek_kalyev_eks-ministr_ya_zemlyak_bakieva_no_s_nim_tayno_ne_obschalsya/).

capacity; only minister Kalyev was accused among other senior officials. Consequently, the role of the Ministry of Defence in April 2010 events was limited.

Former Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov took part in Talas episode; there he delegated Vice Prime Minister Akylbek Japarov, who arrived in Talas to negotiate with the leaders of the protesters. The government did not achieve their goals in the negotiations and soon terminated them, while the situation went out of control.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, security issues were run by the president's close circle. The main person, at the time, was the chairman of the State Security Service – the president's younger brother Janysh Bakiyev. Also, among the leaders of the National Security Service was the president's eldest son Marat Bakiyev, who could influence government decisions and actions.

The trial, which has lasted for four years, has not proved the role of Janysh and Marat Bakiyev. In addition to the numerous shortcomings of the prosecution in the investigation of the case, there are objective difficulties. Based on available information, it can be assumed that Janysh Bakiyev ran the process only verbally. As he said in an interview with RIA Novosti on April 11, 2010, he gave the command to shoot at armed men, at APCs, and at those who directly violated the rules in protected areas.<sup>33</sup> There are no formal instructions and orders signed by him.

The role of the president in these events remains unclear. Besides the last minute unsuccessful attempt to declare a state of emergency and curfew, there is no other information about any president's acts to manage the crisis.

There is also a hypothesis that a staff worked to counter protest actions and to coordinate the work of the security forces, and that it included the president, the heads of the presidential administration and a close circle of country leaders. In particular, such a "Staff" with a capital letter, was mentioned with full confidence both in the State Commission Conclusion on the events of April and May 2010,<sup>34</sup> and in the report of the Tem-

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<sup>32</sup> Some of the information on this episode was published by Akylbek Japarov from recordings of his telephone conversations with the head of the presidential administration Kanybek Joroev who transferred the Prime Minister's instructions to Japarov. Japarov was able to escape from the dangerous area almost untouched, unlike badly beaten Interior Minister Kongantiev.

<sup>33</sup> "The head of the State Guard Service of Kyrgyzstan: my conscience is clear," <http://ria.ru/interview/20100411/221016540.html>. Janysh Bakiyev's words on this: "I gave the command to the APC – fire, fire, fire. I am not hiding it, but I gave the command to shoot at those who had weapons. My conscience is clear. I said on the radio that if someone runs with a weapon, they will open fire on them. Because they also fired."

<sup>34</sup> Conclusion of the State Commission for comprehensive study of the causes and conditions, as well as political assessment of the tragic events that took place in April and May 2010. See the second half of the document. Posted in Vesti.kg. 07.04.2011. Available at: [http://www.vesti.kg/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=4422&Itemid=83](http://www.vesti.kg/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4422&Itemid=83) (first half) and [http://www.vesti.kg/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=4425&Itemid=83](http://www.vesti.kg/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=4425&Itemid=83) (second half). It is worth noting that to date (mid-2014) this document has not been advertised or officially published by the national authorities. This strange fact, as well as the long concealment of the report prior to becoming accessible at Information agency Vesti.kg, is discussed in the popular forum Diesel: <http://diesel.elcat.kg/lofiversion/index.php?t7081203.html>.

porary Parliamentary commission on the events of April-June 2010<sup>35</sup> – documents that have strong political attitude.<sup>36</sup> However, to date there has been no evidence of the existence of such staff. The persons assumed to have been involved also denied its existence.<sup>37</sup> It is perfectly acceptable, and it has not been denied that a number of senior officials discussed the situation collectively and repeatedly throughout the day. But it does not have the status of a special institution or organizational unit, capable of making decisions and being responsible for them.<sup>38</sup>

### *Decision-making process*

With the lightning development of events in the afternoon of April 6 in Talas and on April 7 in Bishkek, the government acted only in ad hoc (spontaneous) manner, taking decisions ad hoc and verbally.<sup>39</sup> By the end of these events, as already known, responsible authorities were missing.

The last and unsuccessful decision of President Bakiev regarding crisis management was the decision to impose a state of emergency in Bishkek.<sup>40</sup> The state of emergency was “introduced” in the afternoon of April 7, when the situation was already out of control. The provisions of the state of emergency, in particular, a ban on mass gatherings, provided an opportunity to use police force. By that time, no one could implement the decree: the security forces tried to suppress the protest, but in the afternoon their forces were very weak.

The problems in crisis management originated from the absence of any recorded decisions, scripts, or rules to manage the situation, as well as from the unnecessary state of emergency. This proved the disorganization of the process, inefficiency of the command hierarchy in such cases, as well as the lack of well-designed and effective instructions for crisis management.

### *Use of force*

The special importance of the April 7 events in terms of crisis management is in fact the use of force. In the busy days of 6 and 7 April—from the escalation of the situation in Talas until the fall of the regime of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev—the use of different instruments of violence turned later into a challenge, both for investigators and analysts. The outcome—80 victims and about 1,000 wounded—is the most obvious proof of the use of violence. Important, though less discussed, was the use of weapons to intimidate and disperse the protesters, which in the end did not take effect, the non-use of weap-

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<sup>35</sup> Interim report of the parliamentary commission, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> The two commissions comprise a number of key participants: revolutionaries from the events of April 7, and critics from the opposition to Bakiyev government in general.

<sup>37</sup> For example, “Defendant: April 7, there was no staff to coordinate the forces,” *Evening Bishkek*, 16 October 2012, <http://www.vb.kg/202904>.

<sup>38</sup> It is interesting that under more favourable conditions such an institution should have existed to coordinate actions in crisis situations – what in some countries is called “Situation Room.”

<sup>39</sup> This was confirmed by all participants in the events.

<sup>40</sup> Based on Article 46, item 7, *Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic*, 2007 version.

ons in Talas and the “Forum” building by the police, the loss of weapons and their acquisition by protesters.

The use of force to keep public peace and to prevent more serious violence is provided by international law and practice.<sup>41</sup> Instruments of violence are to be used for legitimate and meaningful goals, and the way they are used shall be in accordance with the socially significant objectives.

Several different laws, regulations, decisions and other documents regulated the situation and could become the basis for the use of violent methods to control a situation. One of them is the Constitutional Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On State of Emergency,” the Law “On National Security Services,” and the Law “On State Protection Service,” and possibly also the Presidential Decree on “State of Emergency” in Bishkek and some other regions. In addition, all national security services and law enforcement agencies have instructions and other documents regulating the use and storage of special equipment and firearms.

It is still unknown what laws and articles guided those who made the decisions, or who made the decision about the use of violence. It is clear that under the Law “On National Security Services,” for example, in circumstances similar to those in the building “Forum” and in front of the Government House, national security employees had the right to use special equipment and firearms. It is also clear that the State Security Service, according to the law of the State Security Service, could use the necessary equipment, including weapons, to ensure the safety of people – the president, in this case, and facilities – the Government House. It is hard to argue what kind of legal acts were taken as foundation for all the acts.

To control and normalize the situation in Bishkek on April 7, forces from several law enforcement agencies were involved. Personnel from the Ministry of Interior, including patrol officers, Police Academy cadets, national security special forces “Alpha” and “Arstan” and, to a limited extent, Military Academy cadets serving in the special forces “Scorpion” in the Ministry of Defence. Their level of training was different. One fact that can be traced throughout the course of events until the beginning of the shooting in front of the “White House” is that personnel from all units involved did not use firearms in front of the “Forum,” where their own safety was threatened, or in the Ala-Too square, where their lives were endangered and many policemen were beaten.

The first victims were Police Academy cadets Edil Takyrbashev and Nikita Kush, who were killed by a grenade, thrown by an unknown protester.<sup>42</sup> The squad of cadets and most of the other units involved in the Ala-Too Square were not armed. With the fast and rushing disproportionately large number of protesters, government forces were not able to resist them, and sometimes they ran chaotically, as a result of which some men fell down, becoming victims of protesters’ collective violence.

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<sup>41</sup> A brief review of international norms is to be found in “Violence and the Use of Force,” International Committee of the Red Cross, Chapter 2.

<sup>42</sup> “7 apreilde mitingchilerge birinchilerden bolup police approx chygargandygy anyktalgan,” *Evening Bishkek*, 18 November 2013, available at <http://www.vb.kg/kabarordo/233849>.

It could be concluded from the above that the level of training of government forces could have been higher, although this was not the main problem. The use of weapons was problematic, many weapons were taken by protesters, special equipment did not have the desired effect, there was a large number of dead and injured victims – all this was the consequence of a very fast and uncontrolled protest, and in addition the weak coordination and unplanned acts of operation officers to control and normalize the situation.

### *Cooperation and coordination*

It can be concluded that on 6 and 7 April under President Bakiyev's rule, non-state parties were not involved to assist in the situation management. Two weeks before the event, Bakiyev initiated Kurultai of Consent where a representative delegation of community leaders from all over the country convened. Its aim, among other things, was to consolidate the legitimacy of the president and his policy, to create an atmosphere of general agreement with him and, accordingly, to neutralize criticism from the opposition. It is obvious that this event was not aimed at enhancing cooperation between government and non-governmental organizations, and the results of the Kurultai were not visible during the April events.

In the course of events on April 7, until Bakiyev's surrender at about 6 p.m., non-governmental organizations did not participate. Some individuals from this sector were present, but their role in managing the situation was negligible. A possible exception was Toktaiy Umetalieva who was in the centre of events from the very beginning<sup>43</sup> and got in touch with the leaders, informing them about the acts and insisting on the urgent release of arrested opposition members.<sup>44</sup> However, there was no organized, systematic cooperation and coordination with non-governmental groups, and most likely, the situation itself was of a nature not presuming such coordination.

It is worth noting that non-governmental organizations and civil society played a very significant role after the fall of Bakiyev's regime in the evening of April 7th. First of all, these were groups of voluntary guards, who came to restore order and peace in the city after the "revolution" and the subsequent wave of mass looting. When demoralized police units were disbanded and went home and the new Interim government only with difficulty made them return to work, volunteer squads played a vital role in restoring peace and quiet.

### *Communication*

Crisis management on April 6-7 required specific actions in support of connections and communications. Firstly, it concerned public awareness. With regard to access to online information sources, there is contradictory evidence. During the days of the events,

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<sup>43</sup> See, for example, video recording Kloop.kg at the "Forum". "Revolution 2010: Complete video archive from Kloop.kg," available at <http://kloop.kg/blog/2014/04/06/revolyutsiya-2010-polny-j-arhiv-video-ot-kloop-kg/>.

<sup>44</sup> "Kanybek Joroev: Kyrgyz Ex-President believed that on 7 April provocateurs were shooting at people," *24.kg*, 16 October 2012, available at <http://www.kyrgyzonline.com/content/723035>.

obviously, the Internet was not blocked; there were however some difficulties in accessing internet, perhaps due to the sharply increased interest.<sup>45</sup> TV channels, being fully controlled by government, tried to conceal the true scale of what was happening in Talas and Bishkek. The Parliamentary session was broadcast live on national television until mid-day on April 7, while members of Parliament accused the opposition of trying to destabilize the country, and Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov assured the deputies that the situation was under control. In fact, authorities had apparently lost control of the situation by this time.

Second, the issue of communication between the actors came forward. Obviously, communication was maintained at the highest level by informing the president. It is known from reliable sources that in the morning, upon arrival at the workplace, President Bakiyev personally decided to monitor the situation, and therefore requested all responsible officials to report to him. This decision resulted in the fact that key people who constantly and personally monitored and supervised the situation spent a lot of time in the waiting room of the president, reporting to him. Next, the president had yet to think and make decisions based on the reports.<sup>46</sup> In the course of extremely rapidly changing situation, this process of sharing information systematically lagged behind the reality.

Furthermore, when security forces were sent to the site of protests, their tasks were not clearly explained. As reflected in Vitaly Ponomarev's statement, the officers from special unit "Alpha" did not have a clear mission at the "Forum" building.<sup>47</sup> As a result, troops arrived at the site without adequate preparation. Also, apparently communication was lacking between units from different divisions, as militia units, special forces "Arstan" and national security "Alpha" were equipped differently and acted without coordination.<sup>48</sup>

### *Logistics*

Power resources, both human and financial, necessary to control the situation soon became insufficient. These problems started on April 6 in Talas and continued on the next

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<sup>45</sup> It should be noted that some sources, in particular "Azattyk," had limited output prior to the emergency. There is unconfirmed evidence concerning symptomatic remarks and details about the limited information, see "To all the free citizens of free Kyrgyzstan! (Appeal of Tsen-trispolkoma of the People's Kurultai)," Edil Baisalov, *IA Ferghana.ru*, 7 April 2010, available at <http://www.ferghananews.com/news.php?id=14377&mode=snews>, and Conclusion of the State Commission (first half). *IA Vesti.kg*, [http://www.vesti.kg/index.php?option=com\\_k2](http://www.vesti.kg/index.php?option=com_k2).

<sup>46</sup> The President, of course, did not replace commanders and heads of the power structures in their field of expertise, but he had to solve fundamental questions, including the introduction of a state of emergency in Bishkek. Primarily due to poor information on the real situation, Bakiyev decided to declare state of emergency two hours after Parliament advised him to do so. This delay of 1-2 hours might have been critical.

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, Ponomarev, p. 3. A quote from an interview with a member of "Alpha" squad: "Before leaving we were told that our task was to help interior forces to block the crowd, and not let people go anywhere ... They did not explain much. We did not ask any questions. ... We did not control the situation."

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

day in Bishkek. At the same time, it is necessary to remember that the situation, more precisely the mood and scale of protests in Talas and Bishkek, were unexpectedly impressive and went out of control.

Thus, at the beginning of the event, when protesters in Talas who had gathered after Bolt Sher's arrest occupied the regional administration and took the governor of the region hostage, the police forces were not sufficient to release the building and governor.<sup>49</sup> In the course of further action, all special means to disperse protests were exhausted.

200 people were sent from Bishkek to Talas as reinforcement – 135 from Osh and 69 from Jalal-Abad. In the morning, protesters in Talas amounted to several thousand.<sup>50</sup>

A similar situation with regard to the lack of human and other resources occurred in front of the "Forum" in Bishkek. While at the beginning of the day, when a small number of people had gathered, militia acted confidently and could control the situation, after a short time the number of people increased significantly. Then, the actions of the police to cordon protesters and detain individual participants were seen only as a provocation that encouraged more aggressive behaviour of the large crowd.

When the situation on Ala-Too Square deteriorated, a small number of demoralized law enforcement officials, particularly the police, stood in front of thousands uncontrolled, strongly excited people who were coming after the events in "Forum." As soon as protesters started to get together in the square, it became obvious that government forces will not cope with controlling such a crowd.

It is worth noting that Police Academy cadets were involved, young and poorly prepared students, who were sent from Bishkek to Talas to maintain order in this critical situation. Apparently, this was a wrong step as two students were killed in the clashes.

### *International aspects*

On April 6-7, there were no appeals to international organizations and other countries for support. First, the situation was domestic and was to be addressed by the government. Second, the situation developed very quickly and there was no real opportunity to address international actors and, even more so, to get any help from them.

On the day after his departure from Bishkek, Kurmanbek Bakiyev stated in his interview for radio station "Echo of Moscow" that on April 7 he was approached by the Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Nikolai Bordyuzha, but it was too late. Also, before April 7, he had contacts with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and both asked, "How can we help you? We are ready." According to Bakiyev, he replied that he did not need any assistance for home problem.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> "7 apreilde mitingchilerge birinchilerden bolup police approx chygargandygy anyktalgan," *Evening Bishkek*.

<sup>50</sup> Conclusion of the Independent public commission, available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1272720300>.

<sup>51</sup> Kurmanbek Bakiyev's "Interview" in Moscow Echo, 8 April 2010, [www.echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/670374-echo/](http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/670374-echo/).

The role of international partners—both countries and organizations—became tangible shortly after the fall of Bakiyev regime and the arrival of the Provisional Government, which included opposition leaders. In the first place, Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev and the OSCE, which at that time was presided by Kazakhstan, played an important role for the normalization of the situation and the mediation between Bakiyev and the opposition. Russia and the United States were also active. However, these relationships are beyond the scope of this report.

### *Public relations*

Again, because of the speed of events, it is difficult to comment on the information and communication aspect of the situation. Obviously, it could have been much more effective, but was this possible? It could be noted that under Bakiyev’s rule, freedom of press and information was no longer guaranteed, and journalists were widely persecuted.

In the course of events, the spread of information was intentionally limited in order to avoid chaos and panic among the citizens of the country, especially the emergence of tension in other places based on information about Talas, Bishkek and Naryn. So, in the morning the national TV channel broadcast an extraordinary emergency parliamentary session where the situation in Talas and in the country was discussed, and where Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov drew a picture much less critical than the actual one. At the time of the session in the Parliament, clashes between protesters and the police in front of the “Forum” were taking place.

The announcement made by President Bakiyev about the state of emergency in Bishkek was an important fact. Later, the then Director of NTRC (National Television and Radio Corporation) Katya Urumkanova said that due to the coincidence in time of signing the decree and the storming of the NTRC, they managed to announce the state of emergency only once. Also, according to her words, NTRC did not broadcast the incident near the “Forum” because of the attacks on journalists and confiscation of equipment.<sup>52</sup>

Independent media had a greater freedom to present the events: there were many journalists from international and local media. Among the latter, witnesses often mentioned a group of young journalists from the portal Kloop.kg, who broadcast the information live. However, all these media had little exposure to the audience, mostly limited to online information, while internet access was difficult on this day in view of the large number of users. Therefore, practically the most important sources of information were mobile phone messages, which failed because of the simultaneous calls.

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<sup>52</sup> See “Katya Urumkanova: April 7, 2010 NTRC did not broadcast meetings, because ...,” *K-News*, 7 September 2011, available at <http://www.knews.kg/action/2707/>. Although this objective circumstance occurred, it was possible to broadcast information without video from the scene. Probably, until the last moment the NTRC could not freely broadcast the entire amount of information due to political and tactical reasons.

### *Laws and obligations*

One of the least investigated aspects of the events of April 2010 is likely to be the clear understanding of the then existing laws, as well as their implementation. First of all, under the very quick turn of events, the legality and lawfulness of various activities and especially compliance by all actors could not be guaranteed.

One of the potentially problematic elements that still remains unclear is the use of the armed forces of the Ministry of Defence. The law “On the conscription of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic,” adopted in February 2009, according to critics, could be implemented to raise the defence forces in addressing the domestic situation.<sup>53</sup> However, the limited involvement of unarmed cadets and 100 special forces from the Ministry of Defence<sup>54</sup>—not military units—leaves the question of the illegitimate use of defence forces open.

As mentioned above, a number of laws and regulations were adopted on the basis of which participants could act—or actually acted—in the crisis management. But to what extent every decision and every act complied with the law, and whether anyone could control people to abide the law was an unrealistic expectation under the given situation.

### *Human rights*

Fundamental human rights in times of crisis, including during application of violent methods to normalize the situation, must be respected. This is a requirement of international acts and national responsibilities.<sup>55</sup>

Respect for human rights in the course of a failed crisis management seemed a minor issue under these circumstances. As initially mentioned, Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s regime itself had by that time become authoritarian, not a liberal government, for which the concept of human rights could not be a matter of special importance. In its everyday work, the government had made gross violations of human rights long before the events. Therefore, on the day of the events, this could not be an important point of concern for the government.

At the same time, it should be mentioned that the actions of law enforcement and security agencies during the day before the shooting started in front of the Government House, can be characterized as permissible according to the same international standards. Firstly, there was an instruction not to use firearms, and it was respected. Secondly, special equipment was used that did not harm people. The shooting in front of the

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<sup>53</sup> See “Fears that the army could be used to break up demonstrations and rallies,” IWPR, 3 February 2009. This law was amended in 2012 and 2014 to eliminate potential misunderstandings regarding the use of armed forces in the settlement of internal political situations. Nevertheless, even the recently adopted Military Doctrine of the KR in parts may be interpreted in a similar sense – for example Article III.17. See [www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1374474180](http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1374474180).

<sup>54</sup> “Baktybek Kalyev: 200 cadets and 100 special forces arrived to protect the White House,” *IA Evening Bishkek*, 31 October 2012, available at [http://www.vb.kg/doc/204317\\_baktybek\\_kalyev:\\_ohraniat\\_belyy\\_dom\\_pribyli\\_200\\_kyrsantov\\_i\\_100\\_specnazovcev.html](http://www.vb.kg/doc/204317_baktybek_kalyev:_ohraniat_belyy_dom_pribyli_200_kyrsantov_i_100_specnazovcev.html).

<sup>55</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, *Violence and the Use of Force: Reference* (Geneva: ICRC, 2011).

Government House, which led to casualties, needs to be investigated under the law, including the trial of the “April events.”

## **Additional analysis**

### *Why did the system for early warning and prevention fail?*

As it has become clear from the above review, early warning and prevention of the April 7 events was not activated due to a number of good reasons. These reasons can be divided into general political and narrow tactical and situational ones.

The first group of reasons shall refer to the character of the government during that period: its repressive methods; intolerance and rejection of criticism and opposition views; a disproportionate role of the President family members in the government. Secondly, the government unwillingness to engage in any dialogue with the opposition on the eve of the April 6-7 events. There were enough prerequisites for such a dialogue – from the questions raised at the opposition kurultai on March 17 to objective problems and social economic and political issues.

The second group of reasons includes the numerous mistakes and shortcomings directly related to the management of the crisis, as well as the impossibility of preventing the development of events after a certain point. First, the weak awareness of the government on the attitude of the population and the level of their discontent. Kurultais, scheduled for April 7, were not expected to mobilize a lot of people with the attitude which was actually observed. Second, misguided by low expectations about kurultais and their participants, the government made a mistake and arrested almost all opposition leaders. After Bolot Sherniyazov’s first unsuccessful detention, the government still had the opportunity to give up this tactics, but they neglected this opportunity and continued the arrests in the night of April 7.

The arrests added fuel to the protests; afterwards, the government made their next mistake by attempting to disperse the protesters by threats and by law enforcement services, rather than by trying to establish a dialogue and—even at the last minute—to release opposition leaders and bring them to the venue of the meeting. As a result, the crowd of people which appeared at noon on the main city square threatened to make the situation uncontrollable and to miss all possibilities for an initiative on the part of the authorities – except, perhaps, Bakiyev’s peaceful surrender. The latter, however, was not on the agenda at all.

### *What was the level of emergency readiness?*

Looking back, it should be noted that the state was poorly prepared for such political upheavals. Most important was the lack of an effective mechanism for collecting and processing information—especially operational information—in the course of events. As many of the officials from the “White House” stated, an important negative factor for the failure of crisis management was the extremely slow and always lagging behind the events process of transferring information to the President. President Bakiyev asked officials to report to him about what was happening; this led to the fact that several key

people were wasting time in his waiting room and then reported irrelevant information to the President.

There are a number of possible, but not exactly known so far, explanations as to why the authorities lagged behind in their actions. Perhaps there were no officials to personally look at the situation and assess the possibilities for the authorities. It was reported that the National Security Service chairman Murat Sutalinov went to the "Forum," but it is unknown when exactly and how long he stayed there.<sup>56</sup> Middle level officials, officers who were at the scene could not have dared to report that control was lost and their actions were in vain. For example, viewing video clips from Ala-Too Square it is obvious that law enforcement forces stood in groups and continued to isolate the area, not allowing the scores of people to enter. Once, for example, a water cannon was used which repelled the crowd a few meters away, and when the water was over, the crowd surged forward. Could decision-makers have acted differently if they had had reliable information about the real state of affairs in the area? Possibly.

Even if some of the highest officials, for example, Janysh Bakiyev, had had information about the situation, the adoption of any other drastic measures required time to think and weigh the pros and cons. For example, could in such a chaotic scenario President Bakiyev decide to dismiss his brothers and sons – one of the main protesters' demands? Or cancel some important economic decisions? Probably not. Therefore, the government took action by inertia, obviously without any chance for success.

Analysing all these components, one can conclude that the weakest point in the management of events on April 7 was coordination of information and decision-making. In other words, the lack of effective management resulted in the fact that the president himself tried to be in the centre of the decision-making process, and several executives were equally responsible for the safety and control of the situation. As a result, power as a single institution remained in the rear of events, and after the use of lethal weapons<sup>57</sup> had to surrender and give way to a wave of riots and looting.

### *Did rules and regulations exist and were they effectively incorporated into national security structures?*

All relevant departments responsible for ensuring public and civil safety had all the necessary legal and regulatory documents, laws and instructions to implement their activities. The problem was not in the absence or deficiency of laws and regulations, but rather in the coordination of actions, in the system of ensuring operational information, and possibly in the existing informal political atmosphere where different decision-makers were not allowed to act according to their best conclusions and had to consider Kurmanbek's and possibly Janysh Bakiyev's reactions and preferences. One should

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<sup>56</sup> Vitaly Ponomarev, "The role of the command over special forces "Alpha" in the events on 6-7 April in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)," Report (Moscow: Human Rights Centre "Memorial," November 2010), p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Admitting that details of the use of firearms against protesters remain very unclear and contested.

remember that at the time the ruling regime was far from the principle of a legal discipline, and was clearly applying informal methods of work.

### *Were all necessary resources and skills available?*

Taking into consideration all mentioned above, it is clear that the resources and levers necessary to control the situation were insufficient. In particular, provision of information was so weak that in the rapid flow of events authorities were always one step behind the real situation.

Also, by having full control over the main public information resources – NTRC, the authorities tried to follow a certain editorial line, so as not to make the public aware of the crisis, but to some extent the government became hostage to this incorrect and irrelevant information.

Available technical equipment was used but not sufficiently and effectively. For example, special equipment used at the “Forum” building did not bring the desired effect. Also, due to the urgent dispatch to the “Forum,” special squad “Alpha” from the National Security Service was not equipped accordingly.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, the authorities possessed the means to resolve the situation, but they were not used properly and at the right time, and soon—when control over the situation was lost—these instruments lost value.

### *What actors could possibly participate effectively in the crisis management, but did not take part?*

Many of the government’s actions—from the events in Talas to arrests in Bishkek—generated an environment for a very serious and mass political action on 7 April. In anticipation of the event, in the morning of 7 April, was there anyone who could seriously affect the situation and direct it to a more favourable end? These were the arrested opposition leaders who summoned the people on that day. Detaining them, the authorities did not let most of the key players contribute to resolving the situation. If President Bakiyev had listened to Toktaiym Umetalieva’s advice while she was walking with the crowd of people from the “Forum” to Ala-Too Square, that it was necessary to release “Atambayev and Tekebayev,” perhaps this would have helped to keep the situation under control.<sup>59</sup> However, due to the weak or distorted picture of the real situation, the government did not listen to this advice.

### *What factors played a critical role to terminate the crisis?*

For Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s regime, which was responsible to manage the crisis, the situation finished late at night on April 7, when he finally surrendered, gave way to the opposition and left the “White House”: the last to leave the building, according to various

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<sup>58</sup> Vitaly Ponomarev, “The role of the command over special forces “Alpha” in the events on 6-7 April in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan),” Report (Moscow: Human Rights Centre “Memorial,” November 2010), pp. 3-4.

<sup>59</sup> “Kanybek Jorojev: Kyrgyz Ex-President believed that on 7 April provocateurs were shooting at people,” available at <http://www.kyrgyzonline.com/content/723035>.

sources, were Prime Minister Daniyar Usenov and Presidential advisor Elmurza Satybaldiev.<sup>60</sup> That is, the crisis in the government ended with its complete capitulation.

But this could not be the end of the crisis.<sup>61</sup> Formal responsibility for the normalization of the situation was transferred to the new Provisional Government, and of course, the Provisional Government had very limited capacity to quickly bring the situation under control.

The situation had to be brought to normal within the next two or three days. On the next day, April 8, a looting wave was raging: crowds of robbers attacked, broke into and plundered all the shops and other facilities. Bakiyev's private possessions and primarily his home were attacked. A change of public administration started throughout the country, replaced by "people's power." This was the beginning of misappropriation of real estate, especially land.

This complex and somewhat extended in time of crisis process was gradually stabilized due to various factors, but primarily as a result of the opposition to the wave of crime, including organized groups of volunteer teams to maintain order and stop looting. New interim authorities who came as a result of the crisis were far from being able to quickly restore order.

### *Other problems and factors with an important impact on the crisis*

During the time of its independence, Kyrgyzstan developed a culture of rallies and protests, organized for political or other reasons. Such phenomena became more frequent after each of the three main events: Aksyyski in 2002, when the state for the first time used weapons against the citizens; in March 2005; and in April 2010. As a result of the large number of people and, consequently, as traditional political acts, the assembly of citizens turned into a ritual<sup>62</sup> – kurultais, walks, transportation of participants from the provinces to Bishkek, the seizure of administrative buildings, and so on.

The events of April 2010 also comprise a number of acts and events that are not to be seen in other similar cases. To a large extent, these events and circumstances characterize the complexity of the situation and the particular problematics of the power at the time. Among them, first of all, come the unusually rapid developments of events growing from initially peaceful kurultai into clashes between protesters and security forces, and later into a mass uprising against the regime. All this happened in just one

<sup>60</sup> "Temir Sariyev: 7 April 2010 people were killed..." 24.kg, 6 September 2011, available at <http://diesel.kg/forums/topic/68245-%D1%81%D1%83%D0%B4-7-%D0%B0%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BB%D1%8F-2010-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B0/> "Elmurza Satybaldiev: In order to live a good life and have political stability in Kyrgyzstan...." Interview in Jana Ordo Gazeta, 2 November 2012, available at <http://www.gezitter.org/interviews/29019/>.

<sup>61</sup> According to the so-called Interim parliamentary commission, the April 7 crisis lasted until mid-summer, precisely to the tragic events of June 10-14, 2010 – the ethnic conflict in the south.

<sup>62</sup> The word "Repertoires" is used by researchers to denote typical acts in political events. Author of this notion is considered to be famous political scientist Charles Tilly. See: D. della Porta, "Repertoires of Contention," in *Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (Wiley Blackwell, 2013).

day. In part, this rapid development is explained by the government's actions, such as the arrest of the main opposition leaders and the extremely damaging operation to curb the situation in Talas. However, in that particular sequence of events, the special mental state of people seemed to have a decisive role. It was a state of extreme excitement experienced by the collision and the effect of special equipment, used at the building of "Forum" plant; a state from which the crowd could not escape before the growing wave of an equally exciting new wave of clashes in the main square Ala-Too. This mental factor, of course, deserves a special study to draw lessons for the future.

Another special moment in the events of April 7, obviously, was the use of firearms both by the authorities and the protesters, who were armed with weapons, seized during the clashes at the "Forum." Bakiyev in his speech, according to his custom, emphasizing on being different from President Askar Akayev, allegedly said that he would not run away like Akayev but will stay up to the end – words interpreted as a willingness to use weapons to preserve power. Anyway, weapons were used to kill, leading to the death of several dozen men. The circumstances around the use of weapons, ranging from the justification of their use and ending with the partial armament of protesters, are another complex and controversial moment in the history of April 7, leading to important lessons for managing such situations.

Last but not least, another difference between April 7 and almost all other similar events is the unexpected impotence of the government: the regime, which at the time exuded power, full control and invincibility, suddenly fell overnight. It crashed with a large number of victims. One reason for this weakness could be the family reign, the dominance of the President's sons and brothers, which resulted in a levelling of the institutions of power and excessive personalization.

### *Lessons learned*

During the twenty years of history of Kyrgyzstan as an independent state, the country lived through a lot of emergency events and situations, the most important of which were two revolutions – in March 2005 and in April 2010. Several other events, such as those in Aksy in March 2002, in Osh in June 2010 and in November 2006 are also of great importance. These large, as well as smaller-scale events of political tension prove Kyrgyzstan's predisposition to political crises and provide experience to learn from.

### *What are the lessons learned from this and other similar crisis situations?*

The most important lesson learned in April 2010 and March 2005 is that the excessive concentration of power in the President's hands leads to an authoritarian and repressive regime, which in turn gives rise to opposition from citizens. Changing the constitutional order in Kyrgyzstan from presidential-parliamentary (and in fact, super-presidential) to a parliamentary-presidential<sup>63</sup> could be considered the biggest lesson of the two revolutions.

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<sup>63</sup> The differences in these terms of comparative political science can be endless and controversial. However, what is important here is comparison between the prerogatives of the president

Making Parliament the main stage of political life and formally—based on the laws and the Constitution—guaranteeing the opposition’s right to have influence in determining national priorities, the new Constitution could potentially remove the roots of the previous political upheavals: the opposition now would not have to fight for the right to exist and act, including through mass actions. The “potential” viability of the new political order depends not only on formal legislation, but primarily on the behaviour of the main political forces, both in opposition and in power. The growing role of the President and his administration, the fragmented efforts of party factions in parliament, the weak independence of the government from the parliament and the president, and other factors indicate that four years after the April events, serious obstacles in front of the new Constitution still remain.

*Was the official process of lessons learned launched, how were lessons formulated, and what were the main conclusions?*

Constitutional changes were political lessons. Unfortunately, the lessons of April 2010, as well as of other similar events, cannot be considered as lessons implemented in the organization of crisis management.

The most important formal process that started after April 7 was the trial of these events. It is interesting that the subject of litigation was both too broad and incomplete. The main topic of the process was the killing and wounding of protesters. Some defendants were charged with different crimes, some of which were not connected directly with the events on April 7. For example, several former officials were charged with “abuse of power” for their acts carried out before the events of April 7. The trial did not consider the events in Talas, nor beating and causing harm to many employees of the security forces, including the Minister of Internal Affairs Kongantiyev and the murder of Police Academy cadets Kusht and Takyrbashev.

This trial, even if it had been performed better, could not substitute for a formal analysis of shortcomings and deficiencies in the settlement of the crisis in order to draw some practical conclusions. This also applies to issues relevant to the analysis of the socio-political situation, the organization of relevant services and agencies in critical situations, the effectiveness of operational information support, the role of certain key individuals and training of security forces in the effective management of such situations on the spot. Unfortunately, the available information indicates that there were no lessons learned, and the conclusions in the wake of the April 7 events were mostly political slogans and accusations.

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and parliament. According to the new Constitution, Kyrgyzstan is not a pure parliamentary model, as erroneously assumed, but it is a fact that the current Parliament has much broader powers than the Parliament under the previous Constitution.

*Were they recognized by the security sector, its supervisory bodies, local authorities, non-governmental actors?*

In addition to the constitutional reform, a number of other institutional and behavioural changes can be considered the result of political lessons. For example, in order to bring greater transparency and accountability Public Supervisory Boards were established in the ministries and departments, including national security agencies. Public Supervisory Boards consist mostly of representatives of civil society and thus represent an institution of civil control over the work of state bodies.

In recent years, there has been a reform in the Interior Ministry and the armed forces – in particular, after the adoption and implementation of the new Military Doctrine of the Kyrgyz Republic, signed by President Atambayev in July 2013.<sup>64</sup> In line with the Military Doctrine, the General Staff of the Armed Forces was established as the single body to command all departments and agencies of the armed forces.<sup>65</sup>

However, many elements of the reform and innovation shall not be considered the result of specific lessons learned from the events of April 7, 2010. Most often, the reforms were dictated by a much wider scope of lessons and challenges, among which the tragic conflict in Osh and its adjacent areas in June 2010 have a special place.

*Were they taken into account and incorporated properly in the preparation for emergencies?*

It is difficult to assess the readiness of the current government of Kyrgyzstan for political crises similar to that on April 7. After a period of stabilization following the tragic events of June 2010, the law enforcement and security forces in the country are certainly in a better position than in that difficult post-Bakiyev period.

Over the past two years, there were some difficult situations that had political implications: a series of actions, starting with the most significant one in May 2013 by the critics of the Kumtor project in Zheti-Oguz district of Issyk-Kul; a series of events around the arrest and conviction of opposition leaders Kamchibek Tashiyev with his two other colleagues and Ahmatbek Keldibekov; and the most recent event – the kurultai of the National opposition movement, which took place on 10 April 2014.

Despite the fact that these events did not reach the severity of the scenarios on April 6 and 7, law enforcement agencies have so far managed to keep control of the situation, although with difficulty. The fact that this situation did not spread and remained localized with a limited number of participants can be explained by three reasons. First, most of the population was tired of the political turmoil. Second, there was no political and economic environment that would encourage a critical mass of people to protest in

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<sup>64</sup> “President A. Atambaev has approved the Military Doctrine of Kyrgyzstan,” *IA Kabar*, 15 July 2013, available at <http://kabar.kg/rus/politics/full/59317>; and “Military Doctrine of the Kyrgyz Republic,” available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1374474180>.

<sup>65</sup> “Atambaev signed a decree to establish the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan,” *IA KyrTAG*, 4 February 2014, available at <http://www.kyrtag.kg/news/detail.php?ID=3142>.

the spring of 2010, and, third, the political opposition was not comparable in size and capability to the opposition of April 2010.

Given these objective differences between April 2010 and the situation after Bakiyev regime, it can be concluded that the level of ability of the authorities to manage complex political situations like mass rallies is a little proven fact, but so far relatively successful. The preferred use of non-violent methods to resolve the crisis, maintaining a relatively regular dialogue with local communities—albeit late in many cases—and the fact that official leaders and not backstage authorities as Janysh Bakiyev, establish the steps and means to regulate the situation can be assessed as possible signs of improvement in this area.

### *What lessons learned did not bring any changes to the work of crisis management?*

Based on the failure to regulate the crisis on April 7, it became clear that a headquarters for effective coordination of information and decision-making was needed, which would include a small group of key executives from the security forces, with a clear description of the office prerogatives. The existence of such a headquarters on April 7 was not confirmed by different sources.<sup>66</sup> However, such an institution was really needed on 7 April and later.

After declaring a state of emergency, the role of the commandant and his staff, according to the latest edition of the Law “On State of Emergency,” could partially fill in the lack of coordination; nevertheless, this institution does not eliminate the need for a collective coordinating body at the national level. Although certain steps have been taken in this direction, like the establishment of the General Staff of the armed forces and the position of a Vice-Prime Minister in charge of the “power block,” the question remains unresolved.

## **Recommendations**

### *What norms should have been worked out or changed?*

Based on the analysis of the crisis from April 7, 2010, it could be stated that the regulatory framework was not a major problem in providing control over the situation. Nevertheless, a number of positive changes in the regulatory framework had already been approved, starting with the adoption of the new Constitution, the new Law “On Peaceful Assemblies” and ending with changes in the Constitutional Law “On State of Emergency.”

Further changes to the legislation can be made to ensure effective emergency management. For example, as a continuation of the previous discussion (5.e) it has been suggested to create a permanent collective coordinating body for crisis management following the example of “situational rooms” available in the US, with some differences,

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<sup>66</sup> See, in particular, “Conclusion of the State Commission” and “Report of the Interim parliamentary commission.”

for example, focusing on keeping internal order rather than on international appeals. The establishment of this structure may require changes in different laws or the adoption of a separate law on its work.

### *Necessary changes regarding operations and operational procedures*

It is imperative to establish a permanent and effective system for assessment of emerging and crisis situations, the collection and analysis of information and decision-making in critical and emergency situations, similar to the events on 7 April. Responsible officials shall be clearly defined: leadership in crisis management should not by default be given to the president or the prime minister, still their role and the role of other officials should be clearly specified.

The April 7 events have shown that the procedure of declaring a state of emergency can be long and complex, while the situation may require immediate action. Therefore, it makes sense to have unified management by Interior and national security forces (following the model of the General Staff of the Armed Forces) to resolve the crisis in the country, especially in situations where a state of emergency is not declared, but the situation is close to the extreme.

### *Required skills*

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, in particular government departments and bodies responsible for the regulation of public order and crisis response, shall study in detail the experience of past crises, including Osh events of 1990 and 2010, Aksy 2002, the events of March 2005 and April 2010, and learn their lessons.

It is recommended that a separate institute for analysis and expertise be created, possibly with the Secretariat of the Council of Defence, which would deal directly with the investigation of past lessons, provide action-oriented recommendations and formulate crisis management policy.

It is necessary to assess the effectiveness of the OSCE program on support of internal affairs services and to strengthen its focus, aiming at enhancing the potential of the police to control both peaceful and violent demonstrations.

### *Other recommendations*

The Government and the President of the Kyrgyz Republic shall refrain from using the media, in fact controlled by the state (NTRC, in particular), to discredit the opposition and create a certain negative perception among the audience of the opposition. This phenomenon has recently been observed with regard to members of the National opposition movement.

Members of the government and especially the president shall maintain a real and not an artificial dialogue with local communities and the people in general, discussing current issues and explaining the position of state and government on them. This also applies to the issue of Kumtor, the situation in the energy sector, the problems of border communities, and issues related to external relations (for example, on the accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Customs Union).

The Government, regulatory authorities and the President of the Kyrgyz Republic shall provide a complete assessment of past events and adhere to these principles in the future. Especially in the case of the events of April, it shall refer to liability for all offenses, including theft and misappropriation of arms, causing material damage to public and private property, and much more. The President and other relevant authorities shall fight corruption strictly within the framework of existing legislation, and prevent the development of illegal and suspicious methods of corruption and combating it.

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# Chapter 4

## The Events in Osh 2010: Lessons for the Future

Asel Murzakulova and Abdiraim Zhorokulov

### Summary

In the period 10-14 June 2010, in the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions of the Kyrgyz Republic, massive clashes occurred between Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities that led to riots, arson, looting, and caused the death of 423 persons,<sup>1</sup> 2,500 injured, and 400,000 displaced people. Later, these clashes became known as the Osh events of 2010. In the history of Kyrgyzstan this was the largest conflict in number of victims and destruction, and with the strongest international response. During these tragic events, the UN Council on Human Rights convened in Geneva and adopted a resolution in which it called on Kyrgyzstan to investigate fully the facts related to the deaths in the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, and to hold accountable those responsible.

Four years after the tragedy, society has not come up with a common assessment of the events. The numerous reports prepared by the state, international and non-governmental organizations do not match in their evaluation of the causes of the conflict. The main sources point out a number of reasons: separatism of Uzbek community leaders; revanchism of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's supporters; the struggle of the Provisional Government for power in the south; involvement of "third parties" and their intention to destabilize the situation in Central Asia, and the long-term ethnic discrimination of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. Despite this diversity of positions in the evaluation of events, none of the reports enjoyed broad public support.

When considering the causes of this conflict, it is necessary to study the issue during the time of the Soviet Union, as the roots for tensions between the two communities originated in this historical period. The policy of perestroika and transparency in the late 1980s gave rise to the national consciousness of both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. At that time, social and economic problems exacerbated, while Kyrgyz young men had to resolve the problems of housing and land use. Therefore, young people asked local authorities in Osh region to define the land for housing, and in order to accomplish their goals in 1990

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<sup>1</sup> With regard to the number of victims, there is a mismatch with the official data; in particular, the Human Rights Centre "Kylym Shamy" refers to 492 people. From the interviews with G. Abdirasulova, 28 April 2014, Bishkek.

they set up the informal association “Osh Aimag.” Parallel to this, the informal Uzbek Association “Adolat” became active. As part of its agenda, Uzbek group of elders from the Jalal-Abad region in March 1990 addressed the Council of Nationalities of the Supreme Council of the USSR and the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Kirghiz SSR with a demand to grant autonomy to the Uzbek population in southern Kyrgyzstan. Other requests were to create Osh autonomy with self-governance and to give the Uzbek language the status of an official language. In addition, Uzbek residents demanded the creation of an Uzbek cultural centre, an Uzbek faculty at Osh Pedagogical Institute, replacement of the first Regional Secretary of the party Usen Sydykov, who apparently protected only the interests of the Kyrgyz population. The resentment among Uzbeks grew due to the fact that the vast majority of the country’s leading cadres were Kyrgyz.<sup>2</sup> As a result of serious errors in land use and human resources policy, in 1990 discontent resulted in ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, with 282 casualties.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, lessons were not learned from the events in 1990, they did not become the subject of detailed causal analysis, but most importantly no one was held responsible for their inactivity or incorrect decisions. Obviously, these events were overlooked. Absamat Masaliev and Renat Kulmatov, who held senior positions in the Supreme Council of the Republic resigned. Other leaders who had taken wrong decisions retained their high government positions until recently (Apas Djumagulov, Medetkan Sherimkulov, Usen Sydykov and others).<sup>4</sup> None of them took systemic and practical measures to change the situation in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations, which was a reason for the conflict to emerge again later. Moreover, a system of early warning was not established at state level.

Due to the socio-political situation in the country after April 7, 2010, there was a sharp aggravation of interethnic relations in Bishkek (village Maevka) and Chuya region (Tokmok), in the cities of Osh, Jalal-Abad and the surrounding area. The confrontation between the Interim Government and President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who was in Jalal-Abad, led to tensions in the socio-political situation. Part of the society did not recognize the Interim Government as a legitimate power, which could serve as a reason to launch a large-scale retaliation. In this situation, the new authorities needed the support of the south, where Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s birthplace was. In fact, the interests of the Interim Government and the Uzbek community leaders crossed in a crucial point – to prevent Kurmanbek Bakiyev’s supporters from gaining power.

In this difficult political situation, part of the Uzbek community leaders, assessing the current situation in the country as favourable to achieve their goals, started making

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<sup>2</sup> For more details see: *Report of the National Commission for the Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and recommendations on the tragic events that took place in the south in June 2010*, available at <http://linkg.info/dokumenty/otchety/1554-otchet-natsionalnoy-komissii-abdygany-erkebaeva-o-mezhetnicheskom-konflikte-2010-goda-na-yuge-kyrgyzstana>.

<sup>3</sup> Talant Razakov, *Osh events of 1990* (Bishkek, 2011), p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> For more details see: *Report of the National Commission for the Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and making recommendations on the tragic events that took place in the south in June 2010*.

claims, involving large numbers of people. The tragic events in the city of Osh in June were preceded by numerous meetings of Uzbek diaspora, whose organizers were the leaders of national culture centres (Batyrov, Inamzhon Abdrasulov, Zhalalidin Salakhutdinov, Karamat Abdullaev). Thus, from the end of April until 10 June 2010, according to law enforcement officials, more than 25 meetings were held in Osh and the surrounding area, attended by 100 to 500-600 people who, as a rule, discussed international relations issues.<sup>5</sup> “According to Inamzhon Abdrasulov’s words, in parallel ran discussions on the establishment of special teams to provide security in the neighbourhoods and districts with Uzbek population. Conflicts and fights between Kyrgyz and Uzbek young men were often provoked.”<sup>6</sup>

The Interim Government was aware of the demands of the Uzbek community leaders. According to numerous reports, the new authorities negotiated with them. This fact subsequently contributed to the crisis of confidence of the population from the conflict zone in the Interim Government. Thus, one could agree with Neil Melvin’s definition that the ethnic conflict was the result of a struggle for power among Kyrgyz citizens that started after April 7, 2010. The events in June were a follow up of 7 April and the final stage of the struggle between the Provisional Government and supporters of ousted president Kurmanbek Bakiev.<sup>7</sup>

The main sources of this analysis are the numerous reports of government, non-governmental and international commissions, research materials, as well as in-depth interviews conducted as part of this analysis.

### **Situation analysis: response, containment and resolution**

According to data published in the report of the National Commission for Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and recommendations on the tragic events that took place in the south of KR in June 2010, the Provisional Government, law enforcement agencies, local authorities in the southern regions and the cities of Osh and Jalal Abad were informed in time of the growing trend of escalation of inter-ethnic relations. In particular, the National Security Committee submitted nine notes on the current situation; the mayor of Osh, Melis Myrzakmatov sent letters with information about the situation to the members of the Interim Government, local civil activists also reported an increase in tension. However, the Interim Government failed to prevent the large-scale tragedy, though it was contained and terminated fairly quickly – within a few days.

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<sup>5</sup> For more details see: *Report of the National Commission for the Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and recommendations on the tragic events that took place in the south in June 2010.*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Neil Melvin, On the way to a stable multi-ethnic Kyrgyzstan: how to eliminate the causes and break the vicious circle of violence. Project “Central Eurasia,” Occasional Paper no. 3 (2011), available at [www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/stable-kyrgyzstan-20110405-ru\\_0.pdf](http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/stable-kyrgyzstan-20110405-ru_0.pdf).

Reflecting on the incident, as well as the circumstances leading to this conflict, we could draw the following conclusion: law enforcement agencies and local authorities lacked an early warning system.

Although international organizations, in particular UNDP Preventive Development Programme, set up monitoring networks for early warning, they did not work during the conflict. The early warning system developed by UN Preventive Development Programme was an analytical mechanism including a set of measures to identify, predict and prevent crises. Unfortunately, this system was introduced only at the project level and, therefore, state authorities did not give it proper attention due to lack of understanding of the importance of this effort. This situation was affected by the turnover of government personnel, lack of continuity, and most importantly – the lack of proper funding.

In confirmation of the words of the absence of a coherent early warning system we could consider the fact that the state of emergency declared by the Provisional Government in the city of Jalal-Abad on May 19, 2010, was abolished on 1 June. This happened in spite of the signals of the growing threat of ethnic clashes in Osh and Jalal-Abad and the adjacent regions.<sup>8</sup>

In this situation, officials from the regional power services were not able to convince the authorities not to cancel the state of emergency, but rather to expand its territory in the Osh region. All this proves the weak efficiency of individual managers and employees of the security services, law enforcement agencies and local authorities. We shall not forget the fact that officials from the National Security Committee, Ministry of Internal Affairs, prosecutors and their local agencies, as well as heads of local authorities, for a short period (April-May 2010), under conditions of constant confrontation (rallies, pickets and violent seizure of office buildings throughout the country), were in some way demoralized and were not able to do their job of predicting the socio-political situation and ethnic conflicts, as well as to develop measures for their prevention, neutralization and containment.<sup>9</sup>

If we speak about the central power, represented at that time by the Provisional Government, we could conclude that it failed to cope with the responsibility to ensure security to the citizens. Drawing conclusions, we can sadly assume that the Provisional Government either did not recognize, or underestimated the deterioration in inter-ethnic relations in southern Kyrgyzstan. All of this suggests that the Provisional Government, local authorities and law enforcement agencies did not have a clear understanding of the situation in the country, particularly in the absence of an early warning system. In addition, the arguments put forward by the President of the Transition period Roza

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<sup>8</sup> *Report of the National Commission for the Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and recommendations on the tragic events that took place in the south in June 2010.*

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Interim parliamentary commission of the Kyrgyz Parliament to identify and investigate the circumstances and conditions that led to the tragic events that took place in the country in April-June 2010, and provide political assessment, available at <http://inkg.info/literature/Parlament.doc>.*

Otunbayeva that the surge in violence was of such magnitude that the Provisional Government could hardly control it, confirmed the above.<sup>10</sup>

Reports from the independent international commission and from the interim parliamentary commission for investigation of the causes of the ethnic conflict in the south of the country in 2010 show that government authorities received signals for the upcoming clashes. But, unfortunately, they were not well-structured: there was no centre for collection and analysis of information, or for coordination and immediate action. This was mentioned in the reports of both commissions, as well as in the comments of the Government in the report of the International Independent Commission for investigation of the events of June 2010.<sup>11</sup> Materials submitted to the media and the reports of the two commissions show that there was more than enough information, but the Provisional Government was not able to respond adequately. As noted above, there was no effective system of conflict prevention, processing of operational information and working out specific preventive measures.

To be fair, we shall note that in the context of coercive regime change state institutions were not functioning in their full capacity, so the decisions of the Provisional Government were received late or were not considered legitimate by some government leaders. On April 7, 2010 the country suffered from a “power vacuum”: President Kurmanbek Bakiyev and his entourage moved to the south of the country to mobilize their supporters, the government announced their resignation, people’s power was spontaneously established, regions and towns were controlled by Coordination councils represented by various political and social organizations, movements, and civil activists. The Provisional Government, which claimed responsibility for the security of the country, had the task to break the resistance of the former regime, to stabilize the socio-political situation in the country, to restore the hierarchy of state power and to return the state system into the legal framework. Due to the fact that the country was in a transitional political situation, the process of establishing control in all spheres of state governance was not completed. There were no mechanisms for information exchange between authorities and coordination of efforts to take adequate decisions.<sup>12</sup>

### *Situational awareness*

Based on data presented in three different reports and prepared by the temporary parliamentary commission, the independent international commission and the national commission, it becomes clear that the information available to the government on events in the regions was rather comprehensive. Information about upcoming riots and their expected timing was obvious. Melis Myrzakmatov states in his book that he re-

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<sup>10</sup> *Report of the International Independent Commission of Inquiry into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010*, available at [http://www.fergananews.com/archive/2011/kic\\_report\\_russian\\_final.pdf](http://www.fergananews.com/archive/2011/kic_report_russian_final.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> *Comments by the Government to the report of the International Independent Commission of Inquiry into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010*, available at [http://botschaft-kirgisien.de/files/comment\\_osh.pdf](http://botschaft-kirgisien.de/files/comment_osh.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

peatedly held meetings with a broad circle of participants to discuss the prevention of possible conflicts. Further, he writes that the minutes from these meetings were sent personally to President Roza Otunbaeva.<sup>13</sup> The chiefs of the Osh regional police, the Prosecutor's office and the National Security Committee also noted that an inter-ethnic conflict could break out at any moment. Therefore, we can claim that sufficient information about possible conflicts was submitted to the authorities on a regular basis for a considerable period of time.

Between April and the end of May 2010, Uzbek leaders Kadyrzhan Batyrov and Inamzhan Abdrasulov organized short spontaneous rallies in the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad. It is necessary to point out the surge of violence on May 13-14 and the subsequent events on May 19, 2010, followed by a state of emergency in Jalal-Abad region. On May 13-14 2010, Kurmanbek Bakiyev's supporters seized the regional state administration in Jalal-Abad. "As a result of clashes between President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's supporters, on the one hand, and members of the "Ata-Meken" party, as well as supporters of the incumbent governor Bektur Asanov, two persons were killed and 65 were injured."<sup>14</sup> Five days later, on May 19, in the city of Jalal-Abad, during clashes between supporters of Kadyrzhan Batyrov and former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev four persons were killed.<sup>15</sup> However, the state of emergency introduced on May 19 was terminated soon after – on June 1, although the overall situation in the south remained critical. In an interview with the authors of this report, the commandant of Jalal-Abad region, appointed on May 19, 2010, and later appointed commandant of the Osh region in June 2010, Deputy Minister of the Interior, Major-General from the militia Baktybek Alymbekov said: "We received information that Batyrov will act, that people were getting ready, but the situation throughout the country called for a state of emergency. At that time no one could predict what was going to turn into an ethnic conflict."<sup>16</sup>

Periodically, local media published materials, which were more or less provocative and increased tension. For example, the TV programs on channels MezonTV and Osh TV were extremely controversial, thus "the representatives of the Kyrgyz community

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<sup>13</sup> Melis Myrzakmatov, *In search of the truth. Osh tragedy: documents, facts, interviews, addresses and statements* (Bishkek: Turar, 2011), p.34.

<sup>14</sup> *Circumstances and history of the tragic events in May and June 2010 in the cities of Osh, Jalal-Abad, some areas of Osh and Jalal-Abad regions*, Document prepared by the working group of the State Committee for National Security, Ministry of Interior, General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic with the participation of experts from the Office of the President, the Secretariat of the Council of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic on behalf of the President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev on February 17, 2012, available at [www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=7389](http://www.fergananews.com/article.php?id=7389).

<sup>15</sup> *Report of the Interim parliamentary commission of the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic on revealing and investigating the circumstances and conditions that led to the tragic events that took place in the country in April-June 2010, and provide political assessment* (Bishkek, 2011), available at <http://inkg.info/literature/Parlament.doc>.

<sup>16</sup> From an interview with the commandant of the Osh region Baktybek Alymbekov, 9 March 2014, Bishkek.

perceived them as open calls for separatism.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, these kinds of messages, transmitted through the media, were not carefully traced by law enforcement agencies and the Provisional Government. Judging by the materials presented in the National Commission report, “the local government leaders in Osh and Jalal-Abad held regular meetings with all city services and law enforcement agencies which took steps to prevent open conflict that might arise after watching this kind of television programs and materials. At the same meetings, law enforcement officials informed about the growing number of clashes and fights between young people from the Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups. The minutes of these meetings were sent to the Provisional Government. Many of them contained recommendations aiming to reduce tensions. But even after such information, the Provisional Government did not draw the appropriate conclusions, and was not able to fully take control of the situation in the southern region.”<sup>18</sup>

In response to a question about the inaction of the National Security Committee regarding the prevention and containment of ethnic threat, it was noted that before the events of April 2010, the National Security Committee was focused on political espionage, prosecution of the opposition and ensuring security to members of the current regime. Thus, the inherent prerogatives of the special service were left behind. Personnel policy pursued until April 2010 led to changes in the professional profile of this service. In the period from 2007 till 2010, 330 soldiers were dismissed, mostly experienced staff from the National Security Service.<sup>19</sup> As a result, in early 2010, the National Security Committee consisted of newly enrolled young employees who lacked the necessary knowledge and experience.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the “replacement of experienced Kursan Asanov with Bolot Nyshanov as head of the Department of Internal Affairs of Osh adversely affected the efficiency of law enforcement agencies to adequately assess and resolve conflict at an early stage.”<sup>21</sup>

### *Responsibilities and distribution of duties*

Based on the emergency nature of the functioning of the Interim Government, the coordination between state institutions was extremely weak, and in some cases completely paralyzed. The division of responsibilities between central and local authorities to manage the Osh conflict in 2010 was not clear, since the decisions were made by temporary bodies during the conflict – the commandant’s office. Commandants were given full authority, and were empowered to make decisions on their own without the consent or approval of the Interim Government.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Report of the National Commission for the Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and recommendations on the tragic events that took place in the south in June 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Report of the National Security Committee on the work done during the period April-June 2010, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/1411821.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> From an interview with Vitaly Ponomarev, Director of the Central Asian Programme in Human Rights Centre “Memorial,” Bishkek, 29 April 2014.

At an extraordinary session on the night of 10 to 11 June, the Provisional Government issued a Decree on the state of emergency in the cities of Osh, Uzgen, Karasuy and Aravan districts of Osh region of the Kyrgyz Republic. The state of emergency was introduced at 02:00 hours on June 11, 2010 with a curfew from 20:00 to 06:00 hours. First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, General Bakytbek Alymbekov, was appointed the commandant of the area. This decree gave all power into the hands of the commandant. All law enforcement agencies, as well as the city government, including municipal authorities, performed their work within their prerogatives, directly after coordination with the commandant. A day later, on June 12, 2010 a decree of the Provisional Government declared a state of emergency in the Jalal-Abad region of the Kyrgyz Republic with a curfew from 18:00 until 06:00. The first deputy chairman of the State National Security Service of the Kyrgyz Republic Kubatbek Baybolov was appointed commandant of the Jalal-Abad region.

Speaking of the efficiency of government services, we shall point out the lack of a single decision-making centre. This was largely due to the fact that the Provisional Government was not sufficiently supported by the population in the south of the country, or by Melis Myrzakmatov, mayor of Osh, the second largest city in the country. Moreover, members of the Provisional Government were in disagreement on various issues. In addition, "Lieutenant-General Ismail Isakov, special representative of the Provisional Government in the southern regions of the Kyrgyz Republic, who was appointed on 13 May 2010, could not take the situation under control despite his wide range of prerogatives. Later, during the direct clashes, the excited crowd did not listen to Ismail Isakov, who was trying to calm people down and discourage them from acting against the Law."<sup>22</sup>

Since the coordination of efforts to limit the conflict was not effective in the first days of the tragedy, individual peacekeeping efforts ended tragically. Thus, city council officials from Osh and Jalal-Abad—Askar Shakirov, Ermek Murzabekov and Ellyn Arapbaev—were killed.

### *Decision-making process*

Despite the numerous signals about the possibility of arising conflicts, at that time the Provisional Government did not have an action plan to resolve the situation. At the same time, a comparison between the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad shows what different steps were taken by municipal officials in the two cities. For example, analysis of the work of Osh City Hall shows continuous attempts to prevent bloodshed and high efficiency and adequacy of the actions of Osh mayor, Melis Myrzakmatov. For example, the minutes from meetings in Osh City Hall were submitted to the head of the Interim Government. This does not apply to the then mayor of the city of Jalal-Abad, Maksat Zheenbekov. The situation here was just the opposite, as during the events information about the location of the mayor was not available. Unlike municipal services in the city

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<sup>22</sup> Report of the National Commission for the Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and recommendations on the tragic events that took place in the south in June 2010.

of Osh, which despite the difficult situation were able to function adequately, municipal services in the city of Jalal-Abad were almost completely paralyzed.

Conflict localization was attempted by all available at the time forces. Control of conflict containment and normalization of the situation was handled by the commandant. According to the commandants of Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, their actions were based on the current local situation without an agreed action plan. Since the commandants acted in an urgent manner, it was not always possible to record the decisions.<sup>23</sup>

Osh region commandant, Baktybek Alymbekov, said in an interview: "I was not limited in making decisions, which means I was not required to coordinate every decision with the Interim Government members. At that time, all relied on our experience. There were 500 law enforcement officers in Osh and we recruited 2,000 employees in the evening of June 11: we started to attract veterans from Afghanistan, volunteers, customs officers, reserve officers, vigilantes and cadets. Upon arrival in Osh, we started working on the arrangement of checkpoints, which gave us the opportunity to better control the territory. The massive purges in the Ministry of Internal Affairs after the April Revolution (2010) led to complete demoralization on the principle "friend or foe." Under these conditions, along with the resolution of tactical problems, we had to bring our assistants."<sup>24</sup>

In turn, the commandant of the Jalal-Abad region, Kubatbek Baybolov said: "When I arrived, there were 120 officers against 6-7 thousand protesters. All others were transferred to Bishkek or Osh. One armoured vehicle was already in the hands of the insurgents. In fact, they were not able to use it. When the shells and fuel finished, they abandoned it. At the time of my arrival, the staff was completely demoralized. Inaction of the central authorities caused confusion and impotence to control law enforcement services. Thanks to my efforts, we coordinated the situation within 5-6 hours. We managed to prevent the seizure of the city police department arsenal of weapons. On my insistence, additional forces were deployed in the region: in Bishkek I had resolved the question of mobilizing additional 250 Police Academy cadets and reserve officers."<sup>25</sup>

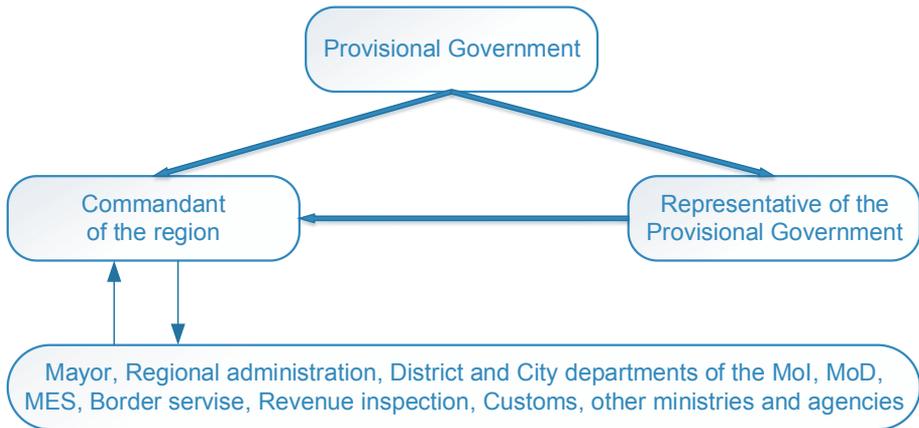
According to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On emergencies," in a state of emergency all public authorities are subordinated to the commandant. During that time, the decision-making scheme on Figure 1 was used.

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<sup>23</sup> In an interview, the commandant of the Jalal-Abad region Kubatbek Baybolov pointed out that all decisions of the commandant's office were recorded and stored in the archive of the Ministry of Interior in the city of Jalal-Abad. During this research this archive was not checked.

<sup>24</sup> From an interview with the commandant of the Osh region Baktybek Alymbekov, 9 March 2014, Bishkek.

<sup>25</sup> From an interview with the commandant of the Jalal-Abad region Kubatbek Baybolov. March 20, 2014, Bishkek.



**Figure 1. Decision-making scheme in a state of emergency in Osh and Jalal-Abad regions.**

*Use of force*

As noted earlier, at the time of the conflict outbreak, a power vacuum was formed in the country. The only body representing power was the Provisional Government. Decisions taken by the members of the Provisional Government did not meet the full approval of the population and local authorities. Yet, despite this, a large part of the population and local authorities recognized members of the Provisional Government as legitimate. All decisions of the Provisional Government were fixed by decrees and regulations. The decree on the state of emergency in the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad and the surrounding areas were followed by decrees: “On the partial mobilization in the Kyrgyz Republic,” “On the permission of the use of military weapons,” “On the responsibility of law enforcement officers, military personnel of the Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic for disobeying a lawful order or request of the commandant of the state of emergency territory.” Of course, after the state of emergency was declared, the situation was rapidly brought under control. In this regard, the question arises why the state of emergency in the Jalal-Abad region was introduced almost two days after the state of emergency in Osh? Probably, if the state of emergency had been introduced simultaneously in both locations, it would have been possible to prevent completely a collision in the city of Jalal-Abad, Bazar-Korgon district and avoid casualties near the plant “Sanpa.” Unfortunately, none of the independent reports on the tragic events provides an answer.

If we consider the combat readiness of the security forces and the regular army, then, as mentioned above, we can say they were not in the best condition. After the events of April 2010, they were almost completely demoralized. Many experienced officers were dismissed, while the newly appointed lacked the operative skills to act in emergency situations of this kind. We shall also point out the fact that the level of public confidence in law enforcement agencies was very low – among both ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek. Also, in support of the arguments about the low morale of security services we shall note that in addition to the security forces, voluntary group of peacekeepers from

the Afghan war were deployed to the south led by General Miroslav Niyazov, who largely contributed to the stabilization of the situation in the Bazar-Korgon and Nookan regions.<sup>26</sup>

The participation of the armed forces of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is estimated differently. On the one hand, the involvement of defence forces had a negative effect. The mission of Ministry of Defence units is to repel an external aggression, but the lack of skills and training to contain internal conflicts led to massive seizure of weapons and ammunition by the protesters, which directly influenced the escalation of the conflict. On the other hand, demoralized Interior Ministry personnel were unable to control the conflict by themselves. The majority of the respondents to this survey agreed with the conclusion that if the Ministry of Interior had been efficient, the conflict could have been contained by internal forces.

A sensitive issue remains the problem of capturing weapons during these conflicts. According to data provided in the working group report on research and documentation of seized weapons, here are some figures:

**Table 1. Seizure/ delivery of firearms, ammunition and military equipment in regions.**<sup>27</sup>

Seizure/delivery	Osh region	Jalal-Abad region	Total
Seized firearms	159	123	282
Returned	51	85	136
Not returned	108	38	146
Seized ammunition	18 136	24 879	43 045
Returned	1280	15 409	16 701
Not returned	16 856	9 470	26 344
Seized supplementary military equipment	47	177	224
Returned	0	146	146
Not returned	47	31	78

<sup>26</sup> Report of the National Commission for the Comprehensive Study of the causes, consequences and recommendations for tragic events that took place in the south in June 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Tables 1 and 2 are given in the report *Security of firearms, military equipment and ammunition provided by the state at times of riots: research, conclusions, recommendations* (Bishkek: Public fund "Kylym Shamy," 2011).

**Table 2. Name of state agencies where firearms, ammunition and military equipment were seized/ delivered.**

Seizure/delivery	Ministry of Interior KR	Ministry of Defence KR	Border Service	Total
Seized firearms	95	104	83	282
Returned	59	37	40	136
Not returned	36	67	43	146
Seized ammunition	20 935	14 486	7 594	43 045
Returned	14 412	1 117	1 160	16 701
Not returned	6 523	13 369	6 434	26 344
Seized supplementary military equipment	158	0	66	224
Returned	146	0	0	146
Not returned	12	0	66	78

Most of the weapons were returned during the first two years after the conflict. But, as data from the working group shows, half of the weapons captured during the conflict have not been returned to date (July 2014). In general, the efforts of government agencies were not effective.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, the availability of weapons among the population is a threat to public safety. At the same time, human rights organizations claim that a proper investigation of seized weapons and the responsibility of officials who have allowed the seizure of weapons, has not yet been conducted.

### *Cooperation and coordination*

The participation of non-governmental organizations, volunteers and local leaders in the containment of the conflict, providing information to the parties to the conflict, the distribution of humanitarian assistance and human resource mobilization was at a high level. At the same time, coordination between these parties in the early days of the conflict remained weak. In general, the cooperation of non-governmental actors with government agencies was widespread. State institutions lacked the human resources, but they were supported by volunteers from non-governmental organizations. Prior to the conflict in the region, there were various mechanisms of cooperation between state, international and public organizations. Today, it is difficult to trace how the existing mecha-

<sup>28</sup> Gulshayr Abdyrasulova, "Gun safety in Kyrgyzstan: current status and challenges," in *Almanac 2012: Governance and Security Sector Reform in Kyrgyzstan* (Geneva-Bishkek: DCAF, 2012), pp. 106-120.

nisms worked in the early days of the conflict, as many respondents interviewed by the authors mentioned poor coordination of joint efforts, or lack thereof in the first three days of the conflict. At the same time, situational communication channels were formed in the first days – they incorporated the pre-conflict channels, but in new configurations. Personal relations played an important role. For example, with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) a network of mediators was established before the conflict in the region. However, this network did not work during the conflict. At the same time, some members of this network joined other channels of civil interaction, located in different parts of Osh and Jalal-Abad regions.

These interim mechanisms ensured the effective exchange of information that contributed to adequate solutions regarding the localization of the conflict, distribution of humanitarian aid, and assistance to refugees in subsequent phases. For example, the distribution of humanitarian aid was organized through several channels:

- *Official*, represented by the Special Representative of the President of the Interim Government Aigul Ryskulova, and in the early days of the conflict largely relying on the nongovernmental sector and municipal services;
- *International*, when international missions organized their activities after 20 June 2010;
- *Informal channels* of mutual assistance and support among the local population, in effect throughout the conflict.

If we define the three phases of the conflict – the start, peak and decline, it is obvious that during the first two phases it was difficult to talk about specific needs, but at the same time, basic needs were obvious. This statement was confirmed by the Special Representative of the President of the Interim Government, Aigul Ryskulova, on providing assistance to victims and refugees as a result of the events in the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions: “In the city of Osh, there was no water, gas, electricity and people did not have food. First, it was necessary to assist vulnerable groups, but social services had not provided lists as employees, fearing for their safety, did not go to work. We worked directly with the local population where it was possible. Certain mobile teams travelled to the barricaded areas. Local leaders, civil activists and non-governmental organizations helped with the distribution of aid. Another example of cooperation was the way bread for the city of Osh was baked, when private entrepreneurs got involved in this work.”<sup>29</sup>

### *Communication*

All decisions made by the members of the Provisional Government were processed in the form of decrees and regulations. Local authorities received timely information about new decrees with instructions what was not to be told to the population. During the

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<sup>29</sup> From an interview with Aigul Ryskulova, Special Representative of the President of the Interim Government on assistance to the victims and refugees as a result of events that occurred in the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, 16 April 2014, Bishkek.

tragic events, national TV channels did not show the real picture of the events in the south. The only transnational channel KTR (Kyrgyz Television and Radio) did not understand the concept of content transmission; therefore, the main communication channel between the population and the Interim Government was very poor.

If we talk about regional TV channels, they could not work efficiently and perform their functions in this crisis, as many employees could not get to their working places due to closed roads in different neighbourhoods of the city, power cuts due to fires, and fear for their lives. Regional TV “OshTV” and “MezonTV” ceased operations immediately after the start of events.

As a result, the population of the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad were not able to receive timely and complete information on what was happening. The only sources of operational information were the Internet and rumours. Most people used mobile Internet, but because of problems with the payment for mobile communications this feature was also strongly limited. In the absence of access to reliable sources, it was difficult to obtain and verify information. The lack of alternative information led to a sharp rise in rumours. As a result, the population quickly spread provocative rumours and people were often exposed to panic in the post-conflict period.<sup>30</sup>

### *Logistics*

At the initial stage of the conflict and in its acute phase there was shortage of human, financial and material resources, which led to the mobilization of additional ones. Distribution of resources was organized according to the conflict phases, based on the situation, needs and available resources. Logistics of search, delivery and distribution of resources was poorly organized at the beginning of the conflict, but with time was gradually adjusted. Allocation of resources was assigned accordingly: security – to the commandant’s office, the humanitarian sphere – to the representatives of the Interim Government, the coordinating staff at the Ministry of Emergencies, civil organizations and subsequently to international organizations.

At the time of the conflict outbreak and on the next day when the conflict was gaining momentum, there was acute shortage of human resources in the police. In simple terms, the streets needed policemen, traffic police, and armed security guards of government agencies. Mobilization of law enforcement personnel was not adequate and one reason for this was the lack of material resources allocated by the Provisional Government for quelling the conflict. Lack of material resources affected the weak mobility of forces involved in the conflict: vehicles, fuel, and means of communication. The situation was under control only after the transfer of additional police forces, Police Academy cadets, Special Forces from the northern regions and the capital.

On the third day of the conflict, the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad felt an acute shortage of food. In some districts people were starving. There was no central market, shops and other retail outlets were partially looted, and those remaining intact were not func-

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<sup>30</sup> For details, see Melis Myrzakmatov, *In search of the truth. Osh tragedy: documents, facts, interviews, appeals and statements* (Bishkek: Turar, 2011).

tioning. Tension decreased when humanitarian aid started to arrive from all over the country.

It is worth noting the important role of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which proved to be more mobile than government agencies. Civil society activists and NGOs organized themselves very quickly and started distributing humanitarian aid to the population. People stuck in their neighbourhoods received food from them. It is also worth noting that the distribution of food in the civilian sector was transparent and humanitarian aid was provided to all in need, regardless of their ethnicity. Food came from international organizations, NGOs, political parties, public and political figures, businesses, entrepreneurs and ordinary citizens who were not in country.<sup>31</sup>

According to most respondents, the mobilization and allocation of necessary resources was inefficient due to the following reasons:

- Existing confidential instructions and plans in case of emergency only affected the responsibilities of senior executives, and in this case, middle and junior level employees, for example in the social funds or medical institutions, operated according to the orders of the leadership. In case of incompetence, the whole structure remained paralyzed. Contingency plans did not involve middle and junior level employees and were not brought to their attention. Employees were not aware to whom to report, who was responsible for resource mobilization, who gave a signal for a certain action, and who was competent to resolve different problems. For example, a warehouse manager in a state institution did not have such instructions. However, as experience has shown, that person had an important role in resource distribution.<sup>32</sup>
- Acute food shortages during this crisis revealed the bad situation in state reserves. During the conflict, the Interim Government issued a resolution to open state reserves. However, there was only flour available.
- Lack of access to the local database of vulnerable groups, as social workers and postmen did not go to work for security reasons. Delivery of aid to this population group was difficult in the early days of conflict.

### *International relations*

Interim Government leader Roza Otunbayeva appealed to the President of the Russian Federation (RF) to send peacekeeping forces. Russia did not send troops but decided to work together with the member countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). An appeal was sent on behalf of Roza Otunbayeva to the leadership of the CSTO, of which the Kyrgyz Republic is a member. But as the CSTO was a relatively new organization, it did not have the tools and procedures for conflicts of this kind. The

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<sup>31</sup> Report of the International Independent Commission of Inquiry into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, available at [www.fergananews.com/archive/2011/kic\\_report\\_russian\\_final.pdf](http://www.fergananews.com/archive/2011/kic_report_russian_final.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> For example, the first humanitarian aid during the conflict was sent to the storage in Osh, where employees lacked the skills to organize the process of distribution of humanitarian aid.

statute and the mandate of the organization did not provide clear terms of intervention, interaction mechanisms or procedures which were not contradictory to international standards. As a result, it was decided not to send joint troops to the Kyrgyz Republic.

Subsequently, the Chair of the Interim Government Roza Otunbayeva appealed to the OSCE leadership to send police consultants in order to settle some disputable issues, and to review impartially the causes of the conflict and its peaceful resolution. OSCE leadership was ready to send 50 unarmed police advisers to the south of the Kyrgyz Republic, but later the Provisional Government refused admission, claiming that it could not guarantee the safety of its members.

The country was repeatedly visited by UN special envoy Miroslav Jenča, who continuously negotiated with members of the Provisional Government, urging them to act in accordance with international norms and conventions that had been ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic – to ensure fair treatment to the entire population during distribution of humanitarian assistance, to identify and detain participants in riots.<sup>33</sup>

### *Public relations*

Rumours played a significant role in misinforming society during the conflict. The credibility of the rumours compared to official information reflected the weak authority of the Provisional Government in the conflict zone. To inform the public, law enforcement agencies took a number of measures, one of them was a system of public notification through SMS messages sent through mobile operators.

Exchange of information between authorities and local and foreign media was ineffective. Among the members of the Provisional Government, only President Roza Otunbayeva communicated regularly with the press. The press office of the Provisional Government consisted of employees from three institutions: government, president and parliament. The information and coordination centre of the Provisional Government provided information support. Provisional Government staff was adequately qualified, but the lack of teamwork and coordination reduced the efficiency. “In fact, the personnel included members of the Interim Government and a support group, but work was not coordinated. We could barely inform local reporters about the situation. A lot of information was delayed. Coordination was a big issue.”<sup>34</sup>

Only three weeks later, personnel from the Information and Coordination Centre was sent to the conflict zone to provide information support to the commandants. A month later, the southern branch of the ICC opened in Osh. International journalists conducted their own reports in Osh, and thus, according to local actors, the “information war” against the Interim Government was the result of poorly coordinated work of the press service of the Interim Government and local authorities. “We learned about the events in Osh from the photographs of Igor Kovalenko, Natasha Lyubeznova, Marles Myrzakan

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<sup>33</sup> Report of the International Independent Commission of Inquiry into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010.

<sup>34</sup> From an interview with an anonymous official from the Interim Government, 27 March 2014, Bishkek.

uulu and others. Correspondents of international agencies arrived in Osh in the early days of the conflict, while employees of ICC received information from them. There was no coordination of the work of international journalists.”<sup>35</sup>

### *Laws and obligations*

Legal compliance was ensured by the legal framework in the event of emergencies, existing before April 7, as well as decrees, and regulations issued by the Interim Government. Despite this, the problem of compliance with the law after April 7 was a key objective of the Government. Some of the first decisions of the Interim Government were: Decree “On the disbandment of the Constitutional Court of the Kyrgyz Republic” and Decree “On termination of powers of members of the National Council for Justice Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic.” Thus, the judicial reform became the main priority of the Interim Government. However, there was no flow of new employees in the judiciary system. In a situation of uncertainty, the personnel in the judicial and supervisory systems, as well as law enforcement officers were demoralized, which hampered their professional effectiveness.

It should be noted that in the post-conflict period, numerous attacks on lawyers dealing with cases on the June events exacerbated the problem of achieving justice. As of 26 April 2012, according to the General Prosecutor’s Office, in connection with the events in Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, which took place in June 2010, 5,640 criminal cases were initiated, out of which 3,341 in the city of Osh, 1,301 in Osh region, 961 in Jalal-Abad and 37 cases by the Military Prosecutor’s Office. With this number of cases, only 288 were submitted to court, and only 253 of them were judged.<sup>36</sup>

We shall also mention the legal awareness of decision-makers involved in conflict resolution. For example, the commandant of Jalal-Abad region, Kubatbek Baybolov, said in an interview: “Members of the Interim Government were very poorly informed about the legislation, and tried to invent a legal basis for authorizing the use of weapons, while the relevant rules already existed in our legislation.”<sup>37</sup> At the same time, there was an opposite opinion on this situation: “A separate decree to permit the use of arms was necessary for several reasons. Firstly, the existing legislation does not adequately regulate the use of weapons in an emergency situation. Second, it was necessary to

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<sup>35</sup> From an interview with an anonymous official from the Interim Government, 27 March 2014, Bishkek.

<sup>36</sup> The materials of the General Prosecutor’s Office are included in the Review of measures taken by authorities in support to victims of the riots that took place in June 2010 in the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions of the Kyrgyz Republic. PF “Kylым Shamy” with technical support from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for Central Asia and the European Union in the framework of the project “Civil monitoring for the protection of human rights and conflict prevention.”

<sup>37</sup> From an interview with the commandant of the Jalal-Abad region Kubatbek Baybolov, 23 March 2014, Bishkek.

have the moral support and legitimization from the Provisional Government.”<sup>38</sup> It was obvious that the existing regulations with regard to emergency situations needed clarification and amendment based on the experience from Osh events of 2010.

### *Human rights*

Four years after the tragedy, it is still difficult to evaluate to what extent actors in the conflict were aware of human rights. Of course, with the help of international organizations and in accordance with national legislation, security officials received information about the principles of human rights at a particular stage of their professional training. We can assume that volunteers, vigilantes, reservists and veterans from Afghanistan were less competent compared to law enforcement officials because they did not receive special training on containment of conflicts. “Afghan” soldiers were soldiers of the regular army of the USSR. Human rights were not discussed in the regular army of the USSR. Reservists and vigilantes had different levels of specialized military training. Among them were those who had not received any training or had extremely poor preparation, such as reservists with past military service or training in the military departments in universities, where they did not receive any military specialty. At the same time, the big question was to what extent Ministry of Interior personnel acted according to their awareness of human rights.

Numerous allegations of human rights organizations concerning violations of the rights of crime suspects during the riots lead to the conclusion that the effective monitoring of human rights protection was at a low level. For example, asymmetric justice drew the attention from the first days of the conflict: “The basis for my objection to the prosecutor of Jalal-Abad, among other things, was the question why out of the 40 detainees at the end of June, only five were Kyrgyz, others were Uzbeks. With this ratio of victims, this was extremely asymmetrical and demanded fair treatment.”<sup>39</sup> The words of a human rights organization representative revealed the cause for this situation: “Post-June situation was characterized by a lack of equal access to justice and massive extortion of money by security officials – this was not a consequence of Bakiyev’s regime but a lack of will in the new government.”<sup>40</sup>

The problem of human rights and fair justice has been raised in the reports of local and international human rights organizations, which offered a number of recommendations to remedy the situation. However, these recommendations have not been accepted.

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<sup>38</sup> From an interview with the commandant of the Jalal-Abad region Kubatbek Baybolov, 9 April 2014, Bishkek.

<sup>39</sup> From an interview with the commandant of the Jalal-Abad region Kubatbek Baybolov, 23 March 2014, Bishkek.

<sup>40</sup> From an interview with Timur Shaikhutdinov, member of the Civil Union “For Reforms,” 30 April 2014, Bishkek.

## Conclusions

The mass riots in June 2010 in the city of Osh, Osh and Jalal-Abad regions proved that the Interim Government was not ready to respond to the containment of the conflict. Accordingly, the Interim Government did not have an action plan in case of emergency. Our analysis shows that the localization and post-conflict recovery was based on the development of the situation. Coordination of efforts to assist the victims, as well as the allocation of resources was also carried out chaotically in the early days of conflict. Despite existing necessary standards on human rights, they were not effectively incorporated into the work of security authorities. At the time of the conflict there was an acute shortage of resources, both at decision-making level – skills to analyse information, coordination mechanisms, information and analytical support, and at the technical level – transport, maintenance and material reserves.

According to the majority of respondents surveyed as part of this analysis, the main factor to terminate the collision was the unexpected for the population scale of violence which shocked the parties involved. At the same time, the effective response by local authorities and civilian communities to contain the conflict played a significant role. Undoubtedly, the decision of the Interim Government to declare a state of emergency and additional resource mobilization contributed significantly to the stabilization. The combined efforts of the Interim Government and international organizations to return refugees eventually helped to avoid a humanitarian disaster. An important factor with a positive impact on containment of the collision was the social sustainability of the conflict, that is, the presence of social practices which prevented its growth, such as the tradition of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks living together in mixed areas free of clashes.

After two violent changes of power in Kyrgyzstan (2005 and 2010), increase of the scale of corruption and inefficient reforms in virtually all spheres of social and economic relations, we can conclude that the state institutions were systematically destroyed in the process of ill-governance. This factor makes it difficult to develop a quality system to prevent and resolve conflicts.

The creation of an early warning system is the foundation for an adequate response to incoming signals and possible prevention of all sorts of conflicts. One option for this system can include the establishment of a situational room. But the creation of the so-called situation rooms should be very carefully considered, taking into account all previous lessons learned. Lessons learned from early attempts to create an early warning system are to be reviewed. It is necessary to completely revise the approach and answer the question why the system did not deliver the expected results. In our view, it is possible to identify some fundamentally important issues that were crucial for the early warning system malfunction:

- The creation of an early warning system was the initiative of international organizations. This fundamentally changed the attitude of the government: the government did not pay attention and was not responsible for this system. During the years of independence, the government got accustomed to international donors that offered various kinds of help and did not require anything in return. The early

warning system was one such product. Everyone understood that it was necessary and should be implemented, but the government did not take responsibility for the continued existence of the system and its use throughout the country.

- Lack of proper funding. As mentioned above, an early warning system was a project of international organizations and, accordingly, was limited in time, territory and assets. As soon as the term of the project was over, funding for the network stopped – it consisted of field monitors and analysts and required constant financial support. Therefore, the network ceased to exist.
- The lack of continuity of power. High level of personnel turnover in government, starting from the central office and ending with the local authorities, is a serious problem. Much time is spent by international organizations for training government officials who are later replaced by others. Moreover, many of the initiatives taken by former leaders do not receive adequate support by the new authorities, sometimes are even frozen.
- Low personnel capacity in law enforcement structures and government in general. Naturally, if you build an effective early warning system, special attention should be paid to the capabilities of government employees who will be directly involved in the implementation process and will be responsible for the performance and resilience of the early warning system.

Based on the above reasons, it can be summarized that the initiative for the construction of an early warning system should come from official authorities. The government is supposed to start building this institution, ensure proper monitoring of the performance and, accordingly, to ensure financing. International organizations shall become partners and provide technical assistance and training, and adapt international experience to national specifics. Thus, we could expect positive results and proper development of the early warning and response system.

## **Lessons Learned**

After the events of Osh in 2010, the government, human rights organizations, international institutions and academic researchers launched a process of analysis and assessment of the conflict. However, none of the numerous reports received broad public support, and four years later we can agree with the following assessment of the Director of the Central Asian program of Human Rights Centre “Memorial,” Vitaly Ponomarev: “The farther we go from the events, the more difficult it is to find the facts which can help us make conclusions about what happened.”<sup>41</sup> At the same time, the official process of lessons learned stopped at the level of political evaluation of government’s acts made by the National Commission for the comprehensive study of causes and consequences of the tragic events of June 2010. The conclusions of this study focused on the actions

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<sup>41</sup> From an interview with Vitaly Ponomarev, director of the Central Asia program “Memorial,” 29 April 2014, Bishkek.

of the leaders of the Uzbek community without considering existing rules, regulations and plans in emergencies.

One of the main lessons is the need for a state policy in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations in order to avoid future conflicts. The government launched a process to build a policy on management of ethnic diversity. In 2011, the Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic established a department of ethnic and religious policy and interaction with civil society, and in 2013 the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic established the State Agency for local self-governance and ethnic relations, as well as ethnic councils with local governance. The purpose of these structures was to develop and implement state policy in the sphere of interethnic relations.

In 2013, the Concept of consolidation of the unity of people and inter-ethnic relations in the Kyrgyz Republic was adopted, which became the first strategic document in this area. Also in 2013, the “Strategy for security of the population and territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in emergency and crisis situations until 2020” was approved. A number of classified documents regarding emergencies were amended by the government and law enforcement agencies. The extent to which these changes were based on the outcome of the June 2010 events cannot be assessed due to the secret status of these documents.

The judicial reform and the reform of the Interior Ministry, launched by Interim President Roza Otunbayeva, were not properly developed. Consequently, any concept papers and specialized authorities would not be effective without the reform in law enforcement institutions, the implementation of competitive human resources policies, and the campaign against corruption in state power agencies. Fair decisions made by public authorities are in direct correlation with the level of conflict in social relations. Unfortunately, it is still early to conclude that the government has learned its lessons.

In the wake of the June events, public organizations launched a process of creating civil networks of conflict early warning. They focused on local tensions and their settlement. Among these initiatives were the Network of UN women peacekeepers, the Network of mediators “Peace messengers,” etc. These networks actively cooperate with state institutions informing them about the situation in certain regions, along with measures to address emerging tensions.

Human rights organizations, concerned with arms control, offered a reform in the Ministry of Internal Affairs changing the basic approach – from national security to public safety. As described above, the reform was not properly developed, which does not give us any reason to state that the lessons learned have led to changes in the preparation for emergencies.

As an international organization, CSTO changed its bylaws expanding the mandate of its activities to participate in internal conflicts on request of the official authorities. Moreover, a crisis response system was created in the framework of this organization in

order to send urgent documents and conduct closed video conferences with presidents, where decisions were made.<sup>42</sup>

UNDP helps the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic through the “Programmes and plans of the government of the Kyrgyz Republic for transition to sustainable development in 2013-2017,” and the expected results of cooperation include introduction of changes and additions to the Law “On civil protection.”

## Recommendations

### *To the Government of the KR:*

- Create an interagency working group to establish a plan for action in case of emergency for mid-level and junior employees in government agencies, as well as develop a coherent vision of operational activities.
- Supplement the existing instructions of local authorities with provisions for compulsory presence of officials at all levels in their working places in the event of emergency situations, prescribing their actions in the case of a crisis, as well as defining responsibilities.
- Establish a permanent staff in the event of emergency, consisting not only of employees from the Ministry of Emergencies, but social workers and workers from municipal and infrastructure agencies.
- Develop emergency medical services, as doctors during the events of June 2010 could provide assistance only inside medical institutions; however, as conflict has shown, many people were stuck and they needed mobile assistance, which has not been organized in the country.
- It is necessary to allocate significant resources in case of emergency, to approve a list of state reserves based on 10 essential products, accounting for 200 thousand people in each region.
- Provide counselling services to the population in a conflict situation.
- Promote and finish the reform of the judiciary system and the Ministry of Interior.
- Hold responsible officers and civilians of the Defence Ministry, Border Troops of the National Security Committee, Ministry of Internal Affairs who have allowed the seizure of weapons, ammunition and military equipment, and take action on their return to the appropriate authorities.
- Revise existing technical requirements to the premises for the storage of weapons, their acceptance, release and evacuation.
- Provide appropriate training to security forces in order to enable operations under conditions of civil unrest without violating human rights.

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<sup>42</sup> Official site of CSTO, [www.odkb-csto.org/news/detail.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=1746&SECTION\\_ID=92](http://www.odkb-csto.org/news/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=1746&SECTION_ID=92).

- Develop a program of information policy in the event of an emergency.

#### *To public organizations:*

- Facilitate the process of developing a Concept of public security. One section shall consider the aspect of weapons security.
- Monitor and give public condemnation to any nationalistic statements of officials and civic leaders.
- Organize in cooperation with the National Security Committee, the General Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Interior a disarmament campaign to collect illegal weapons.
- Conduct civil education projects in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior.
- Organize mediation skills training for security officers with the participation of representatives of social and preventive centres.

#### *To international organizations:*

- Improve the relationship between donors for effective coordination of programs and projects in order to avoid duplication and non-compliance with the requirements of the region.
- Focus on mono-ethnic regions and conduct more activities to promote tolerance and sensitivity to conflicts.
- Enhance the participation of national partners in projects in order to strengthen their interest in the sustainability of the projects.
- Increase the level of public confidence in law enforcement agencies by providing a platform for dialogue, as well as through enhancing the capacity of law enforcement officers.

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16. Materials from an interview with the commandant of the Osh region Baktybek Alymbekov. Bishkek, 9 April 2014.

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# Chapter 5

## Trans-border Conflicts: Review of Trans-border Conflicts on the State Border between the Kyrgyz Republic and Its Neighbouring Countries

Salamat Alamanov and Aynura Umetalieva

### Summary

Conflict situations, observed in recent years on the borders of Kyrgyzstan and neighbouring states, suggest that the main reasons are the ambiguity of the state border (with the Republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and the imperfect system of protection of already legally approved borders (with People's Republic of China and the Republic of Kazakhstan). Kyrgyzstan borders with these four countries.

Kyrgyzstan concluded agreements on the state border with China twice: first in 1996, when a disputed strip in the pass Bedel was not included in the agreement on the Kyrgyz-Chinese border. Later, in 1999, a supplementary agreement was signed regarding the pass Bedel on the Kyrgyz-Chinese border.<sup>1</sup> In 2001, a treaty was signed on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh state border; however, because of the difficult domestic political circumstances in Kyrgyzstan, in particular the opposition against the ratification of this treaty, it was ratified by Kyrgyzstan in 2008.<sup>2</sup>

Very difficult negotiations are going on regarding the delimitation of the borders with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. After the completion of the legal approval of the border line with China (1,084.4 km) and the Republic of Kazakhstan (1,241.6 km), there are still disputed parts of the border lines with the Republic of Uzbekistan (over 350 km) and the Republic of Tajikistan (over 450 km). While some negotiations between the delegations of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are discussed from the perspective of a territorial dispute, others are mutual territorial claims. The current situation on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek and Kyrgyz-Tajik border shows that in practice the government, which controls the

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Paramonov, Oleg Stolkovsky. Border and territorial disputes in China-Central Asian relations, 17 February 2009, available at <http://www.easttime.ru/analytic/3/8/575.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Kurmanbek Bakiyev signed the law "On ratification of the Treaty on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan," <http://www.consulkg.kz/news/main/536/>.

disputed territory, generally seeks to use all means for its direct or indirect development and utilization, which exacerbates the situation, contributing to the escalation of tensions in interstate and cross-border relations.

A key issue in settling the border dispute with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is the problem of enclaves, more precisely, fixing the boundary line close to their location. It is well known that in Kyrgyzstan there are four Uzbek enclaves (Sokh, Shahimardan, Chonkara Gulch, Tash-Tep) and two enclaves of Tajikistan (Vorukh, Kuruk-Sai). Uzbekistan hosts Kyrgyz enclave Barak and Tajik enclave Sarvaksay. The two parties claim an area located in the lower part of Sokh (Uzbekistan) and Vorukh (Tajikistan). Arguments of the negotiating parties are based on documents from different years, and therefore are not convincing. In fact, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan suggest that the state border be determined on the basis of national delimitation in 1924-1927. Kyrgyzstan insists on determining the borderlines based on the results of the joint committee of 1955 for Uzbekistan and 1958-1959 and 1989 for Tajikistan. The question can be resolved only at the highest level with a political decision.

It is quite difficult to coordinate the location of the junction of state borders between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan located in the area of enclave Sokh. There is a conflict of interests between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, which claim an area of about 20 hectares close to the border junction. In case the Uzbek version is accepted, Kyrgyzstan will have to give away this area, and vice versa.

“World experience shows that the only constructive way to solve a disputed border issue, like ours, is through negotiating on the basis of mutual respect, equal consultation and mutual compromises.”<sup>3</sup> All of these problems can be solved through negotiations and good will of the parties with respect to each other. “We need to remind the leaders that until recently the people of Central Asia lived very well without these borders, which are now zealously protected, and sometimes provoke murder and cruel fighting against violators, although on both sides live friendly people who have for centuries shared their bread and salt, water and wood.”<sup>4</sup>

Statistics show escalation of border conflicts and it shall be a wake-up call for the authorities of the countries of Central Asia. During the last three years, there were 31 incidents with weapons on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border with 5 killed and 10 injured Kyrgyz,<sup>5</sup> while from January to October 2013 there were 41 registered incidents in the border areas of Kyrgyzstan.<sup>6</sup> 28 incidents occurred on the border with Tajikistan, 12 – on the border with Uzbekistan, one – with Kazakhstan, and seven criminal cases were charged.

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<sup>3</sup> Salamat Alamanov, “There is a need for substantive discussion of the matter at the highest level,” 1 July 2013.

<sup>4</sup> From an interview with Baktybek Yusupov, a former representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of KR for the south of Kyrgyzstan, a member of the delegation at the border talks, 23-27 January 2014 in the Batken region.

<sup>5</sup> From an interview with the former head of the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic Kurmanakun Matenov, January 2014.

<sup>6</sup> From an interview with Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic Kursan Asanov, January 2014.

After the end of 1999, after the well-known Batken events, when gangs of the radical Islamic extremists invaded Batken region of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan set minefields around enclaves Sokh and Shahimardan on Kyrgyz territory – 150-200 meters from the notional boundary line, in some places already demarcated with barbed wire. There were numerous cases when Kyrgyz citizens and livestock died from landmine explosions. Only in the period 2000-2003, 13 civilians lost their lives. Mining without the consent of the Kyrgyz side was regarded in Bishkek as military intervention by Uzbekistan. In addition, Tashkent refused under various pretexts to give the Kyrgyz side the requested minefield maps. According to a member of the Kyrgyz delegation on the delimitation of borders between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan at the time, the situation in the Batken region was complicated by mines that Uzbek engineers installed on many places.<sup>7</sup>

The authorities in Batken region of Kyrgyzstan had to send an official request to the OSCE mission in Bishkek with a request to the Secretary General to persuade Uzbekistan to pass a card with the mine location. It was in August 2004, when Uzbekistan started to clean the border around enclaves Sokh and Shahimardan.<sup>8</sup> However, accurate information on the complete clearance is not available.

Thus, the objectives of this report were to collect information on cross-border conflicts on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek and Kyrgyz-Tajik border, to identify their sources, as well as to analyse the measures taken by the authorities of the states for their resolution and prevention based on the assessment. Sources of information were: presentations and interviews of state officials, interviews with experts involved in cross-border issues, analysis of media reports, reports by international organizations on the implementation of their projects in border communities in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, monitoring reports, newsletters of NGOs working in the border areas, and regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic. In order to deeply study the problematics, the authors visited conflict areas in Batken region and met with people directly involved in conflict resolution. Due to the sensitivity of the issues, not all interviewees were frank, but we are grateful to everyone who helped us to better understand these complex processes.

## Sources of conflicts

The analysis shows that the main sources of cross-border conflicts between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are the problems associated with economic activities in the border area in the acute shortage of natural resources – land, water, fuel. Specifically, these problems are:

- trans-border water issues due to water allocation schemes and systems inherited from the Soviet period. They infringed upon the interests of the Kirghiz SSR and

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<sup>7</sup> From an interview with Baktybek Yusupov, a former representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the south of Kyrgyzstan, a member of the delegation at the border talks, 23-27 January 2014 in the Batken region.

<sup>8</sup> On the question of ethno-territorial and border issues in Central Asia, Dmitry Trofimov, senior fellow at the Centre for International Studies (University) (Russian Federation).

are even more irrelevant under the new conditions of sovereign relations between neighbouring states.<sup>9</sup> Contradictions in them were sources of conflict in the Soviet era and are manifested in the present day. Unfortunately, conflicts will continue in the future unless they are settled through negotiations, taking into account the interests of all parties. Conflict situations arise with regard to water use in the basins of rivers Isfara, Kozhobakyrghan (Tajikistan), Këksay, Karkyra (Kazakhstan) in the hydrographic system of the Syr Darya River, including the issue of ownership of a large spring Chechme on the border of enclave Sokh (with Uzbekistan);<sup>10</sup>

- the use of cross-border transport links. The network of roads and railways built in Soviet times as inter-republican tract is divided into sections which now belong to different sovereign states. The complexity associated with the severe border and customs regulations and inspections when civilians and cargo transport cross the border line are often accompanied by human rights violations. Very often mutually agreed checkpoints are closed, which brings significant economic losses to each of the countries and exacerbates distrust between states;
- the most urgent problem that increases the danger of conflicts is the acute shortage of land – arable lands, pastures, forests and lands which must provide the continuously growing population in the border areas with food for their own consumption and for sale, fuel used for construction of roads, irrigation canals and ditches, power lines. In recent years, conflicts have been related to the claims of the parties to land in the border areas where the boundary line is not agreed yet. For example, in March 2011 in Kara Batken region, Kyrgyz nationals uprooted 400 apricot trees planted by Tajiks. Each side has claims to this piece of land. Since May 2010, there has been an ongoing border confrontation due to the fact that Kyrgyz border guards did not let the cattle of Sokh population to the traditionally used pastures.<sup>11</sup> The problem of pastures and the logging of trees in the juniper forests contributes to the negative relationships between the residents of the enclave Vorukh and border and environmental services in Kyrgyzstan. Every

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<sup>9</sup> Mamatkanov Duishon, Bazhanova Larissa, Vladimir Romanovsky, *Water resources of Kyrgyzstan at the present stage*. Bishkek, 2006, 266 p.; Kasymova Valentina Mahmudovna, Alamanov Salamat, Aitmurzaev Nurlan Tashmurzaevich, Anna Valeryevna Arkhangelskaya, *Monitoring of the position of Central Asian countries on the use of transboundary water resources*. Report to the National Institute for Strategic Studies (NISS) of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> IA-Nooruzkg.com Press Conference of Chairman of State Border Service of the KR Col. Kurmanakun Matenov, 31 July 2013; K-News.kg, Events. Notification from Deputy Interior Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Kursan Asanov at the commission meeting on border issues, 12 October 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Press conference of Chairman of State Border Service of the KR Colonel Kurmanakun Matenov, 31 July 2013, IA-Nooruzkg.com; Safar Tohir, "Spring alarm on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border," 28 March 2011, [http://rus.azattyk.kg/content/kyrgyzstan\\_tajikistan\\_conflict/4726510.html](http://rus.azattyk.kg/content/kyrgyzstan_tajikistan_conflict/4726510.html).

attempt of Kyrgyzstan to build roads through uncoordinated border sections is accompanied by confrontations that escalate into armed conflicts.<sup>12</sup>

- wilful violations of laws and regulations. These include: violation of the state border by 11 citizens of China in February 2014, numerous cases of logging wood by citizens of Tajikistan in the forests of the Kyrgyz Republic in the basin of Isfara river, etc.;
- ignorance of border guards and citizens regarding the state border line, negligence to observe the border area regime. For this reason, some inadvertently violate the border line causing conflicts. Thus, on July 11, 2013 eight Kyrgyz citizens were detained by border guards of Kazakhstan for trespassing while searching for cattle grazing in the pastures in that country. The conflict in January 2013 in the Uzbek village Hoshiyar and Kyrgyz village Charbak occurred due to violation of Kyrgyz border guards who installed poles with power lines on land which belonged to the village Hoshiyar. On July 23, 2013 Uzbek border guards entered the territory of Kyrgyzstan in Aksy region when a row between guards on both sides turned into an armed conflict with a fatal outcome for the two Uzbek guards. The parties are still having a dispute on the territory of the conflict.

Based on the information for the media by representatives of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, this uncertainty on the border lines can last for a long time. So, after the resumption of negotiations with Uzbekistan, eight meetings were held from 2011 to April 2013 at government delegations level without any results concerning the state border. At the state border, there are 56 disputed areas where the boundary line has not been agreed by the parties.

With regard to delimitation of the state border with Tajikistan, in the last two years 7 meetings of government delegations were held, 14 meetings of topographic and land management working groups and 5 meetings of working groups on legal issues. During this period, 64.2 km were agreed and described, out of which only 15.8 km were approved by government delegations. Topographic and land management working groups described 48.4 km.<sup>13</sup>

“Timely resolution of border issues is a prerequisite for good relations between neighbours,” – said Sukhrobjon Ismailov, head of the Expert Working Group and Analytical Centre in Tashkent (capital of Uzbekistan), warning that the conflict has not been exhausted. “And now, with the temporary truce, I do not think that the issue was solved. In the future, such a similar surge of emotions can be expected from both sides,” – he said.

The intensity of the reaction of the parties shows how difficult it is to control the borders not only around Sokh, but also in other parts of the Kyrgyz border with Uzbekistan and other neighbours. The emergence of new states and incomplete delimitation and

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<sup>12</sup> The boundary of Batken district boundary of the KR and Isfara district of Tajikistan, April 2013, January 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Shamil Atakhanov, Kyrgyzstan needs tactics and strategy of negotiations on delimitation and demarcation of borders, *Kyrtag.kg*, 13 April 2013.

demarcation of blurred boundary lines deprived the population in the border areas in the Ferghana Valley of access to traditional sources of water and pastures, as well as freedom of movement. In addition, residents passing through formal checkpoints are usually subject to humiliation and extortion, and those who cross the unmarked areas risk their lives.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, cross-border conflicts are based on confrontation between the populations of neighbouring countries, and between the population and government agencies operating at the border, on the right to use the scarce natural resources, communications and water infrastructure. The presence of long legally unregulated borderlines creates the preconditions for conflict in any attempt of the parties to conduct business activities in the border area.

### **Trans-border conflicts in the area of Sokh enclave of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

The development of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations in the years of independence was essentially strained, with the achievement of interim solutions on various issues. Most of the key problems between the Republic of Uzbekistan (RUz) and the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) did not find their solution.

With regard to determining the boundary line between the two countries, the main source of contention is the use of different materials as the legal basis during the negotiations. Uzbekistan proposes to use the documents from the national-territorial demarcation in 1924-1927, in which the boundary was fixed after the peoples of Central Asia entered the USSR.<sup>15</sup> The Kyrgyz Republic considers that it is appropriate to use the results of the joint Government commissions from 1955, when the boundary line between the republics was fixed on the basis of actual land use at that time.

The problem of demarcation is currently complicated by the fact that in some areas changes of the administrative boundary line between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek SSR were made by authorities that were not competent or entitled to such procedures, and these changes were not in accordance with the then-existing law. For example, exchanges or transfer of land plots for temporary use between neighbouring collective and state farms. Exchanges were made at the level of these farms or areas, which was legally unacceptable. Probably, the Soviet system allowed carrying out such unauthorized exchanges that eventually were perceived as legitimate transactions by the population. However, when work began on the establishment of the state border these transactions were identified as illegal. The question of the legitimacy of these documents appeared.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Altynay Myrzabekova, Inga Sikorskaya, and Anwar Khaldarov, "Riots in the enclave in Kyrgyzstan," 11 January 2013, available at [www.iwpr.net/ru/report-news/riots-in-enclave-on-site-Kyrgyzstan](http://www.iwpr.net/ru/report-news/riots-in-enclave-on-site-Kyrgyzstan).

<sup>15</sup> Alexey Dmitriev, "Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan quarrel over 27 kilometers of the border," *New News*, 19 February 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Alamanov Salamat, Kyrgyz-Uzbek borders, <http://www.24.kg>, 20 July 2009. The boundaries that were based on such documents were difficult to reconcile.



**Figure 1: Uzbek enclave Sokh on the territory of Kyrgyz Republic.**

Source: [www.kg.akipress.org](http://www.kg.akipress.org).

At the beginning of 2011, according to the Kyrgyz Presidential Administration, delegations agreed on 1058.83 km of the boundary line (out of a total length of 1378.44 km). The positions of the parties differ in 61 areas whose total length is 320.3 km.<sup>17</sup>

Next, we are going to consider the most significant ethnoterritorial conflict situation that took place during the last two years on the perimeters of the enclaves of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan located within Kyrgyz Republic, which had great impact on the international relations and within each country. They are of interest due to the fact that the sources of conflict still exist and can exacerbate the situation at any point of time.

Sokh enclave accommodates Sokh administrative district of Ferghana region of Uzbekistan, which borders to the east with Kadamzhay district, and to the west – with Batken district of Batken region of Kyrgyzstan. Periodically, there are escalating conflicts in residential areas and land where the delimitation of the boundary line has not been completed.

## The problem on the border with Kadamdhay region

Although the boundary line between Kadamdhay and Sokh has been negotiated by government delegations, “Chechme” area remains unresolved with its great potential for conflict. The subject to dispute here is spring “Chechme” with a water flow rate equal to about 400 l/sec, which supplies with water the settlements Chechme (KR) and Chashma (RUz). The situation with the water distribution in recent years is well described by Chechme resident Abdusalam Saypidinov. According to him, 95 % of the spring water flows toward the Sokh district, and the rest of the water which flows in two ditches has

<sup>17</sup> Press-service of the KR President’s administration, 10 February 2011, <http://www.akipress.kg>.

always been enough for a Kyrgyz village growing “a lot of different fruits and vegetables, and fruit trees. However, in the last 2-3 years the neighbours started to stop the water flow in these two ditches.”<sup>18</sup>

Naturally, disputes over irrigation water are renewed each spring and continue throughout the irrigation season. There have been numerous cases when opposing groups of young people from both sides have border disputes, including the dispute over water. Taking into account the increasing role of use of force in resolving disputes, the fact that 1,000 people live in the village of Chechme, and 17,000 – in the village of Chashma, and the water issue has not been resolved, the level of conflict in the area remains high. Experience shows that the ethno-territorial conflicts are easier to prevent than to be resolved for years.

## **Problems on the border with Batken region**

In the area between Batken district and enclave Sokh there are seven sections on which the parties have not found a common solution for the state border. This area includes settlements of the two countries and their agricultural lands, while the difficulty in finding a common view on the lines of the border is related to the contradictions in the economic interests of the people of these villages.

Events in recent years in these border areas show that hasty action by either party could trigger ethno-territorial conflicts with casualties and destruction of property.

One of the areas where the occurrence of inter-ethnic conflict of international nature has acquired a permanent character is the southwestern part of enclave Sokh with the Kyrgyz villages Sogment and Charbak of Kyshtuutsk District and the Uzbek village Hushyar.

The first clash between the enclaved Uzbeks and Kyrgyz border guards began on 26 May 2010 when the Kyrgyz border guards did not let the cattle of the people from Sokh, who traditionally use the lands in Kyrgyzstan, because rent was not paid. Residents of the village Hushyar tried to draw attention to their problems demonstrating force, and at night on May 26, 2010 killed the passengers in four cars, citizens of Kyrgyzstan who wanted to get to the Kyrgyz village Sogment through Hushyar. On the next day, on the border between the villages Hushyar and Sogment, where the Uzbek pasture was, 300-500 people gathered from each country.

On May 29, 2010, residents of Hushyara destroyed the road and aqueduct leading to the village Charbak through Uzbekistan. In response, the residents of Batken region near the village of Jash-Tilek blocked with stones the road to the Uzbek city of Rishton.

During the negotiations on May 30, 2010, the leaders of the Uzbek enclave demanded the Kyrgyz pastures—a demand which was categorically rejected by the population of the Kyrgyz village Sogment—and therefore the negotiations were unsuccessful. Border Service of Kyrgyzstan closed all checkpoints located in the Batken region on the border with Uzbekistan and the entire enclave Sokh was in isolation.

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<sup>18</sup> “Why is our water guarded by Uzbek militaries?” *Newspaper “Defacto”* # 19, 15 March 2012, p. 9.

On May 31, 2010, residents of Batken region again blocked the road to the Uzbek city of Rishton. Uzbekistan sent to the conflict zone about 1,000 commandos and police officers from five districts of the republic. According to media reports, armoured vehicles were present on the Uzbek side.

On June 1, 2010, negotiations took place between the governors of the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan Sultanbay Ayzhigitov, Ferghana region of Uzbekistan Khamidjon Musayev, chiefs of border services and police chiefs in the border areas of the two countries. The Uzbek side expressed its willingness to withdraw its troops, heavy armour from Sokh, and Kyrgyz authorities agreed to develop a mechanism to hand over the Uzbeks pastures.

On June 2, 2010, Uzbekistan started the withdrawal of armoured vehicles parked in the enclave since the Batken events of 1999. At Chechme border post of Batken frontier detachment, 42 units of armoured vehicles were sent through the territory of the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan to Ferghana region of Uzbekistan. This conflict was resolved, but as it turned out, only temporarily.

Another conflict with serious consequences for the citizens of both parties took place in the period from 5 to 9 January 2013. The reason was the action of Kyrgyz border guards in Batken border detachment who set in the area of the Uzbek village Hushyar a number of electric poles in order to ensure energy supply to checkpoint "Charbak." Of these, about five pillars were incorrectly installed within the boundaries of the aforementioned village, which caused a collision, attended by hundreds of civilians and dozens of soldiers. Dozens of people on both sides were injured, and property of significant value was damaged.

### *Situational awareness*

On January 5, 2013, the border guards received information from the local residents of the village Charbak that 50-60 people from Sokh had gathered at the frontier. They were met by the head of the frontier post who wanted to find out the cause of the meeting, to which residents of Sokh answered that poles were installed on the territory of Uzbekistan. The border chief informed the group leader that on January 6 there were going to be representatives of Border Service and the State Register of the Kyrgyz Republic to clarify the lines of setting poles and respond to the claims of the Uzbek side. People expressed their resentment and threats. The border guards fired two warning shots and the people dispersed.

On the next day, January 6, civilians from the village of Sokh gathered there – at first 200 people who began to present their claims. People did not respond to the words that the poles will be dismantled and started beating the policeman from the Kyrgyz side. To stop that, border guards fired warning shots into the air. When people calmed down a bit, the policeman was rescued. Sometime later, the number of people at the border began to increase. By this time the Uzbek border guards had arrived, but they could not stop the people and the crowd began to dismantle the poles. It was said that Kyrgyz citizens had been taken hostages, their cars were seized and their windows smashed.

Uzbek Foreign Ministry did not comment on the situation in the enclave Sokh. An official from the Uzbek Foreign Ministry told a reporter from Kloop.kg that “the press secretary was absent.”

At 11 am on January 7, the place of conflict was visited by officials from the government in Batken region Zhenish Ra'zac, authorities from Kadamzhai district and local head of the law enforcement agencies. At 11.15 the state news KR “Kabar” reported 22 Kyrgyz hostages. “Chairman of the State Border Service of Kyrgyzstan Zakir Tilenov, Batken Governor Jenishbek Razakov and the Akim of the district with same name were negotiating the release of 22 Kyrgyz citizens taken hostage in the territory of the Uzbek enclave Sokh,” – “Kabar” announced.<sup>19</sup>

At 12:15 pm on January 7, news agency “KyrTAG” reported about a shooting in the area Sokh between Kyrgyz and Uzbek citizens. According to unconfirmed reports, two people were killed. At 12:32 Acting Press Secretary of the Kyrgyz government representative in Batken Mamatzhan Berdishev denied the news from “KyrTAG” about the shootout in the enclave Sokh. “There was no shooting. Our guards just fired a warning shot in the air when over a thousand people (Uzbeks) approached the border post. No one was injured,”<sup>20</sup> – he said. At the same time, “Azattyk” radio reported 13 Kyrgyz citizens taken hostage on Uzbek territory. On this day, the acting Press Secretary of the government representative in Batken Mamatzhan Berdishev told Kloop.kg, that about 20 people were taken hostage but he could not tell the exact number. Initially, he said, about 40 Kyrgyz citizens were captured, but after negotiations, involving local authorities from the enclave Sokh and Kadamzhai district of Batken region of Kyrgyzstan, 14 people were released – mostly women and children. Hostages, according to Berdishev, were only men, civilians. All hostages were from the village Charbak, located near the border with the Uzbek enclave Sokh.

### *Early warning system*

Early warning and early response are essential for timely and effective solutions of border issues. Development of all conflicts showed that the vertical system of governance assumes a priori an early warning system between state agencies at different levels. At the same time, a system which connects late to the process of conflict resolution is inefficient. This is due to the fact that there is no developed strategy and tactics of the authorities' actions in conflict situations. As seen above, conflicts arise periodically.

Obviously, the maturing of the conflict, that took place in May 2010 between the residents of the village Sogment (KR) and Hoshiyar (Uzbekistan), was predictable, because the inhabitants of Sokh who made claims for pastures had no alternative options to address their pressing issues. Therefore, the inactivity of the local authorities of both sides under the conditions of permanent conflicts based on unresolved issues is difficult to explain.

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<sup>19</sup> Source: [www.kabar.kg/rus/incident/full/47209](http://www.kabar.kg/rus/incident/full/47209).

<sup>20</sup> Source: <http://hronika.kloop.kg/category/bez-rubriki/page/143/>.

Because of the conflict in January 2013, protesters gathered in front of the White House in Bishkek to express their dissatisfaction with the late response to the conflict in Sokh – only a day after it began. This was reported from the scene by correspondent Alex Kim from Kloop.kg.<sup>21</sup> MPs from the opposition party “Ata-Jurt” Ulugbek Kochkorov and Kurmanbek Osmonov joined the protesters. Both promised to voice the demands of protesters at the parliament session.

### *Decision-making process*

During the next conflict in January 2013, the state bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic, under the coordination of the Secretariat of the Council of Defence, took the following measures:

- In the morning of January 7, a telephone conversation took place between the head of border service of the Kyrgyz Republic Zakir Tilenov and the commander of border troops of Uzbekistan. Agreement was reached for joint action to stabilize the situation;
- The Hokim of Ferghana region in Uzbekistan requested permission together with the head of police in the Ferghana region to enter enclave “Sokh” through checkpoint “Kaytpas” of the KR; this request was granted;
- The Governor of Batken region of the Kyrgyz Republic was advised to meet hokim of Ferghana region of Uzbekistan for conflict resolution and advocacy work among the population on both sides;
- Checkpoints around the enclave Sokh were temporarily closed until the situation was stabilized;
- By the order of Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiyev, the Minister of Internal Affairs was sent to Batken district.<sup>22</sup>

At 16:00 on January 7, a press release was distributed by border troops of Uzbekistan that the military personnel at border point “Charbak” began installing power poles on their own, without notice of the Uzbek party.<sup>23</sup> This happened despite the statement of acting Press Secretary of Kyrgyz government representative in Batken Mamatzhan Berdishev who told earlier Kloop.kg that Kyrgyz border guards had all agreed in advance with the Uzbek party.<sup>24</sup>

According to the border guards of Uzbekistan, Uzbek border guards tried to stop the Kyrgyz military and prevent a conflict. “However, the Kyrgyz side, without the consent and knowledge of the Republic of Uzbekistan, continued work on the installation of

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<sup>21</sup> Source: <http://kloop.kg/blog/2013/01/07/hronika-13-ky-rgy-zstantsev-v-zalozhnikah-posle-konflikta-u-anklava-soh/>.

<sup>22</sup> Source: [http://www.president.kg/ru/apparat\\_prezidenta/sovety\\_pri\\_prezidente/sovet\\_oborony/informatsija\\_soveta\\_oborony/](http://www.president.kg/ru/apparat_prezidenta/sovety_pri_prezidente/sovet_oborony/informatsija_soveta_oborony/).

<sup>23</sup> Source: <http://kloop.kg/blog/2013/01/07/hronika-13-ky-rgy-zstantsev-v-zalozhnikah-posle-konflikta-u-anklava-soh/>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

poles, which led to a conflict between residents of Hoshiyar and Kyrgyz military”<sup>25</sup> – the message said. As a result of the incident, according to a press release, Kyrgyz border guards used their weapons wounding five citizens of Uzbekistan. Their condition was very bad. It was also stated that the law enforcement authorities of Uzbekistan opened a criminal case and are investigating.

At 16:07, Chief of Staff of the Border Service of the KR Iskenderbek Mambetaliyev refuted the statement of the Uzbek authorities of the injured citizens of Uzbekistan. In his words, the Kyrgyz guards made only warning shots into the air and did not shoot at people. He confirmed to the correspondent from Kloop.kg, that the Kyrgyz government envoy in the Batken region and the head of the Ferghana region in Uzbekistan will hold a meeting today, along with the border service heads of the two countries.

At 16:13, Chief of Staff of the Border Service Iskenderbek Mambetaliyev told Kloop.kg correspondent that the hostages will soon be released. They were, he said, 15 to 20 people. Law enforcement agencies of Uzbekistan moved them to the rural hospital in Hoshiyar village and protected them from the local residents. “The situation in the village Hoshiyar is tense – our citizens, 15-20 people, are located in the rural hospital under the protection of law enforcement agencies from Sokh district of Uzbekistan,”<sup>26</sup> – he said.

At 16:20 on 7 January 2013, the hostages were released. Chief of Staff of the Border Service Iskender Mambetaliyev reported that there were 16 people. After this message the rally in Bishkek stopped.

Thus, the conflict was suspended by the intervention of central government representatives from both sides – heads of border services, the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this case, because of the futile actions of local authorities, representatives of the central authorities of the two sides were forced to take part in ending the conflict.

### *International relations*

With regard to the role of international organizations to assist in the peaceful settlement of cross-border conflicts, Foreign Minister of Ukraine and then OSCE Chairman, Leonid Kozhar, expressed his particular concern about the Sokh border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 2013. “I welcome the release of people who were detained. Problems should be solved peacefully through dialogue. The OSCE stands ready to facilitate this process in the case of a request and in accordance with its mandate,”<sup>27</sup> – Kozhar said. OSCE and other international organizations were not involved directly in resolving the conflict that erupted around Sokh.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Source: [www.turmush.kg/ru/news:39615](http://www.turmush.kg/ru/news:39615).

### *Cooperation and coordination*

It should be noted that non-governmental organizations (NGOs), volunteers and international organizations participated indirectly in the management of this and other conflicts. Border issues were controlled directly by the state through law enforcement and border officials of the two countries.

However, for a number of years, several international organizations and local non-governmental organizations have taken steps to establish an early warning system for conflict prevention. The authorities at regional and district level have been actively involved in projects of international organizations and NGOs in this area. At the same time, the implementation of the following projects revealed the weak capacity of state employees. Unfortunately, low wages and weak social benefits did not contribute to the influx of highly skilled experts in regional and district administrations. Because of insufficient qualification, current employees are unable to analyse existing problems and to develop measures to respond to them. High staff turnover in government and local agencies also had a negative impact on early warning, as very often trained people moved to another job or even left government positions.<sup>28</sup>

Public Foundation "For International Tolerance" was one of the most active non-governmental organizations working in the border areas. From July 2005 to January 2008, the foundation implemented the project "Early Warning for Prevention of Violence," which was initiated to prevent violence in political conflicts by creating a mechanism of forecasting and conflict studies, and by the implementation of preventive measures. The project was initiated by Public Foundation "For International Tolerance" and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and was funded by the OSCE, UNDP and the governments of Switzerland and the United States. To closely monitor the situation in the country, a national network of observers was created by the project including civil society activists, representatives of the academic sector, the media and law enforcement agencies. Thirty six observers monitored throughout the country in constant communication with the Centre for Early Warning created with the Foundation "For International Tolerance."

Based on this information, the Centre for Early Warning carried out information processing, prepared recommendations for intervention to prevent violence, published a "Weekly Bulletin." Also, the Batken office of the Foundation prepared analytical reports, a scenario of conflict situations and recommendations for their solution,<sup>29</sup> which were sent to government organizations.

Reports of international organizations (UNDP, OSCE, International Crisis Group) on cross-border issues often stayed on the shelves of government agencies, serving only as informative material.

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<sup>28</sup> For example, during the reported period UNDP cooperated with 14 deputy governors of Batken region.

<sup>29</sup> Analytical report of Batken branch of the Foundation "For International Tolerance" on the conflict between residents of Charbak Batken region of the Kyrgyz Republic and the village Hoshiyar Sokh district of Uzbekistan.

Despite the fact that the central authorities were aware about some conflict situations, they did not have the proper tools and skills for timely and early response to conflict because of staff turnover in the Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic and the frequent change of its leadership. Moreover, political will was not sufficient to solve some problems. In fact, local authorities and law enforcement agencies acted hastily in such conflicts.

Thus, the creation and operation of an early warning system (EWS) and the early response to cross-border problems in the reported period had its successes, but along with them there were considerable difficulties. The creation of EWS requires common and coordinated efforts of all stakeholders – government agencies, international organizations, civil society, local communities, the business community and the media. In addition, trust between all participants, transparency and active participation of all parties was necessary for the successful functioning of the system.

In the past, cross-border conflicts occurred usually only in warm weather from spring to autumn. In the last 2-3 years, these conflicts occurred year-round. In this regard, early warning is needed more than ever for the prevention and resolution of conflicts in border communities in the Ferghana valley.

### *Responsibilities*

The main responsibility for dealing with emergencies occurring in the border area goes to the heads of local administration<sup>30</sup> and the government representative in the region.<sup>31</sup> Resolving the conflict in the area of Sokh in the Republic of Uzbekistan mainly involved local authorities in the face of the authorized representative of the Batken region and heads of Kadamzhay and Batken district administrations, as well as law enforcement agencies: National Security Committee, border guards and the police department of the Kyrgyz Republic Batken region. The central government was represented by the Minister of Internal Affairs Shamil Atakhanov and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic.

There is no document that describes clearly how conflict resolution responsibilities are shared between the government authorized representative (e.g. in the Batken region) and the heads of regional state administrations (e.g. Kadamzhay and Batken districts), but in accordance with the laws they are obliged to resolve conflict situations in border areas under their jurisdiction.

According to the Law “On the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic” dated 18 June 2012, the authorized representative of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic co-ordinates and supervises the activities of law enforcement agencies to ensure order and security in the region, as well as for the protection of public borders.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On the local state administration” of 14 July 2011, no. 96, Bishkek.

<sup>31</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic” of 18 June 2012, no. 85, Bishkek.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

According to Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic for Defence, Law Enforcement and Border Affairs Tokon Mamytov, “the new government did not pay attention to the borders because of the events of June 2010, the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2010 and 2011. Borders became a focus of attention only in 2012. The Parliament passed a bill which gave special status to the border regions. The Border Guard Service was separated from the National Security as an independent body reporting to the President. The Government increased the salaries of border guards. Despite the difficult economic situation, the government provided 340 million Soms in support of the border service.”<sup>33</sup>

Next steps of the Kyrgyz Government showed that along with the delimitation of the border authorized representatives of the Government were responsible for the social problems in border towns – the construction of nursing homes, roads, engineering facilities for border protection, etc.

### *Laws and obligation*

For the settlement of the situation around the delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, the authorities of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan shall refer to the following international treaties to which Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic are parties:

- Agreement on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States of 8 December 1991.<sup>34</sup> The Agreement emphasized the inviolability of existing borders within the Commonwealth, declared the guarantee of freedom of movement of citizens. Three Declarations were adopted in the framework of this Agreement: Alma-Ata Declaration of December 1, 1991; Minsk Declaration of 14 February 1992; and the Moscow Declaration of April 15, 1994. They noted that the CIS countries in their mutual relations ensure compliance with the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers, and also argue that the acquisition of territory by force cannot be recognized, the occupation of the territory of the State cannot be used for international recognition or impose changes in its legal status.<sup>35</sup>
- Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 23 May 1969.<sup>36</sup>
- Bilateral treaties between KR and Uzbekistan.
- Treaty of eternal friendship between the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan, ratified by the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic no. 48 of July 5, 1997, which stated that the

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<sup>33</sup> Tokon Mamytov: “If we rest up, trusting in God, we can be deprived of our land,” [http://m.gezitter.org/interviews/17216\\_tokon\\_mamyitov\\_deputat\\_fraktsii\\_armamyis\\_esli\\_budem\\_o\\_tlejivatsya\\_upovaya\\_na\\_boga\\_myi\\_mojem\\_lichitsya\\_svoey\\_zemli/#messages\\_comment\\_list](http://m.gezitter.org/interviews/17216_tokon_mamyitov_deputat_fraktsii_armamyis_esli_budem_o_tlejivatsya_upovaya_na_boga_myi_mojem_lichitsya_svoey_zemli/#messages_comment_list).

<sup>34</sup> Applicable to the Republic of Uzbekistan since 4 January 1992; for the Kyrgyz Republic – since 6 March 1992.

<sup>35</sup> An open letter from the deputy Ismail Isakov to President Almazbek Atambayev.

<sup>36</sup> The well-known principle *Rastasuntservanda*, which was proclaimed in Article 25 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. It also provides that every treaty is binding for the participants and they must execute it in good will.

signatories confirm their determination to actively develop relations based on respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of their borders, the principles of non-interference in their internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit.

- Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on trips of citizens of 3 October 2006.

### *Human rights*

All participating countries that have signed the agreement within the UN, SCO and CIS must comply with all provisions of the agreement: not to violate the territorial integrity and inviolability of borders. However, despite the adopted and signed above-mentioned international agreements, during the conflicts in the enclave Sokh local residents of the village of Hoshiyar, Uzbekistan violated human rights – destruction of property of Kyrgyz citizens, taking hostages, intentional infliction of serious harm to their health, and violated border regulations by illegally crossing the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to the ongoing situation, former Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic Akun said: “This is a flagrant violation of international law on the part of Uzbekistan. I express my protest. There are limits to everything! As a human rights defender I am insulted because this incident has also interstate character. Why did the border and other law enforcement services of Kyrgyzstan allow abuse, offense of the honour and dignity of our citizens by citizens of another country? This is not the first case of lawlessness on the part of both citizens and border services of the neighbouring country, and this has lasted for 30 years.”<sup>38</sup>

Tursunbek Akun also noted that the slowness of the Kyrgyz authorities was the reason for such conflicts. “Public authorities are obliged to protect the territorial integrity of the country, the sovereign rights of our fellow citizens, as well as to carry out explanatory work on the specifics of living in the border area,”<sup>39</sup> – he said. Akun added that he had held talks on the incident with the Ombudsman of Uzbekistan.

### *Level of emergency preparedness*

Emergency preparedness of the Border Service of KR shall be carried out in accordance with the Law and Regulation “On the Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic.” Also, according to the regulation “On the Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic,”<sup>40</sup> this agency was entrusted with the following functions: organization of informational, analytical and scientific support of the Border Service; analytical studies in the field of state

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<sup>37</sup> From an interview with Deputy Prime Minister for Defence, Law Enforcement and Border Affairs Tokon Mamytov.

<sup>38</sup> Source: [www.knews.kg/action/26201\\_tursunbek\\_akun\\_pochemu\\_pogranichnyie\\_i\\_drugie\\_silovyye\\_strukturyi\\_kyrgyzystana\\_dopustili\\_nadrugatelstvo\\_nad\\_nashimi\\_grajdanami/](http://www.knews.kg/action/26201_tursunbek_akun_pochemu_pogranichnyie_i_drugie_silovyye_strukturyi_kyrgyzystana_dopustili_nadrugatelstvo_nad_nashimi_grajdanami/).

<sup>39</sup> On December 10, 2012, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the Regulation on the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

border protection; preparation and submission of information and analytical materials to the President, Parliament, Government and other relevant authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Border Service readiness for emergency can be assessed as “satisfactory,” as the situation requires increasing the staff capacity. In order to improve the coordination of law enforcement agencies in the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, on February 28, 2013 a new position was introduced – Deputy Prime Minister for Defence, Security and Border issues.

### *Public relations*

A typical feature of the conflicts in these case studies is that their initiators and participants were representatives of the local population of both countries. They first brought the information about possible conflicts on specific issues. Sources of conflict were unresolved issues regarding the use of land, water, fuel and other resources in the border areas, where traditional patterns of use, adopted during the Soviet period, were violated after gaining independence. During the conflict period, Kyrgyz authorities did not hide from the media the real situation in the conflict zone and gave interviews to journalists.

There was exchange of information between the authorities and the media and the population of the region and the country as a whole was informed adequately about the situation. Information in the media and online publications, especially on sites 24.kg, turmush.kg, kloop.kg and kabar.kg, coincided with the data presented by Mamazhan Berdishev, press secretary of the authorized representative of the Batken region.

## **Conclusions**

The situation analysis reveals the following specifics in this part of the region:

1. A high degree of mobilization of residents of border towns on both sides who are capable of arriving at the venue in a few minutes and aggravate the situation to bring a conflict. This psychological state of the population is provoked by rumours spread by unidentified individuals on the collusion of authorities to transfer land, pastures, and springs to the opposite side.
2. Unfriendly attitude of border guards on both sides. Hostility is observed not only to civilians, but also in relation to each other. Border guards on each side can shoot at anyone suspected of violating the border laws, regardless of their crime.
3. Existing ethnic variety around the Uzbek enclave Sokh is perceived as a threat to the territorial integrity of each of the neighbouring countries. The high potential for conflict here will continue in the future as a result of the agrarian overpopulation and acute shortage of land and water resources.
4. Delimitation and demarcation of borders, after their completion, together with the agreements on the border and enclave Sokh, which must enter into force after the agreement on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek state border, can mitigate the threat of ethno-territorial conflicts in the region.

5. There is a mutual understanding between the representatives of local services on land management, which is absent in border services.
6. It is necessary to establish a mechanism of interaction between the border services of the parties and ensure close cooperation with the land administration on arranging the border zone, including posts and checkpoints.

## **Trans-border conflicts in the area of enclave Voruh in the Republic of Tajikistan**

The probability of conflict in this area is very high. The history of the development and aggravation of conflicts for land and water around the enclave, provoked by the formation of interrepublican Kyrgyz-Tajik administrative border, began in the 1920s and continues to date. Contradictions generated in the course of the national-territorial delimitation in the period 1924-1927, actively manifested today, bring moral and material damages to the residents of both countries. In 1958-1959, due to disagreements between the inhabitants of cross-border communities on land use, the Joint Commission<sup>41</sup> once again put efforts to determine the administrative borderline. Unfortunately, the results were not approved in accordance with the legislation of the USSR at the time.

At the border talks which began in the post-Soviet period in 1997 and still continue, the Kyrgyz side proposed to use the documents from 1958, 1959 and 1989, when the parity Commissions of the parties defined the boundaries of the actual use of land based on Kyrgyz and Tajik collective farms.<sup>42</sup> Currently, the Tajik side, which agreed at the time with the results of the joint commissions, does not recognize the legitimacy of these documents, which, in their opinion, prejudice its rights to own territories. Tajikistan proposes to use the documents from national-territorial delimitation in 1924-1927, which, in their opinion, have gone through all the legal procedures of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, were approved by a decree, and therefore they should be recognized by both parties.

Since the 1980s, the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan has been the home to a continuous conflict between Kyrgyz and Tajiks from neighbouring Isfara region of Tajikistan, which is based on a dispute over land and water resources. Clashes between Tajiks and Kyrgyz were observed in villages Vorukh-Tanguy in 1982 and a Match-Aktatyr in 1988. In 1989, the disagreements escalated into an ethnic conflict with unsuccessful attempts to settle it within the next year. In the spring of 1991 clashes resumed and Tajiks demanded ten thousand hectares of Kyrgyz land for permanent use. This conflict, in which

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<sup>41</sup> The special joint committee, which dealt on a parity basis with the demarcation and delimitation of borders between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>42</sup> More about territorial disputes, problems of having multiple maps that are referenced by the parties during conflicts are related to the ownership of disputed land. See *Collection of articles "Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan: a policy of strengthening partnerships in the context of regional relations,"* Public Fund Turdakun Usabaliyev and Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek, 2010.

the presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan accused each other, became an interstate conflict. The reasons that provoked it are still in effect.

Thus, during the Kyrgyz-Tajik collision in the early 1990s, there was a fairly significant mismatch between the positions of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the state border. The presidents of the two republics exchanged official accusations of unwillingness to solve the problems. The then leader of Tajikistan Kahhar Mahkamov even cancelled his visit to Bishkek as a protest against the illegal, in his view, dispute on "Tajik ancestral lands."

The tension in this historical period (early 1990s) was growing beyond a local conflict and gained attention at a higher levels. It was time to revise the interrepublican borders. Recently, the issue of border security has become a priority in Kyrgyz-Tajik relations. It is well known that armed extremists of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) entered the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan in 1999 and 2000 through the territory of Tajikistan. Moreover, Kyrgyz authorities have repeatedly stated that IMU militant training bases are located in some parts of the neighbouring state and almost directly accuse their Tajik counterparts in inaction and lack of desire to assist in the fight against extremists.

### **Chronology of the trans-border conflicts in 2010-2013**

In 2010, more than 50 incidents occurred in the border areas, out of them 24 were on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. From March to June 2011, four major conflicts took place in the border areas of Jamoat Chorkuh that were related to the disputed territories. In 2012, there were 18 collisions, and in 2013 – 19 conflicts on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border.

On April 17, 2013, a serious incident occurred between the communities. Frustrated by inaction and lack of information about the measures taken against those responsible for the conflict that occurred earlier between the residents of Kok-Tash (Aksai village council, KR) and village Somonien (Jamoat Chorkuh, RT), the residents of the latter looked for an opportunity to express their emotions.

One of the main reasons that provoked young people to take action was an incident involving Kyrgyz border guards and residents of Jamoat Chorkuh. According to the Public Relations Department and Border Troops Media, "On April 8 at about 13.00 hours (at the time when 15 km from the place of incident the leaders of the two regions were having a meeting. Author's note) the border guards from border post "Kapchygai" noticed that on Kyrgyz territory about 20 Tajik citizens were illegally loading rubble on eight trucks "KAMAZ." Asked by Kyrgyz border guards to stop loading the trucks, Tajik citizens responded negatively and, moreover, according to border guards, began to attack them and tried to seize their weapons. In order to prevent the capture of weapons, guards fired warning shots into the air and Tajiks fled. Then the two sides started to fight. About 200 residents of the Tajik village HodzhaiAlo, angry with the actions of Kyrgyz border guards, blocked the highway Batken – Ak-Sai and threw stones at the car of the officer from police department "Aksai." In turn, in protest against the actions of Tajik youth, more than 100 residents of the village Aksai blocked the highway Isfara – Vorukh in the section passing through Kyrgyz territory and damaged the car owned by a resident of HodzhaiAlo. Over 200 cars gathered on both

sides. During the confrontation, which lasted about 7 hours, security forces on both sides barely managed to deter people from acts of violence against each other. People left after the heads of the two regions came to the place of incident."<sup>43</sup>



**Figure 2: Tajik enclave Vorukh on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.**

Source: Early Warning Report. UNDP Preventive Development Programme, Batken, 2004.

The events of 2013-2014 show that the conflicts were provoked by ethnic issues. The main topic of confrontation was the construction of Kyrgyz road Kok-Tash-Ak-Sai-Tamdyk bypassing Vorukh enclave. Construction of the road will provide residents of Aksai, Samarkandek and Aktatyr districts in Kyrgyzstan with direct and independent access to the pastures around Vorukh enclave. Right now, the road passes through Vorukh which is a reason for year-round conflicts because of loss of cattle. Usually, Tajiks are blamed for cattle loss. At the same time, residents of Vorukh have free access to Kyrgyz pastures.

The protest of Tajik population is based on the fact that the road is built on a territory that is not defined by the intergovernmental agreement and has long been a subject of dispute. The major concerns are the assumptions that the construction of an independent road will complicate access to pastures, as the Kyrgyz side would no longer be interested to make concessions to residents of Vorukh and will not allow their cattle to graze on Kyrgyz pastures. Rumours among the Tajik population say that after the construction of the road, Kyrgyzstan plans to build a reservoir and a small hydroelectric

<sup>43</sup> Early Warning Report (Batken: UNDP Preventive Development Programme, 2004).

power station in the upper part of Isfara river and thereby deprive people of their only source of water.

The road construction started in April 2013 and was temporarily suspended due to the strong opposition from residents of the village of Vorukh. As a result of cooperation between border services, local authorities and religious leaders of both countries the conflict was settled, but only temporarily.<sup>44</sup> Subsequent events showed that any adverse event in this area grew into a conflict and road blocking.

On December 15, 2013, at 1 a.m., at the crossroad between Zarafshan near Chorku, Kok-Tash Ortoboz (KR) and Chorku-Vorukh (RT) unknown individuals set on fire a tire shop, owned by the Tajik citizen Nozim, resident of Chorku. The suspects were Kyrgyz citizens.

At night on December 17, 2013, unknown persons set on fire a house with six rooms in the north of village Aksai, area "Ak-Shagyl," near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. The house was owned by Zhanybek Orozokulov from the village Aksai of the KR and part of it was used as a teahouse. Residents of Aksai, together with a detachment of "Kapchygai" border post, about 40-50 people, extinguished the fire. The suspects were Tajik citizens. After 22.00, an aggressive group of Kyrgyz citizens—about 30-35 people—blocked the highway Isfara – Vorukh. At 23.00 Tajik citizens blocked the way to the village of Ak-Sai on the road Batken – Isfana near the village Hodzhalo (Matchai) Isfara district.

### *Situation awareness*

On December 18, 2013, at 12.20, about 100 Kyrgyz citizens gathered in the village of Ak-Sai on the road to the enclave "Vorukh" and decided to block the passage to the above-mentioned road until their problems were resolved: construction of a bypass road; the prosecution of persons involved in the arson, and compensation for the damages.

At 13.20, officials from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan held talks on the stabilization of the situation. It was said that the parties "expressed an interest in resolving the situation and instructed law enforcement agencies to prosecute perpetrators of the fire."<sup>45</sup>

At 14.35, Kyrgyz citizens unloaded gravel and stones on the road Isfara – Vorukh at the entrance to enclave Vorukh. At the same time, residents of Ak-Sai attempted to beat the head of the state register of Batken district Alisher Ergeshov and the Deputy Representative of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Batken region Bakir Zholchiev. However, law enforcement officers and border guards prevented the crime and officials were taken to the border post "Kapchygai."

On December 18 at 20.00, Tajik citizens tried to block the highway Batken – Isfana in the area Jack-Oruk. However, about 400 Kyrgyz stopped them. At 21.50, Kyrgyz citizens burned the barn in a Tajik home in the area Jack-Oruk.

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<sup>44</sup> "Mufti from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan visited Tajik enclave Vorukh, took part in the Friday prayer and met with the population," *AKIpress-Osh*, 3 May 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Source: [http://www.vb.kg/doc/255799\\_hronologija\\_konflikta\\_na\\_ychastke\\_kyrgyzsko\\_tadjikskoy\\_granicy.html](http://www.vb.kg/doc/255799_hronologija_konflikta_na_ychastke_kyrgyzsko_tadjikskoy_granicy.html).

On December 19 at 00.30, Kyrgyz citizens dispersed. No more than 10 people remained. Still, the probability of provocative actions on both sides remained high.

In the morning of December 19, the situation in the Batken region remained unchanged. Road Batken – Isfana was open. Highway Isfara – Vorukh remained closed. Kyrgyz Government sent to the place of conflict the First Deputy Chairman of the State Border Service Iskender Mambetaliyev.

On December 20 at 9.00, sections of the road Isfara–Vorukh (Tajikistan) and Ak-Sai –Vorukh (Kyrgyzstan) were closed. Negotiations with the local population took place. Law enforcement officers were in full control of the situation and took appropriate measures to prevent another conflict.

### *Use of force*

In the land disputes of recent years, along with the growing number of incidents on the disputed territories there has been a trend of involving law enforcement agencies in territorial disputes. If earlier land disputes were resolved by the heads of local governments, experts in land management and community leaders, currently law enforcement officials are frequently involved. The intervention of the police in territorial disputes, especially participation of armed border guards, aggravates the situation and sometimes provokes armed conflicts. Analysis of recent conflicts shows that there have been virtually no incidents, even minor disputes, without military involvement.

The conflict on January 11, 2014 with the participation of border guards of the parties was provoked by the construction of the road Kok-Tash-Ak-Sai-Tamdyk. At 13.15, shooting started on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border near the watershed in Batken region of Batken district between soldiers of the State Border Service of Kyrgyzstan and National Security border troops of Tajikistan.

The subject of contestation was a piece of land where the construction of a bypass road was going on and about a hundred Tajik border guards arrived to settle the conflict. The Tajik side insisted that the work was carried out on the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Kyrgyz side was convinced that the territory belonged to the KR. At first, the border guards talked quietly. But then there was a verbal altercation and the commander of Tajik Border Special Forces, Lieutenant Colonel Hanifov fired the first shot in the stomach of a lieutenant from Kyrgyz Border Service. As a result of the incident, at least three Kyrgyz guards were injured.<sup>46</sup>

“As a result of the scuffle, special forces of the neighbouring country first used weapon against our border guards, after which there was a skirmish,” Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Tokon Mamytov said.<sup>47</sup>

Each of these situations provoked the rapid mobilization and the aggressive attitude of the residents of nearby villages on both sides of the border to the place of conflict. A “traditional” step in every conflict situation was to block the road Kok-Tash-Ak-Sai by Tajik citizens, and the road Isfara-Vorukh by Kyrgyz citizens.

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<sup>46</sup> Source: [http://www.knews.kg/action/42926\\_perestrelka\\_na\\_kyirgyzsko-tadjikskoy\\_granitse/](http://www.knews.kg/action/42926_perestrelka_na_kyirgyzsko-tadjikskoy_granitse/).

<sup>47</sup> Source: [www.vb.kg/doc/257576\\_tokon\\_mamytov\\_nazval\\_prichiny\\_konflikta\\_na\\_granice.html](http://www.vb.kg/doc/257576_tokon_mamytov_nazval_prichiny_konflikta_na_granice.html).

The specifics of the conflict on January 2014 with use of small and large calibre guns shall be taken into account; as a result, people from both sides were injured. This fact had a negative impact on interstate relations. Kyrgyzstan unilaterally closed the border with Tajikistan. The agreement between deputy prime ministers on the joint investigation of the incident was not implemented. The situation became very tense after Tajikistan deployed heavy armoured equipment and troops at the border. Any further action—the withdrawal of troops or identification of the perpetrators in the shootout and their punishment—could not restore in the near future the relationship of trust between population and border guards in this area. And most importantly, the source of conflict was not removed – the state border line was not defined.

“But if earlier border conflicts were of domestic and economic character, for example, related to cattle, distribution of water or crops and were not politically motivated, the danger of current conflicts is that any conflict can quickly become politicized,” – said Deputy Prime Minister Tokon Mamytov.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the politicization of the border issues at state level, delimitation remains a contentious issue at the local level. Undoubtedly, delimitation of borders in the Ferghana Valley is a very time-consuming process that leads to partial or complete separation of the communities living there. Consequently, obstacles will arise due to the ambitions of regional leaders and the struggle for power at the regional level. Locally, borders and land are not considered as a sphere of government control, but rather perceived as a material property belonging to a particular district.<sup>49</sup>

### *Early warning system*

As Tajik journalist Negmatullo Mirsaidov pointed out, “quite often inefficient management of the border areas becomes a source of conflict. In all past and ongoing conflicts and incidents, local authorities are represented by officials in state institutions and law enforcement agencies whose actions either ignore or provoke confrontation.” In such a situation, the lack of transparency and accountability of government, as well as the absence of reliable information further consolidates public confidence in the fact that “the authorities do not care about us and our problems.”<sup>50</sup>

At the same time, as subsequent events showed in 2013-2014, authorities at all levels, even though aware that the sources of conflict persist, failed to take effective preventive measures at international and local level, periodically allowing the emergence of new conflicts between border communities. Thus, despite the fact that central authori-

<sup>48</sup> Source: <http://iwpr.net/ru/report-news>.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Salamat Alamanov (at that time head of the Kyrgyz government delegations at the talks on border issues with China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), published in the article “Delimitation – intellectual challenge,” *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 5 December 2007.

<sup>50</sup> “The potential for peace and the threats of conflict,” Analysis of the development of border communities in Isfara district in Tajikistan (J. Vorukh, Chorku, Surkh and Shurab) and Batken region in Kyrgyzstan (Ak-Sai, Ak-Tatyr and Samarkandek), NGO “CPP Vorukh” within the framework of the UNDP project “Conflict prevention and mitigation in the Ferghana Valley” (with the financial support of the Government of Norway).

ties were sufficiently aware of the situation, they did not have the appropriate tools and skills to respond in time to conflicts.

### *Laws and obligations*

The conflict in January 2014 gained international attention and had long-term consequences for the region as a whole. Although each of the parties and their neighbours perceived the situation through the prism of their own national interests, a crucial role in overcoming the conflict was played by the interest to ensure the viability of the existing regional security system.

Firstly, this bilateral conflict is of intersystem nature and therefore destroys the regional security system. Its further expansion paralyzes the efficiency of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the SCO, CSTO, the Anti-Terrorist Centre (ATC) and CHSB, CIS. All this happens at a time when the growth of the Afghan threat and possible destabilizing geopolitical combinations of world powers require maximum concentration of joint efforts of all the Central Asian countries and their regional partners. Accordingly, the adoption of promptly agreed measures for the timely neutralization of emerging threats to national and regional security becomes problematic.<sup>51</sup>

The population in the border areas of Kyrgyzstan demands the implementation of the Law "On pastures,"<sup>52</sup> including the part concerning the procedure for the use of pastures of Kyrgyzstan by foreign nationals, taking into account the potential for conflict in the process and national security considerations.

According to Article 13 of the Law "On pastures," providing pasture for use by foreign legal and natural persons may take place in the presence of unused pastures on the basis of interstate and intergovernmental agreements ratified by the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic. However, in spite of certain agreements to provide pastures to Tajik farmers (tariff, period, number of cattle), according to activist from the Batken region Taalaybek Ibraimov, at the moment people from the village Aksai, Batken district, are categorically against Tajik cattle grazing in Kyrgyzstan. The local population would agree only if the Tajiks did not interfere with the construction of the bypass road Kok-Tash-Ak-Sai-Tamdyk.<sup>53</sup>

### *Level of readiness of state agencies for emergency*

Events in Vorukh (Tajikistan) unfolded similarly to the clashes in Sokh (Uzbekistan) in January. The problems there also started when the enclave residents opposed the construction of power lines by Kyrgyz border guards. As at government level relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are more complex than those with Tajikistan, in response to events in Sokh Uzbekistan banned all border transfers, and these restrictions

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<sup>51</sup> "Regional Partnership as a factor in the settlement of the Kyrgyz-Tajik conflict," Karim Dovudov, 22:33, CentrAsia, 16 January 2014, [www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1389897180](http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1389897180).

<sup>52</sup> Law "On Amendments and Additions to the Law of KR "On pastures"," adopted by the Parliament on November 24, 2011.

<sup>53</sup> From an interview with Taalaibek Ibraimov, an activist of the village Aksai of Batken district, May 2014.

have not been fully cancelled to date. Meanwhile, after the Kyrgyz-Tajik incident of 2014, officials from both countries made efforts to ensure that the checkpoints were opened and facilitated the smooth movement of vehicles.<sup>54</sup>

Asked about the efficiency of the reaction of authorities in the conflict, the head of the State Register of Batken district Alisher Ergeshov said, "I believe that the central and local authorities on both sides should always be ready to negotiate on the situation on the border, as they are always aware of any growing confrontation between residents, based mainly in economic activities along the border. Any actions in the border area are under the close supervision of the population on both sides, and they quickly spread in the district and the region."<sup>55</sup>

The level of disaster preparedness of authorities in Batken region and the central government was insufficient. First, the authorities had to analyse the chronology and dynamics of previous conflicts. Second, joint patrolling at the border was to be decided at intergovernmental level. Third, state authorities were supposed to strengthen security measures taking into account the incidents in December 2013.

### *Liability*

As previous conflicts in the border areas have shown, public authorities are not always able to respond quickly to conflicts due to a lack of skills for interaction with their counterparts in neighbouring countries, as well as the inability to adequately assess the development of the conflict. In some cases, local authorities are not able to reduce the tensions among opposing border communities. Moreover, the mechanism of transmission of information on emerging or ongoing conflicts is not sufficiently fast. This may be explained with the fact that representatives of the lower levels of authorities are not prepared to use the capacity of the existing mechanism of interaction between power structures.

### *Decision-making process*

In the wake of the recent unrest in Vorukh in December 2013, an Intergovernmental commission on delimitation and demarcation of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border was established. On January 9, 2014, the Commission adopted a document regulating the activities of both parties in the border areas until the final delimitation and demarcation of the disputed areas. Tajik Foreign Ministry reported that on January 7, 2014, the Kyrgyz and Tajik sides agreed to stop the construction of the road Kok-Tash-Ak-Sai-Tamdyk. However, "despite this, on January 11, 2014 at 12:20 the Kyrgyz side under armed cover attempted to continue the construction works on the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan. Recording a violation of the state border, Tajik border guards demanded that violators suspend construction works,"<sup>56</sup> news agency 24.kg reported.

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<sup>54</sup> "Enclave Issues Challenge Uzbek and Kyrgyz Leaders," IWPR, [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org).

<sup>55</sup> From an interview with Alisher Ergeshov, head of the State Register of Batken district, 23-27 January 2014, Batken region.

<sup>56</sup> Source: <http://www.24kg.org/community/169169-vlasti-tadzhikistana-obvinili-v-razzhigani.html>.

On the same day, at about 12.20 in Jamoat Ovchi-Kalacha Bobodzhon Gafurov district of Sughd province of Tajikistan another conflict took place. "Representatives of the neighbouring Kyrgyz border post approached the state border of Tajikistan and asked their Tajik colleagues to remove their border guards who protected the territory. The purpose of this demand was the beginning of uncoordinated construction of the road Kulundu–Maksat by the Kyrgyz side,"<sup>57</sup> the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan reported.

The Kyrgyz side, by contrast, argued that at the negotiations in Dushanbe on January 7, 2014, the parties "found common ground and decided to cooperate."<sup>58</sup> According to the State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, the conflict was provoked by Tajik military rather than Kyrgyz border guards. The Kyrgyz Border Service reported that the same information was also received from the locals and it will be thoroughly checked during the official investigation.

"It is surprising that immediately after the talks between Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Tokon Mamytov and his counterpart in Tajikistan Murodali Alimardon, where agreement was reached on jointly patrolling of the most disputed areas of the Kyrgyz-Tajik state border, Tajik border guards penetrated into the territory of Kyrgyzstan and used guns," officials reported.<sup>59</sup>

On January 14, 2014, Kyrgyzstan withdrew its ambassador from Dushanbe Urmat Saralaev for consultations. On the next day, a meeting of Kyrgyz and Tajik delegations took place in the city of Isfara. At the meeting, the Kyrgyz side was represented by Head of Department of Defence and Law in the Kyrgyz Government, Major General Alik Mamyrkulov; Chief of Staff of the State Border Service, Colonel Iskender Mambetaliyev; and Regional border command in Batken region. Tajikistan was represented by Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Tajikistan Abdurahim; Deputy Interior Minister Major General Iskandar Radjabov; and Regional border command in Sughd region. During the negotiations, it was decided to remove special units and additional units from the border area in order to avoid conflicts and to continue joint border patrols as of the first contract. However, the expert commission did not make the final verdict.

On February 14, 2014, at a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Murodali Alimardon and his counterpart Tokon Mamytov in Bishkek the use of roads and land in the border areas was discussed, as well as the problems associated with checkpoints. First of all, Tajikistan requested that border checkpoints be opened, because as a result of the closure of the border Tajikistan suffered millions in losses due to the cost of food and fuel. There was a discussion to bring additional military forces to patrol the borders. They agreed on the joint protection of the borders in dangerous areas. It was decided to set up a commission that will put an end to the question concerning the disputed land and the construction of the road by Kyrgyzstan. Until then, Kyrgyzstan will build the road within 5-10 meters away from the area men-

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<sup>57</sup> Sources Granitsa.kg: "We can only dream of rest," Mahinur Niyazov, 10:25, stoletie.ru, 16 January 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

tioned. The Kyrgyz side demanded that Tajikistan repair the damage after the shootout on January 11, 2014 and respond to the notes.

Tajikistan offered to pave the way to the enclave Vorukh and asked that a 10-kilometer road from Hozholu to Vorukh be separated and not pass through Ak-Sai. But the Kyrgyz side rejected this proposal, citing the presence of an existing road Kok-Tash – Ak-Sai – Tamdyk – Hozholu, which could be used by Tajik citizens provided that they did not create obstacles to the local population. Otherwise, the road will be closed.<sup>60</sup>

On March 3, 2014, the meeting of the intergovernmental commission of Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic on the demarcation and delimitation of the disputed areas of the state border between the two states ended in Dushanbe. The parties signed a protocol to continue the work of relevant committees to settle the situation on the Tajik-Kyrgyz border. The protocol was signed by Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Tokon Mamytov and Deputy Prime Minister of Tajikistan Murodali Alimardon. According to the Tajik government, at a meeting held behind closed doors, the parties came to an agreement to build two bridges in the disputed territories near the state border in the direction of Isfara. One bridge will be built by Tajikistan, the other one – by Kyrgyzstan. The parties also agreed to hold the next round of talks in late March 2014 in Tajikistan.<sup>61</sup>

However, after the agreement to normalize border relations was signed by the prime ministers of the two countries, numerous conflicts in this section of the border occurred again. High level agreements are not always implemented on the spot, and are not perceived by the local population as a guide to establish good neighbourly relations.

### *Cooperation and coordination*

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kyrgyzstan through the Programme for Peace and Development initiated the establishment of an early warning system in border communities. This initiative was implemented in 2003-2007 in the Batken region and partially covered neighbouring border communities in Sughd province of Tajikistan and Uzbek Sokh enclave. The program prepared a report on early warning which included:<sup>62</sup>

- analysis of risk factors for cross-border issues;
- the main causes of conflicts and problems in border communities;
- description of the effects of cross-border problems in the absence of response;
- conclusions and recommendations for all key actors, including governments, civil society, international organizations, local community in order to resolve the reported problems.

At the same time, UNDP initiated the establishment of joint working groups between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan at district level. These working groups were created on a parity basis and consisted of 10-12 members who represented district government agen-

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Tokon Mamytov, Newspaper “Fabula” # 9 of 11 February 2014, pp. 5 and 11.

<sup>61</sup> Avaz Yuldashev, 3 March 2014, <http://www.centrasia.ru/news.php?CR=3>.

<sup>62</sup> See *Early warning report*, UNDP Preventive Development Programme, Batken, 2004.

cies and municipalities, law enforcement agencies, the business sector, water, land and forest services, as well as civil society organizations. The aim of the working groups was to discuss jointly identified transboundary issues, as well as to solve and / or address these issues to a higher authority. Working group meetings were held on a quarterly basis.<sup>63</sup>

During the meetings, members of the working groups also held discussions on early warning. A striking example was the discussion on the use of Kyrgyz pastures by Tajik livestock in 2008. The Tajik side noted the urgent need for them to access the pastures located in Batken and Leilek areas. Until the end of 2007, Tajik livestock breeders used Kyrgyz pastures on the basis of intergovernmental agreement of 1992 which expired on December 31, 2007. Then, the Kyrgyz side terminated access to pastures. As a result of discussions, members of the working group decided to appeal to the heads of Batken and Sughd regions with a request to send the issue for resolution at governmental level in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. As a result, the Kyrgyz Government Office prepared a new draft of intergovernmental agreement on the use of pastures, which was sent to the Parliamentary Committee in December 2009.

Another mechanism for an early warning system was the subject of UNDP projects “Promoting Integrated Water Resources Management and Fostering Transboundary Dialogue in Central Asia” and GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation) “Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia.” Both of these projects aimed at creating an early warning system for conflicts associated with the distribution of water resources of transboundary rivers, specifically the distribution of water between river Isfarinka between Batken (Kyrgyzstan) and Isfara (RT) areas. The above projects provided for the creation of teams of observers, with representatives of water services in Batken and Isfara districts, who were responsible for monitoring and ensuring transparent distribution of water between the Kyrgyz and Tajik communities.<sup>64</sup> In case of disputes and conflicts over water distribution the teams of observers shall notify local authorities and other actors so that they take the necessary measures to resolve or prevent disputes and conflicts.

Thus, the early warning system, established with the support of UNDP and GIZ, involved the collection and analysis of information on cross-border issues, joint discussion on the problems identified, as well as solving or addressing the above cross-border issues to relevant state agencies.

### *International relations*

While Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the conflict between them is contrary to the position of the Organization on non-use of weapons against each other, CSTO did not comment on the unrest in

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<sup>63</sup> See “Minutes of the meeting of the joint working group from Batken district KR and Isfara region in Tajikistan,” Batken, 2011.

<sup>64</sup> “Minutes of the meeting of the interdepartmental group of water services in Batken and Isfara districts,” Batken, 2011.

Vorukh in December 2013. According to CSTO press service, Secretary General Nikolay Bordyuzha already held telephone talks with the heads of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan, but an official statement did not follow. Actions of the leadership of the parties show that they believe it is possible to defuse the situation on a bilateral basis, through negotiations and without intermediaries.

### *Communications*

For a long time, information about the process of demarcation and delimitation of borders has been “closed” which generated various speculations among the population of the Batken region. If relevant information had been available, residents might have gradually prepared to take action. In any case, communities have the right to receive information and the authorities must take into account the fact that citizens want to know how government agencies are trying to solve their immediate problems.

Another problem is the very low level of awareness of existing bilateral agreements and treaties. In the context of the current processes, the issue of timely notification of citizens plays a key role. The lack of information leads to misunderstanding. In general, there is no systematic approach in raising public awareness of the laws and statutes of the two countries, which are directly related to the everyday life of residents in border areas.

### *Public relations*

Access to information in the border communities of Isfara district in Tajikistan is limited as independent print media are inaccessible due to their high cost and lack of distribution networks. However, there is a well-established distribution network of public print media, both central and local through mandatory subscription to a specific list of state publications, but they do not actually contain the information necessary for residents of the border communities.

In Batken region of the Kyrgyz Republic, information about the incident in Aksai was provided to the media and online publications in an operational mode. Exchange of information between the authorities and the media was effective. During the conflict, authorities did not hide from the media the real situation developing in the conflict zone and gave interviews. Thus, the population of the Batken region was informed adequately about the emergency.

With the assistance of international organizations (UNICEF, Internews, US Embassy Democratic program) through local partners (e.g., Foundation for International Tolerance) a number of projects were carried out aimed at informing the public about the ways of cooperation with law enforcement agencies and protection of human rights. Information was transmitted through the local radio station “Salam” and the release of the eponymous newsletter, broadcast and published in two languages – Kyrgyz and Russian. Also, a joint Kyrgyz-Tajik informational and educational Newsletter “Mediator” was published with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, a cycle of joint programs was organized on radio “Tiroz” with the support of the OSCE and Mercy Corps.

With the assistance of UNDP, Jamoat Resource Centres were established in border communities with the purpose to improve access of local population to information and to overcome the information vacuum in the target communities. Raising the awareness of residents in border villages on conflict management and prevention, confidence and tolerance building continues in the current UNDP project "Mitigation and prevention of conflicts in the Ferghana Valley."

Thus, the work of donors played a positive role in raising public awareness of border communities in Batken district on cross-border issues.

## **Summary and conclusions**

The analysis of the situation shows that in the border areas of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan there is still a high potential for cross-border conflicts with the following sources:

- no legally established state border;
- insufficient natural resources and absence of bilateral documents regulating the sharing of these resources under the new conditions, taking into account the sovereign status of the former Soviet republics;
- politicization of relations at the level of local communities in neighbouring countries.

Attention shall be drawn to the following circumstances, typical for the region:

1. High level of mobilization of residents of border towns in all three countries who are able to arrive immediately to the venue of a critical situation and escalate the situation into a conflict. This psychological state of the population on both sides is generated by the fact that people accuse their authorities of impotence, unilateral compromises in the course of negotiations on water and land issues. The construction of roads, bridges, canals and other infrastructure is interpreted as a hostile act to the detriment of the sovereignty of the country and the economy in the region. The consequences of such actions are exaggerated.
2. "Patriotic" statements by officials in the course of negotiations on border issues are crucial for the formation of hostile international relations. They create false understanding of the problem of legally fixing the state border. On January 11, 2014 in the village of Chorkuh, first deputy chairman of the Sughd region Jumaboi Sanginov said that Tajikistan will not give away even 1 cm of its territory. Similar statements on intransigence can be heard from senior officials of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Controversial issues can be resolved only on the basis of mutual concessions.
3. The existing ethnic variety around the Tajik enclave Vorukh and Uzbek enclave Sokh is perceived by the population of the region as a threat to the territorial integrity of each of the neighbouring countries. High conflict potential in these areas along the Kyrgyz border will continue as a result of agrarian overpopulation and the acute shortage of land and water resources.

4. Delimitation and demarcation of borders, after their completion, together with the agreements on border and enclaves that are to be implemented after the signing and ratification of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek and Kyrgyz-Tajik state border agreements, can mitigate the ethno-territorial conflict potential in the region.

## Lessons Learned

- Government agencies play a significant role in addressing cross-border issues and developing cross-border communities: the competence of government employees in the analysis, management and conflict prevention. Frequent cases of border incidents indicate potential weakness of the authorities, both at regional level and at the level of local government, to identify, predict and prevent conflict situations, to hold negotiations and resolve conflicts.
- Current cross-border conflicts arise from the weak efforts of delegations on the delimitation of frontiers. During numerous meetings over the past three years, not a single kilometre has been agreed on. From the records of the work of Government joint commissions of the Kyrgyz SSR, Uzbek SSR and the Tajik SSR, it is known that in 1955, 1958, and 1959 good decisions were made for the lines of administrative borders. Possibly, the futility of ongoing negotiations is the result of the professional level of people who are entrusted with this important task. Taking into account the fact that border problems are numerous and in addition to delimitation they include a variety of cross-border economic relations between the population and are a source of cross-border conflicts, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic should carefully form the delegations for border talks and focus on the professional expertise and experience in government agencies related to border issues.<sup>65</sup>
- Despite the high level of interest of the two governments in the development of border regions, local strategic development plans and programs, both at regional and municipality level, neglect the aspects of reduction and prevention of conflicts. In this situation, any initiative aimed at reducing the potential for conflict will only affect symptoms, leaving unresolved the most serious problems. In this regard, it is necessary to develop mechanisms that would help to establish relationships between local authorities and the communities.
- Dealing with a particular dispute, government representatives and commission members usually try to eliminate not the reason but the external effect. As a result, problems that do not seem likely to cause any complications become latent and are often a serious threat for social tensions.
- During meetings, little attention is paid to the analysis of conflict situations. If on the one hand, this is due to the low level of competence and lack of analytical

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<sup>65</sup> From an interview with Jumali Adilbaev, Professor of History in Osh State University, studying border issues, 23-27 January 2014, Batken oblast.

skills among employees of state agencies, on the other hand, such meetings are very limited in time, usually of duration of only one day.

- Absence of a mechanism for bilateral monitoring of the implementation of decisions. In the best case, the implementation of the decisions taken are monitored separately and the parties do not inform each other about the results.
- Absence of the principle of compulsory implementation of decisions. In case of failure, there is no specific person to bear responsibility.
- Frequent change of public administrators in general has a negative impact on the stability of dialogue between the authorities and the effectiveness of collaborative problem solving in particular. Temporary relationships of mutual trust and cooperation between supervisors, the expertise for resolution of disputes, oral agreements and principles of coexistence are subject to revision by newly appointed heads of agencies and not always this process has a positive effect on the cooperation between authorities. There is no mechanism of “continuity” created by the former leadership of institutions and decisions. The same commissions and working groups are created repeatedly. Generally, in Kyrgyzstan the change of a single leader is accompanied by the change of the entire administration.
- Weak participation of civil society representatives as observers during a conflict.

## **Recommendations**

Norms (rules, standards, laws and regulations) shall be altered, amended or newly developed:

- It is necessary to accelerate the completion of the process of delimitation and demarcation of borders, as well as the consolidation of their results by intrastate and interstate procedures.
- To accelerate the implementation of the Law “On giving special status to certain border areas of the Kyrgyz Republic and their development,” especially the development and adoption of a special state program, and ensure that it is adequately funded.
- To meet the requirements of the Law “On pastures,” including the procedure for the use of pastures in KR by foreign nationals, taking into consideration national security, as well as granting additional powers to local authorities to lease pastures.

Necessary changes in the operational work and operational procedures:

- To strengthen cooperation between border and land management services, heads of border regions, municipalities and water departments.
- To resume the cross-border working groups between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan created with the support and initiative of UNDP in Kyrgyzstan to discuss the situation in border communities and plan joint activities for the purpose of preventive response. Cross-border working groups should include representatives of gov-

ernment agencies responsible for water, land and migration issues, law enforcement agencies, representatives of border municipalities, heads of border regions who in turn are to chair these working groups.

- To establish a mechanism of interaction between the border services of the parties, and to ensure their close cooperation with land management agencies on the arrangement of the border zones, including posts and checkpoints.

Required skills (database, communication, analytical support in the decision making process, public relations):

- To create a map of conflicts, including a summary of the geography of the conflict, parties involved, causes of the conflict, actions taken by government agencies, lessons learned. This map will help to analyse the dynamics of conflict, to produce the best and worst case scenarios in order to prevent possible conflicts in the future.
- To establish a system of continuous monitoring and analysis of conflict situations by improving the work of law enforcement agencies.
- In order to predict the situation along the state border, it is important to conduct operational and intelligence activities in the border area.
- To conduct regular meetings between MPs and relevant public authorities with the population to discuss and resolve border issues.
- State structures shall strengthen cooperation with international organizations and local NGOs working in the field of cross-border cooperation and conflict prevention (UNDP, ATCD, the OSCE, Saferworld, Eurasia Foundation, Foundation Soros–Kyrgyzstan, Foundation “For International Tolerance,” Fund “Peaceful Development of Ferghana Valley” and others).
- Local authorities, international organizations and NGOs need to continue the educational programs on conflict management which will allow different groups of population to gain experience for peaceful resolution of problems.
- To operate within the laws and regulations, including international rights and obligations.
- To make the population in the border villages aware of the rules and procedures of crossing the border with the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan, and the economic activities in the border area.
- Give a legal assessment of incidents in terms of human rights violations.

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# Chapter 6

## Kyrgyzstan's Experience in Managing the Risks of Earthquakes: Nura-Alay Earthquake in 2008

Dzhergalbek Ukashev and Chinar Berbaeva

### Summary

Due to its geographical location, Kyrgyzstan is a country that is largely exposed to disasters and catastrophes. The greatest threat to the population and critical infrastructure are: earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, mudslides, floods, groundwater, highland lakes outbursts, depots for hazardous waste, and hurricanes.

According to incomplete data of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic, in Kyrgyzstan there are at least 14,000 dangerous and over 4,000 particularly dangerous sites, areas and zones – sources of various natural disasters, accidents and catastrophes which are distributed unevenly and with different degrees of activity manifested on the territory of the seven administrative regions of Kyrgyzstan. Some of them are of a transborder nature.

More than 80 large settlements are located in an area of possible earthquakes, the intensity of which can reach more than 9 points. About 75 % of the population (approximately 4,332,450 people) lives there.

According to estimates, about 3.3 million people, which represent about 66 % of the population, live in houses that are not resistant to strong earthquakes.

Moreover, in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- There are more than 5,000 landslide-prone areas;
- There are more than 60 hazardous waste depots which contain about 160 million m<sup>3</sup> of toxic and radioactive waste, as well as more than 100 dumps of overburden, waste rock and substandard ore – radioactive waste with a total weight of over 2 billion tons. Areas of possible radioactive contamination are on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with a total population of about 5 million people;
- There are more than 300 high-altitude glacial lakes, creating a serious potential threat to the population and national economy, as their breakthroughs are generating powerful mud and water flows that exit in densely populated valleys and can have catastrophic consequences.

After an earthquake, the consequences of the above threats can be immense. Statistics show that each year about 200 emergencies of various kinds are registered in the country with direct damage worth 30-35 million US dollars, while the overall tangible losses, economic damage and the need for rehabilitation and reconstruction amount to much more.

For a long period of time, emergency and crisis situations in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic strongly undermine investment efforts and are becoming a serious obstacle to sustainable development and reducing poverty.

The National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2013-2017 aims to improve the work of state bodies and local authorities focused on the safety of the population and territories from the risk of natural and industrial disasters.

All this makes the Kyrgyz government seek new ways to reduce disaster risk, protect population and territories from emergency situations, use international experience and follow the recommendations of the international community to ensure the priority role of disaster risk reduction at the national and local levels with a strong institutional basis for their implementation.

### **Background Information**

*Crisis situation* – extraordinary circumstances (natural disasters, major accidents or catastrophes, epidemics, epizootics, direct threats to the constitutional order, riots, accompanied by violence and threat to human life) as defined in Article 3 of the Constitutional Law of the KR dated October 24, 1998 no. 135 “State of Emergency.”<sup>1</sup>

*Emergency situation* – situation in a particular territory of the Kyrgyz Republic as a result of dangerous natural or industrial phenomenon, accidents, catastrophes, natural or other disasters, the impact of modern means of destruction that may cause or have caused loss of life, damage to human health or the environment, considerable material losses and deterioration of living conditions.<sup>2</sup>

*Earthquake* – tremors and vibrations of the earth’s surface as a result of displacements and sudden breaks in the crust or upper mantle and transmitted over long distances in the form of elastic waves.<sup>3</sup> The magnitude of earthquakes is usually measured by different scales, based on the records of seismographs. One of the scales is known as the Richter scale. Earthquake magnitude is a dimensionless index that is proportional to the logarithm of the ratio of the maximum amplitude of a certain type of waves of earthquakes and a standard earthquake. The intensity of the earthquake on the surface is measured in points, depending on the depth and magnitude of the earthquake which serves as a measure of its energy. Kyrgyzstan has adopted the international MSK-64 scale (Medvedev, Sponheuer, Karnik scale) according to which the intensity of the earthquake is classified into 12 points according to its destructive force.

<sup>1</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated June 2, 2012 no. 357 “On approval of the Concept and Strategy of complex safety of the population and territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in emergency and crisis situations until 2020.”

<sup>2</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 20, 2009 no. 239 “On Civil Protection.”

<sup>3</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 17 November 2011 no. 733 “Classification of emergency situations and criteria for their assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic.”

## Short description of Nura-Alay earthquake in 2008

The village of Nura appeared in the middle of last century and is located in a mountainous area, 275 kilometres from the provincial centre of Osh, 180 kilometres from the regional centre of the village Gulcha and 8 kilometres south-west of border and customs checkpoint Irkeshtam on the border with China. Access to the village of Nura is possible only by helicopter or ground transport.

Residential buildings in Nura were built before 2008 mostly without foundation only from brick. Natural disasters such as landslides and small fluctuations in the Earth's crust somehow bypassed the village. Once, an earthquake ruined the bridge over the nearby river, while aftershocks were not felt in the village. This time luck passed the village.

In Kyrgyzstan, on October 5, 2008 at 21 hours 53 minutes local time there was a powerful tremor (earthquake), very sensitive to human perception, especially for the residents of the southern region.

Under the law, in the event of an earthquake, all information from various sources goes first to the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic since it is the authorized state body of executive power of the Kyrgyz Republic to implement the state policy of civil protection, fire, radiation safety, the safety of people on water sites and hydrometeorology. It was found that in order to finally determine the place, time, magnitude, intensity and other parameters of earthquakes, the Ministry of Emergency uses official data received from the Institute of Seismology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Thus, the following official information about the earthquake in Nura village of Alay district of Osh region was received from the Institute of Seismology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- On 5 October 2008 at 21 hours 53 min local time, an earthquake with magnitude 8 according to MSK-64 was registered.
- The epicentre is 220 km south-east of Osh, 150 km south of the village of Sufi-Kurgan.
- Coordinates of the epicentre: 39°38 min N latitude, 73°52 min E longitude.
- The earthquake was felt in Nura village with Mag. 8, in Osh – Mag. 5.0, Batken – Mag. 4.5, Bishkek – Mag. 3.0.

In addition, operational services of the Ministry of Emergency with the help of US Geological Survey, which is a US government research organization specializing in earth sciences (Reston, Virginia),<sup>4</sup> sent the following information:

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<sup>4</sup> <http://earthquake.usgs.gov>.

- Magnitude: mb 6.3, Region Kyrgyzstan
- Date time: 2008-10-05 at 15:52:49.7 UTC
- Local time: 21:52 2008-10-05
- Location: 39.6 N; 73.82 E; Depth 40 km
- Distances: 136 km SE Osh, 139 km S Özgön.

Source: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov).

Operational services of the Ministry of Emergency Situations received and processed the following maps (see below) regarding the earthquake, on which icons displayed the location of the epicentre and the village of Nura of Alay district of Osh region.

According to the locals, there were a few tremors: the first one was very powerful and the land could not calm down; tremors were felt like waves that rolled under the feet. The director of the Institute of Seismology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic Kanatbek Abdrakhmatov stated that on October 5, 2008, two hours after the devastating tremor with magnitude 8 recorded at about ten o'clock in the evening on Sunday, October 5, seismologists recorded an aftershock with magnitude 6. In total, about 100 aftershocks were recorded in the country in those days, 15 of which were strong and medium in magnitude.

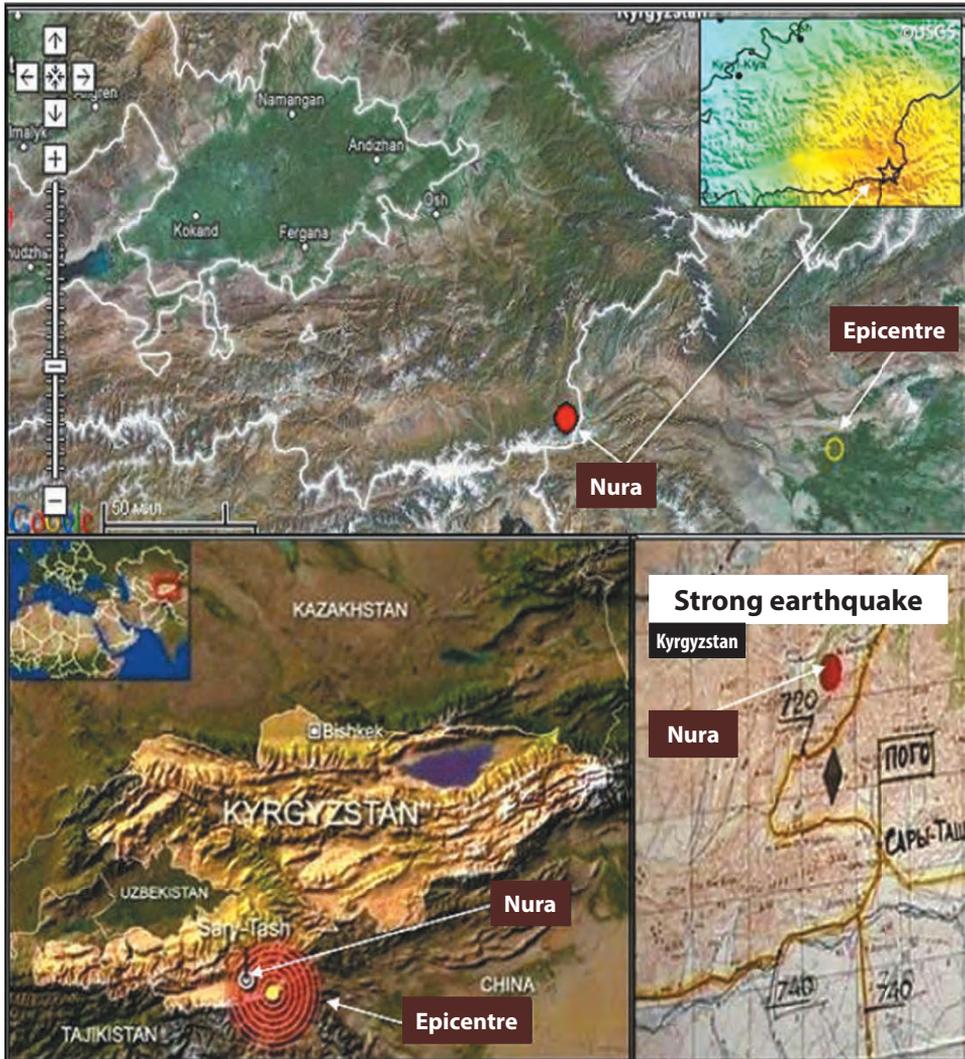
Nura village in Alay district of Osh region was almost completely destroyed, with 75 dead (about 8 %) of the 924 residents. Among the casualties were 32 preschool children, 12 pupils, and 31 adults. In addition, more than 140 people (about 16 % of the population of the village) received injuries of various degrees and were treated in hospitals in Osh and the hospital in Alay district. More than 200 heads of cattle were killed.

The earthquake in Nura destroyed completely over 95 % of the buildings. Only four houses, the club and the dispensary remained undestroyed, built by the panel method. But they were also brought to emergency state. Only the new school built in compliance with the construction regulations did not have visible damages.

According to the Department of monitoring and forecasting of emergency situations at the Ministry of Emergencies, as a result of Nura-Alay earthquake in Alay and Chon-Alay districts (including the village of Nura) 988 houses were damaged, of which 152 were completely destroyed, 38 were in emergency state, 94 received significant damage.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Department of monitoring and forecasting of emergency situations at the Ministry of Emergencies is responsible for monitoring and forecasting of natural and industrial emergencies.

The main tasks of the Department are:



**Map 1: Space image, covering the Alay basin and adjacent territories.**

Source: Nura Earthquake, Report of the Institute of Seismology of the National Academy of Sciences of the KR.

- monitoring, prediction and prevention of emergencies to protect the population and territories from natural hazards and industrial processes;
- forecast of the development and revitalization of dangerous natural processes and phenomena in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The following photos show clearly the consequences of the devastating earthquake in Nura village, Alay district of Osh region.



October 2008, the village of Nura

**Photograph 1: Nura village before the earthquake.**

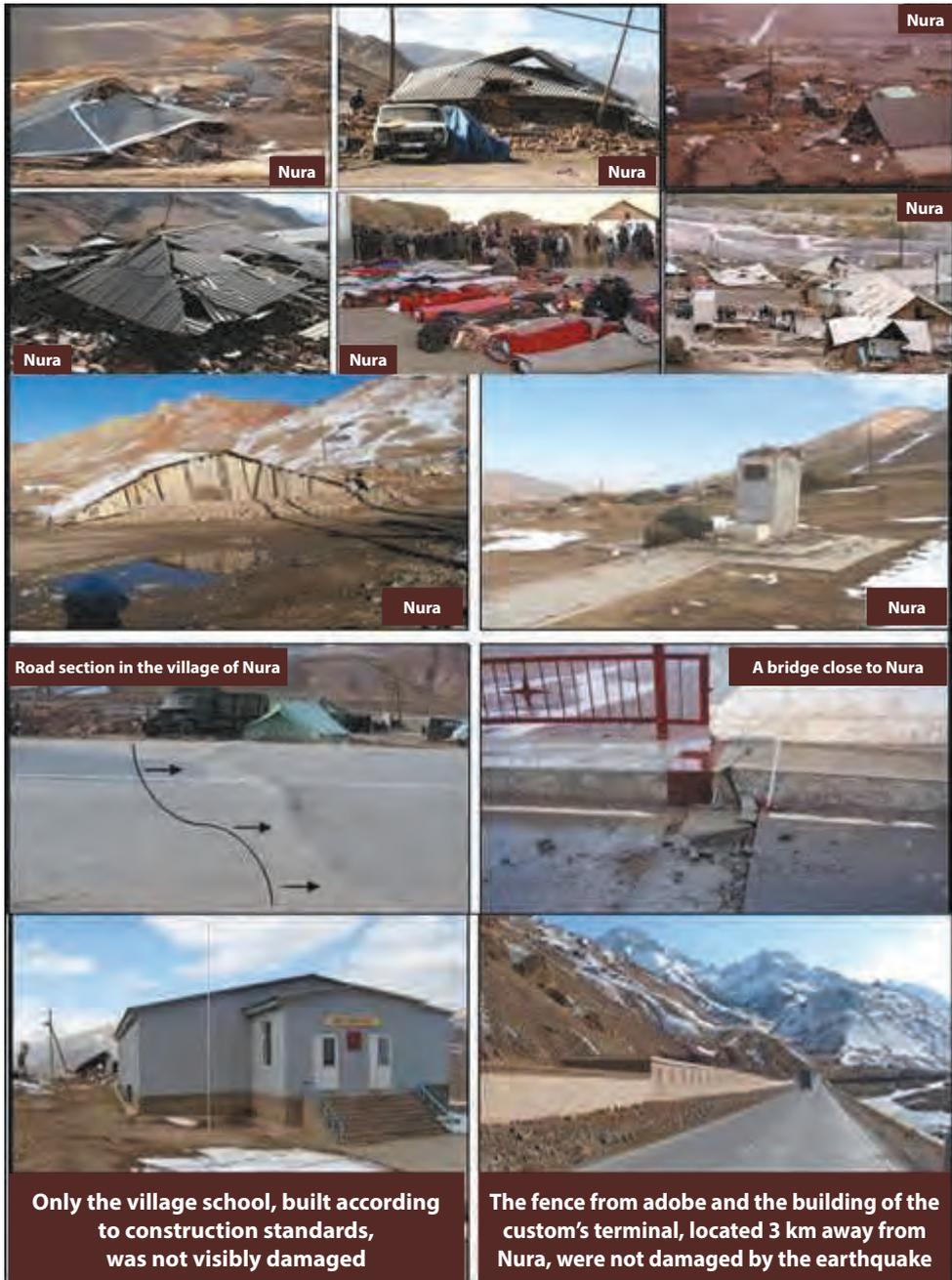
Source: Archive of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the KR.

## **Prevailing views of the sources and causes of the emergency situation**

Although research has been carried out for a long time to determine the causes of earthquakes, they are not completely studied. There are several distinct types of earthquakes, the main ones are tectonic, volcanic and technogenic.

Tectonic earthquakes occur after a sudden stress relief, such as movements in the earth's crust. Recent studies show that the cause of deep earthquakes can be phase transitions in the earth's mantle occurring at certain temperatures and pressures. Sometimes deep faults come to the surface. Nura-Alay earthquake in 2008 was of tectonic origin.

Earthquakes originate from invisible processes in the depths of the earth, tremors, vibrations, breaks and displacement of the earth's crust. There are seismically active areas where the crust is still in a stage of formation and the underground processes are more active.



**Photograph 2: Nura village after the earthquake.**

Source: Archive of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the KR.

## Seismology and Seismological Services study earthquakes

### **Brief Background Information**

In Kyrgyzstan, the role of the National Seismological Service is performed by the Institute of Seismology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic, which has 6 research laboratories, Seismic Monitoring Centre (brings together 24 seismic, 5 hydrogeochemical, 2 geodynamic and 5 geomagnetic stations), Data Centre and the Centre for the preparation of the population for natural destructive phenomena.

Main tasks of the Institute of Seismology of the National Academy of Sciences are:

- assessment of seismic hazard and preparation of different scale maps of seismic zones;
- forecast of the seismic situation and mapping of areas of expected earthquakes;
- assessment of the impact of earthquakes on the ground and facilities, as well as the assessment of seismic risk in the built-up areas;
- development of practical recommendations to reduce damage from seismic catastrophes and improve earthquake engineering;
- predict the place or area where the earthquake is expected;
- forecast the magnitude (strength) of the expected earthquake;
- determine the expected time of earthquake;
- identify and submit official data on the place, time, magnitude, intensity and other parameters of earthquakes to the Ministry of Emergencies and other interested parties.

With regard to the monitoring of dangerous natural processes and predicting their activation, it is the task and function of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) to organize and implement them in close cooperation with all stakeholders: ministries, agencies, local state administrations, local authorities, research, international and non-governmental organizations.

The Department for monitoring and prevention of emergencies at the MES collects all major inputs on the overall exposure, monitors hazardous natural processes and forecasts their activation in a yearly book of 700 pages, as well as additional materials (research papers, information collections, brochures, maps, atlases, photos and videos).

These materials are presented in print, and since 2009 – in electronic format, to all stakeholders: officials, specialists, experts from ministries, departments, state administrations and local governments, as well as representatives of international and non-governmental organizations. These materials are also available to the public, as since 2012 they have been published on the official website of the Ministry of Emergency Situations ([www.mes.kg](http://www.mes.kg)).

Thus, the official opinion of the Ministry of Emergency Situations and IS NAS KR on the sources and causes of hazardous natural processes and phenomena, as well as official information and long-term prognosis that the entire territory of Kyrgyzstan is exposed to seismic action, belongs to the zone of high seismic activity characterized with seismicity of magnitude 8 and 9, and there is a threat of strong destructive earthquakes in the Kyrgyz Republic, is considered unbiased reality that is openly communicated to the entire population on a regular basis by the executive authorities and the media.

## Presence of indicators of long-term prediction of strong earthquakes

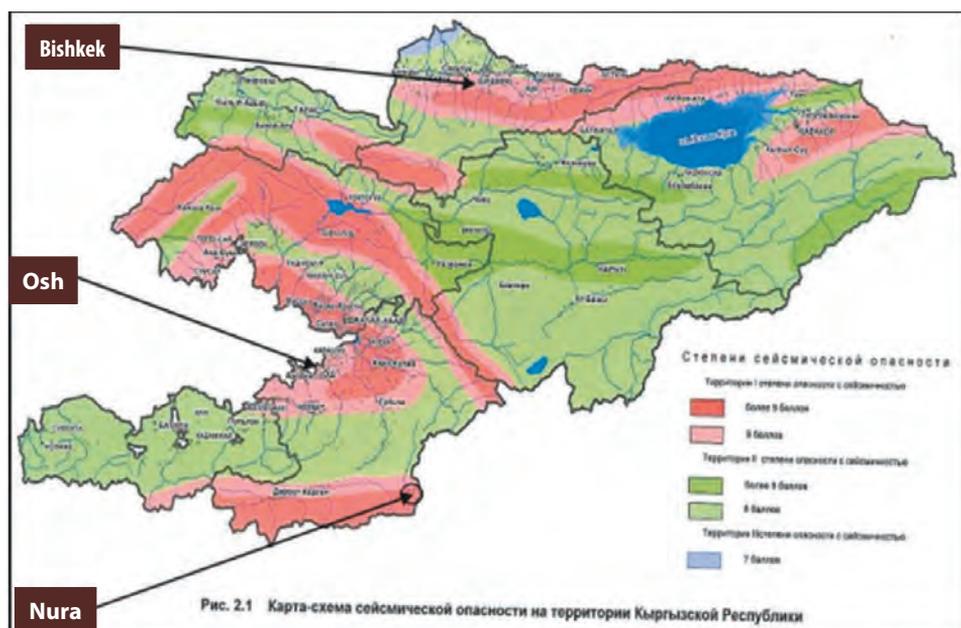
Based on geological, geophysical and latest tectonic data, the Institute of Seismology at NAS KR has drawn maps which indicate the long-term (15 years or more) prognosis for the location of areas expected to intensify their seismic activity in Kyrgyzstan and specifically in all regions, including the Osh region.

Thus, it could be claimed that almost every citizen of Kyrgyzstan to some extent is aware of the high seismicity throughout the country and the constant threat of a possible violent and destructive earthquake.

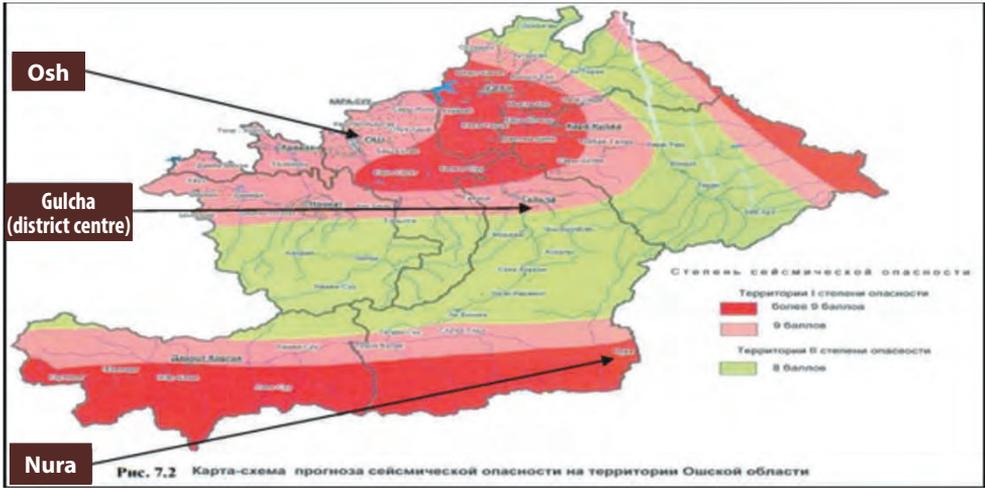
Since 2006, at the MES there is a functioning Centre for training and retraining of Civil Protection experts that implements the state policy for civil protection training. This centre annually conducts training with officials and experts from the civil protection, ministries, state committees and administrative departments of the Kyrgyz Republic, local state administrations and local authorities.

The main tasks of the Centre are:

- training and retraining of officials and experts from civil protection, ministries, state committees and administrative departments of the Kyrgyz Republic, local state administrations and local self-government;



Map 2: Map of seismic activity in the Kyrgyz Republic.



**Map 3: Map of seismic activity prognosis in the territory of Osh region.**

Source: Book on “Monitoring, forecasting and preparing to react to possible activation of hazardous processes and events of the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2007-2008.”

- training instructors for the course “Basics of Life Safety” in secondary and higher education institutions and non-governmental organizations, and providing the population with the rules of conduct and ways of protection in emergency situations;
- work with the faculty of the universities in the Kyrgyz Republic for the development of teaching materials for the specialty “Protection in emergency situations”;
- organization of research with students of specialized departments (research work with students) on issues relevant to civil protection topics;
- providing knowledge in civil protection, preparation and publication of training and methodological materials, seminars and conferences on civil protection.

The Ministry of Emergency Situations also regularly broadcasts announcements about the risks and response to potential emergencies, and since 2011 the Public Broadcasting Corporation has a weekly program “Emergency situations.”

### **Detailed analysis of earthquake risk management; Nura-Alay earthquake**

*Early warning: presence of indicators of medium-term prognosis of strong earthquakes*

Years of experience show that with the existing modern seismic stations in Kyrgyzstan it is possible to predict the place of expected earthquakes 1-3 years ahead with a probability of 0.6. Annual results of prognosis are transferred from IS NAS KR to the Department for monitoring and prevention of emergencies at the MES KR.

Therefore, in addition to the long-term forecast, the Institute of Seismology of the NAS KR has developed and submitted to the Ministry of Emergencies a medium-term forecast for 2008-2010 with the level of danger in seismic zones in certain regions. In particular, with regard to medium-term forecast in the zone of the village of Nura, the Book of prognosis for 2008 officially presents the following information:

The greatest seismic activity in the next three years (2008-2010) is expected in the Batken and Osh regions. Strong earthquakes with an intensity of 8-9 magnitude and probability 0.7–0.8 are possible in the border areas with Tajikistan and China.

The area of expected earthquakes AK-2 (zone of the village of Nura) was assigned to the first category of risk.

In addition, schematic maps were drawn up with predicted earthquakes on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2001-2009 years, both nationally and separately for all regions for the period 2007-2009, including Osh region.

Thus, we can claim that the indicators of medium-term forecast of strong earthquakes have existed since the Ministry of Emergency Situations received from the Institute of Seismology at the National Academy of Sciences sufficient official information indicating that within designated areas of expected earthquakes strong earthquakes are possible with intensity 8-9 magnitude, with probability of 0.7–0.8.



**Map 4: Map of expected earthquakes in KR in the period 2001-2009.**

Source: IS, NAS of the KR.

### *Was the early warning system activated?*

To prevent or stop an earthquake is impossible. However, to reduce vulnerability and catastrophic consequences, more specifically to minimize destruction, loss of life and material losses through some preventive measures is possible.

Earthquake early warning in the world is based so far only on an accurate reading of medium-term forecast, because:

- exact scientific prediction of earthquakes does not exist yet;
- using certain technical parameters, scientists can only assume that an earthquake is likely to occur in some areas, but the exact timing cannot be predicted;
- so far no equipment has been invented in Kyrgyzstan, nor in the world, capable of specifying in advance—by a few days or hours—the place, time and strength of the earthquake, which subsequently could serve as a basis for determining the specific warnings of impending disaster and for the adoption of a set of urgent action to prevent loss of life and minimize the damage;
- a methodology for medium-term projections developed by IS NAS of the KR allows only roughly to determine the areas of expected earthquakes. In this case, the main aim of prognosis is to conduct a reasonable policy of construction of all buildings and structures in accordance with the building regulations, adhering to the principle of earthquake engineering, land use from the medium-term earthquake prediction card, as advance preparation for expected catastrophe;
- authorities of all countries and at all levels are afraid of “false alarms” when, after taking all measures to minimize the number of human casualties and material losses, the predicted earthquake may not occur;
- practically, all catastrophic earthquakes in the world have been unexpected so far.

That is why the MES has launched an early warning system: to bring officially medium-term forecast for strong earthquakes received from the Institute of Seismology at NAS KR to all stakeholders: managers and officials, specialists and experts in ministries, state administrations and local governments, as well as representatives of international and non-governmental organizations.

The Ministry of Emergency Situations operates and further improves a Crisis Management Centre (hereinafter CMC), responsible for the daily management of a unified information-management system which integrates information resources and opportunities of the functional and territorial subsystems of the civil protection system for the purpose of operational management in crisis and emergency situations. This centre consists of CMCs based in Bishkek, Osh, the regional centres Karakol, Naryn, Jalal-Abad, Batken, Talas and mobile control posts, and has greatly increased the efficiency of the management for the prevention and elimination of emergency situations in online regime. Also, a unified state duty and dispatch service 112 was created – a “hot line” to receive and transmit information, to manage all operating duty and dispatch services in the country, and to respond to emergency and crisis situations.

In recent years, the Ministry of Emergencies, as well as some other ministries and civil protection services have put a lot of effort to enhance the capacity of rescue services and units. For example, the Ministry of Emergency Situations conducts reforms in the search and rescue forces by creating fire brigades that will significantly increase their number and geographical coverage. For example, 96 % of the fire protection service personnel in Germany are volunteers: there are 25,000 volunteer fire departments (1.3 million volunteer firefighters) and 100 professional fire brigades (27,600 professional firefighters), as well as 261,000 young firemen (age 10–17).

In addition, a diving rescue service was established in the Kyrgyz Republic. With the technical support of international organizations, hundreds of volunteer rescue teams were created and prepared for action in rural areas. For example, according to the Ministry of Emergency Situations there are 350 volunteer rescue teams in Kyrgyzstan who receive their initial training at the National Centre for Rescue Training for the southern and northern region of MES and are awarded the official status of “rescuer.”

Every year, with the assistance of international organizations, materials and equipment, as well as fire and rescue vehicles and equipment are provided, stored and modernized in a timely manner.

In the book “Monitoring, forecasting and preparing to respond to possible activation of hazardous processes and phenomena in the Kyrgyz Republic,” published and submitted to all interested parties in early 2007, the section “Prognosis of seismic hazard” gives the following basic information:

- information on long-term and medium-term forecast of seismic hazard (textual information and maps);
- injunction in case of inability to get an accurate operational forecast for the time and place of an earthquake, all stakeholders need to maintain a reasonable and economic policy of construction, land use, and to prepare in advance for the expected disaster;
- warning that currently on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, according to preliminary estimates, 3.3 million people, or about 65 % of the population, live in houses rather unstable for the expected strong earthquakes and 70 % of the homes, mostly in the private sector, are not earthquake-resistant.

In order to reduce the possible damage and losses from catastrophes, MES recommended that the regional state administration bodies and local self-government do the following:

- ongoing monitoring and improvement of the predicted data on the location, strength, time of expected seismic hazard, construction planning and land use taking into account the medium-term earthquake prediction map;
- exercises to develop scenarios and prepare the public for relevant behaviour in time of seismic catastrophes;
- determination of seismic resistance of homes, especially dangerous industrial facilities, engineering structures;

- development of legal documents, special videos, manuals, posters, brochures aimed at informing the public on how to reduce the risk of earthquakes;
- special tables with illustrative information on the medium-term prognosis of strong earthquakes based on the example of the village of Nura:

**Table 6: Information on the mid-term earthquake prediction.**

#	Name of administrative regions	Name of region of expected earthquake	Index of region of expected earthquake	Towns in the regions of expected earthquakes	Class of earthquake	Level of alarm	Category of danger
2	Alay	Kyzyl-Agyn	AK -2	Nura, Irkesh-tam	14-15	Sufficient	First

*How effectively did the early warning system work?*

Upon receiving scientifically based medium-term forecast that within designated areas of expected earthquakes (their number in Kyrgyzstan was about 50, including 10 with “first” category of danger) were possible strong earthquakes with a magnitude of 8–9 and a fairly high degree of probability (0.7–0.8), the Ministry of Emergencies launched an early warning system.

Measures taken under the early warning system were mainly limited to:

- bringing officially medium-term forecast for strong earthquakes received from the Institute of Seismology at NAS KR to all stakeholders: managers and officials, specialists and experts in ministries, state administrations and local governments, as well as representatives of international and non-governmental organizations;
- publication of medium-term forecast of strong earthquakes in the book “Monitoring, forecasting and preparing to respond to possible activation of hazardous processes and phenomena on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic”;
- issuing regulations to comply with a reasonable and economic policy of construction, land use, and timely preparation for the expected catastrophe.

However, looking back into the past, at the catastrophe in the village of Nura of Alay district and a variety of other natural disasters, unfortunately, it is fair to state that the early warning system did not work properly. To justify this claim, we can bring the following arguments:

- in practice, none of the government agencies gave understandable non-alarming information to the residents of the village of Nura on the medium-term forecast that there was a real threat of earthquakes with intensity of 8–9 with a fairly high degree of probability (0.7–0.8). And this is the case even though the law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Civil Protection” stipulates that people have the right to be informed of the risks to which the population may be exposed in certain places

on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the safety measures necessary to be taken;<sup>5</sup>

- additional inspections for vulnerability of the territory and population of the area were not conducted, for example, for seismic resistance of houses, social facilities, training and community preparedness for action before, during and after a major earthquake, including first aid;
- possible consequences in the event of an earthquake were not estimated and actions necessary to improve disaster resistance and preventive protective measures were not planned;
- preventive protective measures that could increase the readiness of local residents to emergency situations were not organized;
- an updated action plan in case of emergency was not developed, in this case, under the threat of a major earthquake, which would ensure transfer of emergency information, a request for assistance, the organization and conduct of rescue and other emergency operations;
- local authorities did not receive guidance to carry out protective and preventive measures, structural and non-structural mitigation works;
- the population did not receive additional training how to act before, during and after the earthquake, methods of first aid. Training exercises were not conducted; volunteer rescue teams were set up from local residents.

This is not the complete list of organizational and practical measures that could have been undertaken. It is important to note that most of these activities did not require significant investment of material and financial resources.

In addition, it is necessary to add that the residents of Nura, considering their own safety and the safety of their relatives and property, had to take some basic measures such as:

- security measures in their daily activities, prevention of violations, including construction standards;
- learning ways to protect the population and territories in emergency situations, methods of delivering first aid.

If the above-mentioned organizational and practical preventive measures had been conducted by the authorities and the population in full or partially, this would have to some extent mitigated the impact of the devastating earthquake and reduced human and material losses in the village of Nura.

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<sup>5</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 20, 2009 no. 239 "On Civil Protection," Article 12: Rights and obligations of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic in the field of civil protection.

## **Brief analysis of the emergency response in the event of a strong earthquake**

### *Timely information and situation awareness*

Next follows a brief overview of further developments as well as analysis of the actions of state bodies for emergency response to the earthquake in Nura in chronological order.

The Ministry of Emergency Situations and all power structures reported the chronology of further developments since the moment of their inception (T). Thus, for this emergency the initial time was 22 hours 00 minutes (more precisely 21 hours 53 minutes, however for the sake of convenience 22 hours 00 minutes).

*T+10-20 minutes:* MES services on constant alert, deployed in the southern regions of the country (Osh, Batken, Jalal-Abad), felt a strong tremor – an earthquake, and in compliance with their duties, predicting serious consequences, including destruction, human and material losses, started to collect information from regions using all channels of communication and reported the earthquake to relevant officials.

Moreover, the majority of managers and specialists from MES operational services, whose duties include taking measures for immediate response to emergencies, even after working hours, based on their functional responsibilities, took steps to clarify the information and alert subordinate services, manpower and resources for the upcoming departure to areas of potential emergency.

*T+20-25 minutes:* operational duty officers at the Crisis Management Centre in Osh were able to get basic information from the US Geological Service about the earthquake on the Internet.

The MES leadership summoned managers, emergency services and emergency response units and decided to alert operational teams, search and rescue teams to move to a possible crisis area.

*T+30 minutes:* According to the director of IS NAS KR, seismologists registered the strong quake and processed the data received, and approximately at 22 hours 30 minutes sent preliminary official information regarding the place, time, coordinates, magnitude and intensity of the earthquake to the CMC, as well as to the Office of the President and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The basic parameters of the earthquake were determined according to the Kyrgyz seismic station, the centre in Obninsk and IRIS (International Seismological Centre). Within 1.5 hours, preliminary information about the earthquake coordinates was double-checked, verified and retransferred to the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

By this time, representatives of local authorities started sending information to the operational service in the Ministry of Emergency Situations about the absence of any visual damage and loss of life in cities and large towns. However, there was no information from remote places closer to the epicentre of the earthquake, including the village of Nura.

Experts assume that in case of a disaster, information from the scene cannot be transferred in a timely manner due to communication failures and power cuts.

*T+40 minutes:* due to well-established cooperation between law enforcement agencies, the Ministry of Emergencies received from the Border Service in Osh very important and reliable operational information about the catastrophic consequences of a strong earthquake in the village of Nura.

This operational information contained evidence that residents of Nura had reached border and customs point Irkeshtam on horseback (3-5 km distance from the village of Nura), told about the massive destruction of houses and death, and requested help.

Around the same time, all free of duty guards and customs officers, about 25-30 people, were urgently sent to the village of Nura.

*T+1 hour:* the Ministry of Emergency Situations sent from Osh to the site of crisis a task force and search and rescue units in special cars (about 40 people) equipped with all necessary safety equipment and communications means. They also brought with them generators of power, winter tents, blankets, heaters and clothing for adult and children.

*T + 1-2 hours:* The Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic reported on the current disastrous situation in the village of Nura of Alay district to the Prime Minister, who is the head of Civil Protection, as well as to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Prime Minister, as the head of Civil Protection, in accordance with his mandate in Civil Protection, decides on the appointment of the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic as the head of the republican staff for emergency response in Alay region of Osh district, and sets the emergency regime in the civil protection state system.

### **Background Information**

*Civil Protection State System* – a national system, whose elements control and provide capabilities to state bodies, local authorities, NGOs and voluntary organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic, protects the population and territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in emergency situations in peacetime and wartime.

*Civil Protection* – an integral part of the national defence system providing peacetime and wartime protection of the population and territory of the Kyrgyz Republic from industrial, natural and bio-social disasters, and in time of war – from the dangers arising from hostilities or as a result of these actions.

Modes of operation of the state system of civil protection in peacetime:

- *mode of daily activities* – under normal production, radiation, chemical and biological (bacteriological), seismic, hydrometeorological conditions;
- *high alert* – under deteriorated production, radiation, chemical and biological (bacteriological), seismic and hydrometeorological conditions or forecast for the possibility of emergency situations;
- *state of emergency* – in case of emergencies and during the liquidation of their consequences.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 20, 2009 no. 239 “On Civil Protection.”

At 23:30 hours on October 5, the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic took over the direct leadership in organizing all necessary measures for the management and coordination of public authorities at all levels to organize and conduct search and rescue, recovery and other emergency operations, disaster relief operations and assessment of the scale of disaster.

Order of the Prime Minister as the Chairman of Civil Protection was prepared, signed and submitted on October 6, 2008 on alerting relevant authorities and capabilities of Civil Protection, the implementation of practical measures for the recovery and other emergency operations in the crisis area.

*T+1-6 hours* (from 23:00 on October 5 until 04:00 on October 6): border and customs officers in Irkeshtam together with physically fit locals in darkness conducted initial search and rescue operations, pulled out injured men from the rubble, including the dead and survivors before the arrival of rescue units from the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the KR and other services.

Those injured who could get out by themselves or were pulled out from the rubble, in the absence of medical supplies and bandages were given first aid with improvised means in school buildings and dispensaries.

Later, some of the victims, women, elderly, children, except for the critically injured and non-transportable, were gradually evacuated to warm buildings near the customs and border crossing of Irkeshtam.

*T+7 hours* (local time 05:00, early morning 6 October): MES forces arrived – Task Force and search and rescue teams headed by the Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic (over 40 people), equipped with all necessary safety equipment and communications means; they also brought sources of power supply, winter tents, blankets, heaters, adult and children's clothing.

Forces from the Ministry of Emergency Situations and a medical team made a quick assessment of the scale of the disaster, coordinated their actions and started search and rescue, recovery and other emergency operations.

At the same time, another medical team arrived from Alay district with a small supply of medicines and bandages; they immediately began providing medical assistance together with the MES rescuers.

*T+7 hours 30 minutes* (local time 05:30, early morning on 6 October): MES Task Force established voice communication with the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic and since that time the process of collecting, receiving and transmitting timely information from the disaster zone began. This allowed the MES and all interested state structures to assess the scale of disaster, to coordinate their further acts and to provide humanitarian assistance to the population.

*T+11 hours*: the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic Kamchybek Tashiev arrived by helicopter with 10 rescuers who brought additional rescue equipment. This same helicopter immediately took the most seriously wounded to the nearest hospital.

At this time, additional forces arrived from the MES, ministries and departments: Civil Protection, regional and district government agencies and local governments under

the direct supervision of the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic also immediately joined the disaster relief operation in accordance with their assigned tasks.

### **Background Information**

To complete civil protection peacetime and wartime tasks, there are national, regional, district and city civil protection bodies and civil protection organizations.

Civil protection bodies are tasked to perform engineering, medical and other special operations related to civil protection, preparation of resources, and to ensure civil protection during the rescue operation.<sup>7</sup>

In agreement with the President, Chief of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic, according to the plan of interaction, the Ministry of Defence allocated three Mi-8 helicopters to deliver rescuers and emergency assistance, for transportation of the injured to medical facilities, as well as 100 troops to assist in the rescue operation.

### **Background Information**

The President of the Kyrgyz Republic decides to summon in case of need the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic to the disaster relief operation.<sup>8</sup>

*T+12 hours* (local time 10:00, 6 October): The Minister of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyzstan Kamchybek Tashiev, directly from the emergency area, officially informed the authorities and the media that Nura village of Alay district of Osh region as a result of a strong earthquake was almost completely destroyed, and according to preliminary data sixty people were killed and more than a hundred local residents were injured.

Helicopters transported the wounded in the regional centre of Osh for hospitalization. According to Kamchybek Tashiev, “search and rescue operation continues and it is early to tell the exact number of dead and injured.”<sup>9</sup>

After that, the media spread the news and the whole country and the whole world knew about the serious consequences of the earthquake in Nura village of Alay district of Osh region.

Given the scale of the disaster, media representatives rapidly tried to establish contact with the state authorities. Initial information from the crisis venue was presented by the press service of the Ministry of Emergency, which in turn disseminated information on all national channels and was connected to all interested parties.

<sup>7</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 20, 2009 no. 239 “On Civil Protection,” Article 15: Civil Protection services.

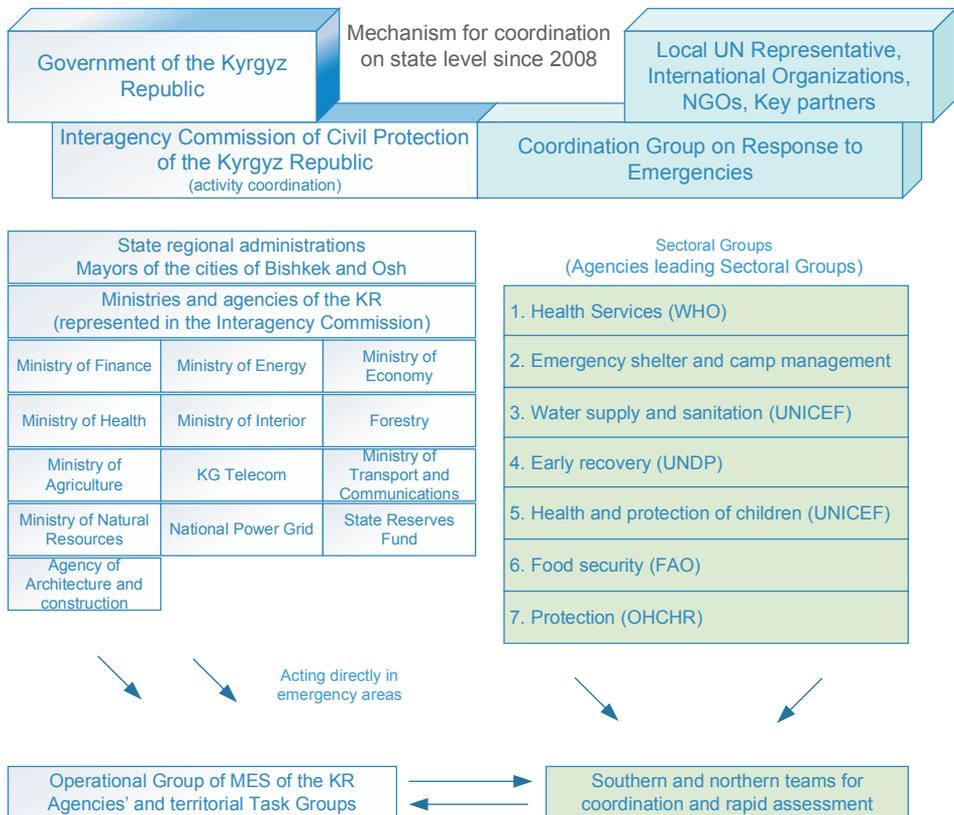
<sup>8</sup> Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 20, 2009 no. 239 “On Civil Protection,” Article 5: Presidential powers in the field of civil protection.

<sup>9</sup> Sources: <http://www.fergananews.com>.

We should also note the high interest and direct participation of the media in coordination meetings on the aftermath of the Nura-Alay earthquake organized in the Crisis Management Centre of MES. During the meetings, media representatives were provided “first hand” accurate information. They also had the opportunity to discuss the situation with representatives of the authorities, which allowed them widely and reliably to cover the events in the village of Nura.

MES, as the authorized body in the field of Civil Protection, appealed to the international organizations for help. It is relevant to note that in early 2008 in Kyrgyzstan in order to strengthen cooperation and coordination in crisis management between the Kyrgyz Government, the UN, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as other key players, a mechanism for coordination was established for crisis response. The figure below graphically displays the structure of the coordination mechanism for emergency response in the Kyrgyz Republic as of October 2008.

Thus, the Coordinating Unit for Disaster Response (hereinafter DRCU) under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan spread information about a



**Scheme 1: The structure of the coordination mechanism for crisis response in the Kyrgyz Republic October 2008.**

large-scale disaster and the need for humanitarian assistance. Later DRCU assumed responsibility for coordination of the provision and delivery of international humanitarian assistance.

In addition, DRCU decided to send emergency teams for coordination and rapid assessment to coordinate international humanitarian aid directly in the crisis area.

More than 50 people were pulled alive from the rubble, including 20 seriously injured who were gradually evacuated by helicopter to Osh regional hospital, and about 15 slightly wounded – to Alay district hospital.

The Ministry of Health (Medical Service of Civil Protection of the KR) used helicopters to transport to the village of Nura several teams of emergency medical assistance who brought surgery sets, oxygen concentrators, as well as humanitarian assistance from the World Health Organization. In the area of the nearest medical centre in the village of Sary-Tash (75 kilometres from the village of Nura) it was decided to deploy a field hospital.

The role and contribution of the international community in the aftermath of the Nura-Alay earthquake, as well as in the organization of post-crisis measures were significant. Humanitarian assistance in the form of food, drinking water, tents, medical supplies and other items helped to avoid the negative consequences of the disaster, while support in the form of building materials and funds helped the state build the “new” village of Nura.

It should be noted that to date in the Kyrgyz Republic there are not properly established procedures for receiving humanitarian assistance in case of emergency. The only existing document regulating issues of humanitarian imports is the Regulation on the receipt and distribution of humanitarian assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic, approved by Governmental Decree number 459 of 10 October 2007, while the Ministry of Social Protection of the Kyrgyz population is responsible for the overall coordination of receipt, distribution and accounting of humanitarian aid.

Nura-Alay earthquake proved that there was a need for updating the provision on the receipt of humanitarian aid and simplification of the procedure in a crisis.

*T+12-24 hours* (1 day, 6 October): in the crisis venue in Nura village from 10:00 a.m. until 22:00 p.m.

Additional assets continued to arrive from the MES, ministries and departments (civil protection, regional, district state structures and local governments), as well as relatives of the victims, volunteers from other villages and regions of the country.

Under the direct supervision of the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic Kamchibek Tashiev, arriving forces were involved in search and rescue, recovery and other emergency operations in accordance with their specialization and purpose.

The first vehicles with humanitarian aid arrived: mainly food and other essential items (bread, flour, rice, sugar, cereals, mineral water, tea, vegetable oil, canned food, clothing, blankets, insulated tents, bedding, medicines, bandages) that were urgently collected by local state administrations and local governments as well as international and non-governmental organizations.

Public commissions were set up and started functioning in Osh regional and Alay district state administrations, as well as in Nura for receipt and distribution of humanitarian aid. Bank accounts were also open to collect funds for the victims of the earthquake.

From the UNDP warehouses, located in the city of Osh, the village of Nura received warm blankets, winter tents, food and other items.

In accordance with the current legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, Civil Protection organizations at all levels of government and administration had to strictly follow measures to increase efficiency, enhance training, force capacity and means of control, create logistical supplies, food, medical, and individual collective means of protection in case of emergency. However, practice has shown a complete lack of humanitarian reserves in some places.

This was due to the weak interaction of state bodies with international and non-profit organizations, ineffective coordination of the competent authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic, and insufficient funding for the crisis response.

On this day, the President of Kyrgyzstan signed a decree “On declaring October 7, 2008 a day of mourning in the Kyrgyz Republic for the victims of the earthquake in Alay district of Osh region on October 5, 2008.”<sup>10</sup>

*T+48 hours* (second day, 7 October): the following events were organized in the village of Nura by civil protection forces with the support of international organizations:

- search and rescue operations – all destroyed buildings were checked entirely and all survivors and dead were taken out from the rubble;
- by this time 75 dead were reported, including 74 corpses pulled out from the rubble, and Temirbek Kyzy Farida, born in 1991, who died in the hospital at 19:30 h from injuries incompatible with life. All victims and bodies were identified, lists were compiled;
- the degree of destruction of homes and other buildings was determined. According to the surveys, as a result of the earthquake on October 5 in the Alay district of Osh region out of 988 houses, 152 residential and other buildings were destroyed, 38 were damaged, and 94 required major repairs;
- lists of names of those killed and injured, as well as information about destroyed residential and other buildings, were submitted on the same day to the media to increase public awareness;
- more than 140 victims who received injuries of varying degrees were transported by helicopters and hospitalized in Osh regional hospital, the children’s hospital, or Alay district territorial hospital;
- some women with children, kids who became orphans after the death of parents and friends, elderly residents at their request and consent were taken to the neighbouring settlements to relatives or boarding houses;
- a tent camp provided with all necessary equipment was deployed on site;

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<sup>10</sup> Decree of the President of KR “On declaring October 7, 2008 a day of mourning in the Kyrgyz Republic for the victims of the earthquake in Alay district of Osh region on October 5, 2008.”

- at the campsite, meals were offered three times a day for the local residents and participants in the operation;
- a wired telephone line connection was installed and the electricity supply was resumed, which was also used for the lighting of the tent camp;
- roads and driveways between houses were cleaned with construction machinery;
- local residents were provided tents for storage of property and building materials.

At the same time, serious problems were encountered in ensuring readiness of Civil Protection authorities, capabilities of state bodies and local authorities to take action under threat and crisis situations, in search and rescue and reconstruction works. For example, the current state of readiness of search and rescue MES units and other civil protection services can be assessed by the time they needed to come to the village of Nura. The earthquake occurred at 22 pm on 5 October, whereas MES units arrived in the disaster area on October 6, at 5:00 am, that is only 7 hours after the disaster. It was good that customs and border services were located close to the village and their personnel arrived within an hour to help; together with the locals and without any rescue equipment they began conducting primary search and rescue operations in the darkness.

In Kyrgyzstan there are thousands of villages like Nura; many of them are remote, mountainous and inaccessible; the road is often blocked for a long time, especially in winter. However, what happens if there is a catastrophic disaster in a major city or town? Is it possible in this case to talk about adequate professional rescue teams?

*T+72 hours* (day three, 8 October): The President of the Kyrgyz Republic and the accompanying officials arrived in the village of Nura and met with local residents; they expressed their condolences and acquainted themselves with the extent of destruction.

A mourning farewell ceremony and the funeral of 74 dead took place near the village in the new graveyard on a nearby hill.

The Kyrgyz President told the population about the planned steps to mitigate the consequences of the crisis and provide material support:

- each homeless family will receive 200,000 soms (about 5.4 thousand USD) in the form of preferential long-term loan;
- 4 million soms (77.2 thousand USD) will be allocated from the reserve funds of the President and the Prime Minister for disaster relief and assistance to the most seriously affected families;
- 17 million soms (about 328.104 thousand USD) will be allocated from the state budget for the MES, whose staff, among other things, had to deal with specific duties: to prepare the dead, to prepare the place of burial and other pressing issues;
- at the end of October temporary housing will be built in the village: 130 light-weight houses that will help people survive the winter;
- in the early spring of 2009, work began on the place of the destroyed houses to build new earthquake-resistant houses, baths, a gym, road construction, water

supply, power supply to ensure the installation of a new power supply substation; by the end of September 2009, a memorial for all victims of the earthquake will be built;

- each affected family will also be provided commensurate financial and humanitarian assistance with special care to children, women and the elderly, especially those who have lost their parents.

From the above it follows that the Kyrgyz government has committed itself to the construction of new houses for the affected population, and it is very important to stress that the construction of the village of Nura was strictly in compliance with building standards.

*T + 3-10 days (8-15 October):* reconstruction work and normalization of everyday life of the affected population continued in the village of Nura.

The High School, located in the village of Nura, which used to have 205 students, was temporarily closed and school-age children continued studying at schools or boarding schools in Osh, the villages of Gulcha, Sarymogol, Sarytash and others.

Medical services as well as services for protection of animals and plants took sanitation, anti-epidemic, anti-epizootic measures, eliminated the adverse consequences of dead people and animals.

Meanwhile, humanitarian aid in the form of financial and material resources started arriving from all regions of the country, from international organizations, from nearby and faraway countries.

At this stage, it is necessary to note that the amount of humanitarian aid was much greater than the immediate needs of the affected population in the small village of Nura, so most of the relief supplies were placed in storage as reserves for further use in other emergency and crisis situations.

MES organized round-the-clock production of 1-2-3-bedroom mobile residential buildings based on the 40-foot rail containers. International company "Kumtor Operating Company" handed in as humanitarian aid 75 containers. By October 15, the first mobile homes had already been delivered and installed in the village of Nura; they accommodated the most affected families in need.

*T + 30 days (5 November 2008):* reconstruction works and normalization of everyday life for the cold winter in the village of Nura was almost completed; there was uninterrupted supply of electricity, telephone and mobile communications, and supply of drinking water.

All affected residents at this stage received, depending on the priority needs, adequate material and humanitarian assistance, including food, clothing, bedding, kitchen utensils, firewood and coal, food for the livestock. Those who were left without identity cards were taken care of.

By this time, 115 sets of 1-2-3-bedroom mobile homes had been delivered and installed; insulated and equipped with everything necessary for temporary housing, they accommodated all remaining homeless families.

The photograph below shows mobile residential buildings based on the 40-foot rail containers and winter tents, set beside the ruined houses, which were given to families to store property and building materials in them.



**Photograph 3: Mobile residences for the population in the village of Nura.**

Source: Archive of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the KR.

MES units with the participation of the local population completely tore down the destroyed houses, selected all materials that could be reused in households, while the rest of the rubble was taken to a designated place.

Further, until the end of November 2009, on the basis of decisions of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (Decree of 10 January 2009 no. 1, Order of 5 June 2009, no. 277-p, and others) relevant executive authorities with the support of the international community adopted the following key measures to eliminate the effects of the disaster and restore normal life in the village of Nura of Alay district:

- environmental and geological requirements of the area, designing a master plan for the village of Nura, designing plans for the construction of residential houses, social and cultural facilities and utilities, assigning responsible bodies and deadlines for the construction of facilities, as well as allocation of financial resources;
- residents of the village of Nura received waivers on the cost of electricity of 150 kWh per month in November-December 2008 and January-March 2009 per subscriber;
- the construction of 152 houses, including 26 two-bedroom and 126 three-bedroom houses was completed. These prefabricated panel houses were made in China with improved thermal insulation taking into account the seismic resistance of magnitude at least 9, provided with electric and steam heating using coal, and in some homes even internal water supply. However, during the construction and

after delivery of houses people expressed their discontent with some deficiencies due to missed deadlines;

- new poles were erected and a new 250 kW power substation was built;
- local roads, water intake facilities, water lines, memorial, sauna, shop, catering, and a sports hall were built.

Until the end of November 2010, the following were built and put into operation: a kindergarten for 50 kids, a club with 200 seats, a complex of consumer services, a mosque, auto repair shop, a stadium and two bridges, as well as some work was done to consolidate the shores of the River Nura. Thus, the initial reconstruction and rehabilitation steps for resuming normal life in the village of Nura were completed.



**Photograph 4: Reconstructed Nura village, 2012.**  
Source: Archive of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the KR.

## **Analysis of risk management of earthquakes in Kyrgyzstan**

### *Current state, achievements and gaps (on the example of the 2008 Nura-Alay earthquake)*

This analysis of earthquake management in Kyrgyzstan will be based on the study of the current state of security, protection of the interests of individuals, society, national territory and infrastructure from the adverse effects of strong earthquakes.

Two key questions will be addressed that affect the efficiency of the entire process of earthquake management, namely: the current state of crisis prevention and crisis response.

This analysis is based on the following basic information.

A) *The threat of strong earthquakes is considered an objective reality for Kyrgyzstan. Long-term and medium-term forecasts are developed, but it is not possible to provide a short-term operational forecast, i.e. to prevent or stop a powerful earthquake and the resulting crisis is impossible.*

Virtually the entire territory of Kyrgyzstan is in a zone of high seismic activity, and is characterized mainly by 8 and 9-point seismicity.

Using certain parameters, Kyrgyz seismologists can only assume that in some areas an earthquake is possible, developing long-term and medium-term forecasts which are updated periodically.

Currently, the Institute of Seismology at the National Academy of Sciences, has developed a new Map of seismic zones in the Kyrgyz Republic and a new Map of probability of seismic hazard in Kyrgyzstan for the period from 2011 to 2020.

All catastrophic earthquakes in Kyrgyzstan and throughout the world, due to impossibility to determine where, when and how strong tremors will be, have occurred and will occur for many more years unexpectedly.

Authorities in Kyrgyzstan and in many countries of the world, based of medium-term forecasts, do not organize in advance evacuation of the population in areas of expected strong earthquakes, as it is extremely difficult to stop operations in inhabited areas or large cities for an indefinite period of time.

Central authorities predict, plan, allocate forces and assets, carry out preventive measures for capital construction of protective structures, special preventive and reconstruction activities, as well as in case of emergency. They also take steps to prepare for crisis management.

B) *The population and territory of Kyrgyzstan are vulnerable to earthquakes to a high degree, which means that almost every strong 8-9-magnitude earthquake could result in a crisis with disastrous consequences.*

The high degree of vulnerability of the population and the country is not determined by the threat or occurrence of large earthquakes, but by the physical condition, seismic resistance of houses, public buildings and facilities. People are injured and killed not by an earthquake, but rather by non-resistant buildings and structures that are destroyed as a result of their occurrence.

According to preliminary MES estimates, 3.3 million people, representing more than 60 % of the population, live in houses totally unstable to expected strong earthquakes. A significant amount of operating and a certain part of newly constructed houses, buildings and structures have a deficiency of seismic resistance, and their destruction by earthquakes can lead to huge human and material losses.

For example, let's consider the seismic resistance of residential buildings. According to official data of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic by type, number of floors and the material in external walls, the following residential buildings are available in the country (see Tables 2 and 3).

*The countryside:* More than 660 thousand one-storey residential buildings were constructed. The most optimistic estimates of experts show that at least 30-40 % or about

300 thousand of them (in settlements like Nura – 80-90 %) were built from adobe, without foundation and frame. Consequently, they are not earthquake-proof and can completely collapse as a “house of cards” after strong tremors.

According to the director of the Kyrgyz Scientific Research and Design Institute of Earthquake Engineering, Seyitbek Imanbekovov, in Kyrgyzstan there are 2.5 thousand settlements out of which 80 % are in the countryside. However, about 95 % of the houses in the countryside do not meet the standards of seismic resistance.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 2: Available residential buildings by type and number of floors.**

As a result of the census of population and housing of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2009							
	Total, number	Including number of floors					Floors are not specified
		1-floor	2-floor	3-5-floor	6-9-floor	10-floor and over	
KR	905 002	887 349	11 523	4 316	494	5	1 315
In towns	235 091	223 193	6 672	3 892	492	5	837
In villages	669 911	664 156	4 851	424	2	-	478

**Table 3: Available residential buildings by type and material of external walls.**

As a result of the census of population and housing of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2009									
Incl. by material of external walls									
	Total, number	brick	concrete, reinforced concrete, panel	cinder-block	timber	adobe, clay	mixed material	other	not specified
KP	905003	161992	2727	14551	31897	615774	76367	380	1315
In towns	235092	59399	2158	6049	7982	140204	18283	180	837
In villages	669911	102593	569	8502	23915	475570	58084	200	478

Source: IS, NAS of the KR.

*In cities:* The situation may be better than in rural areas, but there are also a big number of dilapidated, seismic non-resistant houses built in the 1940-1960s, both single-storey and multi-storey buildings. In addition, as some experts say, it is possible that some of the new tall buildings have been constructed by private companies without complying with the building standards.

<sup>11</sup> Source: www.knews.kg.

In some tall buildings, owners illegally change the design, reconstruct the flats, open a variety of offices and shops on the first floor, fail to repair the roof and gutters, which often leads to accelerated physical wear and reduces the seismic resistance of buildings.

**Excerpts from the debate in the press of February 2013**

Yusuf Tahirov, Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture of the Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transport and Architecture, made a loud statement that the new multi-storey residential buildings in Bishkek are a threat and called them “houses murderers.”

On the next day, builders urgently convened a press conference where the Chairman of the union Askarbek Moldobaev assured reporters that houses made of brick-frame structure can be as high as 14 floors, and they are able to withstand an earthquake with a magnitude of up to 8-9. Both sides put forward arguments as strong as “reinforced concrete,” but who is right?

Kanatbek Abdrakhmatov, Director of the Institute of Seismology, NAS of the KR, said: “At the present time, many construction companies operating in Kyrgyzstan, particularly from overseas, use international principles and rules of construction rather than Soviet. International standards are also very tough. Therefore, I believe that 90 % of new buildings have a high seismic resistance. However, the whole thing is in performance. For example, if they put four instead of eight fixtures, it inevitably affects the stability of the building.”

Seyitbek Imanbekov, Director of the Institute of Earthquake Engineering, characterized Yusuf Tagirov’s statement about the threat of brick-frame houses as nonsense. “There are three types of control over the implementation of building norms: first – by the author who is legally responsible. The second type of control is by the technical supervision: they supervise the quality and quantity of materials to comply with standards. The third body is the State Inspectorate on technical and environmental safety,” – said S. Imanbekov. He was confident that even if one of the regulatory bodies misses a violation, it is not possible for all three to do so.<sup>12</sup>

It is difficult to make an unambiguous conclusion about the degree of safety of new high-rise buildings in Bishkek, as too many factors affect their seismic resistance.

In addition, facts show that if a strong earthquake occurs in the cities or large towns, it usually leads to disastrous consequences.

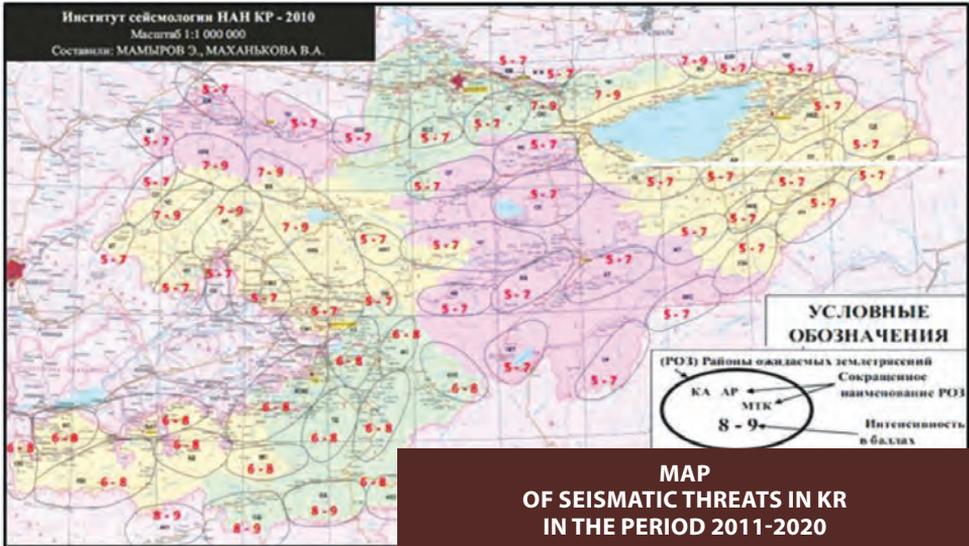
*C) The country has established a state system of civil protection authorities, forces and means which is taking all possible measures to protect the population and territories from natural disasters, accidents and catastrophes. This is one of the most important functions of the state – national security.*

Kyrgyzstan, as a sovereign state, a member of the United Nations and many other international organizations, in the interests of national security in the field of civil protection, and guided by international obligations and the basic principles for strengthening activities for disaster risk reduction, was the first among post-Soviet states to make the transition from a system of civil defence, which was basically aimed at protecting the population in time of war, to a system of civil protection. Thereby, Kyrgyzstan actually

<sup>12</sup> Source: [www.kyrtag.kg](http://www.kyrtag.kg).

put forward the question of protecting the population and territories from crises of natural, technological and biological-social nature as national and local priorities.

In 2009, the Law “On Civil Protection” was adopted which defines the objectives and institutional framework of reference of Civil Protection and regulated powers, rights and duties of the Kyrgyz government, state agencies, local governments, organizations and population in addressing civil protection.



**Map 5: Map of seismic threats in KR in the period 2011-2020.**

Source: Archive of the IS of NAS of the KR.

In 2011, Kyrgyzstan established the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction – an important step in the creation of a national coordinating mechanism and strategic leadership in the field of disaster risk reduction, which involves the participation of all stakeholders in the country, including government agencies, the private sector, civil society and international organizations.

In 2012, the “National Strategy for safety of the population and territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in emergency and crisis situations in 2010-2015” was adopted; Action plans were developed for its implementation, coordinated with the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: “Building the resilience of nations and communities.”

It is very important that in 2013, disaster risk reduction was integrated in the “National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2013-2017.” A special section “Disaster risk reduction and improving emergency preparedness” presented a number of issues on the implementation of organizational and practical measures aimed at improving the work of public authorities in collaboration with civil society to ensure the safety of population and territories from the risk of natural and industrial disasters.

Year after year, more attention is paid to ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional framework. To date, the country has established an appropriate legislative and regulatory framework that is constantly being improved aiming at more precise regulation of political, legislative and institutional framework for the protection of the population and territories from emergency situations, through sharing of responsibilities between different levels of executive authorities and local self-government.

For example, according to legislation the Chief of Civil Protection is: at national level – the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic; at regional, district and local levels – the heads of territorial administrations and local authorities; at institutional level – heads of organizations, enterprises, institutions, regardless of ownership. The Ministry of Emergency Situations was tasked with the implementation of adequate regulations, as well as special, oversight, supervision and coordination functions in the area of civil protection as the authorized state body for civil protection. Legislation stipulates that failure by officials and citizens of the KR to perform their duties in civil protection entails responsibility in accordance with the current legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Scientific and technical programmes, projects and plans have been initiated and carried out aimed at preventing emergency situations and improving the sustainability of production and operation facilities in time of crisis.

There is significant progress in improving the effectiveness of activities to identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and improve early warning systems.

Based on the available opportunities, organizational and practical measures are taken to reduce the risk factors of disasters, to improve disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels, for training and qualification of managers and employees of state agencies and local governments at all levels, awareness and training of the population for threats or emergency and crisis situations.

Every year more and more attention is paid to enhancing international cooperation through the initiation and implementation of joint strategies, concepts, agreements, contracts, programmes and projects in the field of disaster risk reduction and emergency response.

To date, a number of activities have been completed or are close to completion on the implementation of important programmes and projects aimed at:

- implementation of the integrated republican system for information and awareness of the population – 112;
- improvement of the Crisis Management Centre responsible for daily management of the unified information system that combines information resources and capabilities of functional and territorial subsystems of the state civil protection system in order to enhance operational crisis management;
- improving the information-analytical work, database platforms, crisis simulation systems, hydrometeorological monitoring and management of water resources;
- prevention of risks of radioactive tailings and natural disasters (floods, landslides, avalanches);

- setting up a mobile, multi-function Fire and Rescue Service by reforming the territorial agencies of the MES and the State Fire Service;
- practical implementation of the process of alerting the population about the threats of emergencies through television, radio, Internet, print media and SMS messages transmitted by all mobile operators free of charge;
- formation of volunteer fire and rescue teams capable of organizing and conducting primary search and rescue operations at local level before the arrival of professional rescue units from the MES and Civil Protection;
- introduction of “Basics of Life Safety” in the curriculum, development of electronic textbooks, teaching and information materials;
- preventive and liquidation measures, construction of flood protection embankments and other protective structures, as well as mitigation and reconstruction works.

### *Main problems in disaster risk management, including earthquakes*

Efficiency and effectiveness of the whole complex of measures taken for disaster risk management, especially in terms of the implementation of early action to reduce vulnerabilities, to conduct prevention, as well as enhance readiness to respond adequately, remain insufficient. The main reasons are:

*1. The extremely limited financial and material resources for early action to reduce vulnerabilities, preventive measures, as well as enhancing readiness for adequate response to emergencies, both at the national and local levels.*

According to MES data, about 200 emergency situations of natural and industrial character are registered annually in the country, the direct damage from which is about 30-35 million USD. At the same time, only about 6 million USD are allocated from the state budget for their prevention and elimination. For example, the direct material damage from Nura-Alay earthquake was about 10 million USD, and for elimination of the consequences and reconstruction more than 40 million USD was spent.

Providing thorough protection of the population and territories from emergency situations is not possible because measures to reduce vulnerability to earthquakes, protection against landslides, flooding, mudslides and other natural and industrial disasters are very expensive and require significant financial and human resources.

It is easy to calculate that only the most urgent measures to eliminate the consequences of annual disasters, and the reconstruction of partially or completely destroyed industrial and social facilities, at least to a state in which they were before the disaster, take about the same amount of resources as estimated in caused material damage, that is at least \$ 35 million annually.

Destruction of industrial and social facilities is due to the fact that at the time of disaster they were in a physically vulnerable, unstable state. Hence, during their reconstruction and rehabilitation it is necessary to observe the concept of “building better and more stable than before.” That is, the facilities affected by a disaster shall be recon-

structured in view of ensuring their subsequent maximum resilience to future disasters, to meet modern requirements, have improved quality and, in some cases, it should be possible to transfer strategic assets to safer areas. To this end, annual resource requirements will be not 35 million USD but several times more – at least 70-100 million USD.

Kyrgyzstan does not have such resources; and only the national debt of the country to foreign countries and international financial institutions on January 1, 2014 amounted to 3 billion 241 million USD.

Thus, we can conclude that in Kyrgyzstan due to lack of financial and material resources from year to year, a significant portion of industrial and social facilities, partially or completely destroyed by disaster, are not properly restored, not to mention the necessary implementation of the required set of preventive measures.

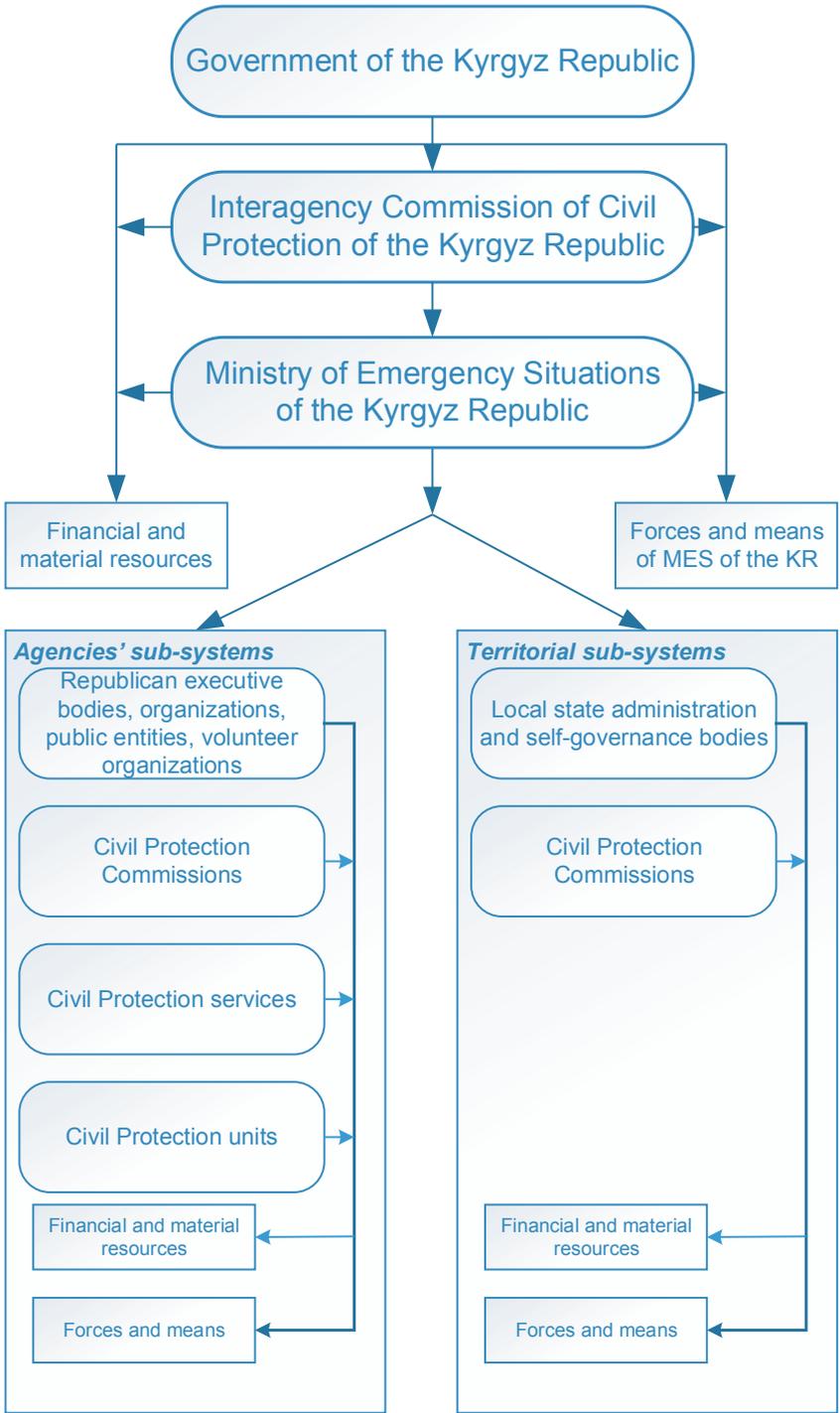
In 2011, Kyrgyzstan made the transition to the two-level budget – national and local, which consists of the budgets of 25 towns and 459 *aiyl* aimag. However, to date, local governments do not have an effective mechanism for funding prevention and mitigation of natural and industrial disasters, which means that they are not entitled to allocate funds for crisis prevention on their territory.

For example, in Kyrgyzstan only in the last decade (2002-2012) due to the impact of natural disasters, accidents and catastrophes more than 36,000 families are virtually homeless or have received prescriptions for relocation from potentially dangerous sites (about 180,000 people, if we assume that the average family consists of 5 people). Among them: victims of an earthquake – 13.7 thousand families (38 %); landslide – 3.5 thousand families (10 %); mudflow and soil erosion – 5.2 thousand families (14 %); from rising groundwater – 9.3 thousand families (26 %) and other emergencies – 4.5 thousand families (12 %).

Currently, given the fact that the vast majority of families affected by disasters belong to the most vulnerable and poor group of population, the government provides them with financial assistance for the restoration of old or new housing construction by providing concessional (interest-free) long-term loans at the amount of 50 thousand soms (less than 1 thousand USD), or 200 thousand soms (about 3,750 USD), depending on the degree of destruction.

The funds provided are insufficient to restore the old or build new housing; in addition, the government is often unable to provide timely disbursement of concessional long-term loans. Due to the constant increase in the number of people affected by natural disasters and budget shortfalls, the number of unsecured loans is growing, which means many homeless families cannot rebuild their homes for months and years.

Currently, out of 36,423 families only 17,052 families (47 %) have fully received preferential long-term loans; the remaining 19,371 families (53 %) received only a partial loan or nothing. Due to the reasons indicated above, we can claim that the majority of victims of various disasters are simply unable to restore their housing, and those families that received preferential long-term loans are unlikely to build housing to meet all modern seismic requirements.



**Scheme 2: Management of the State Civil Protection System in the KR.**

As a result of the earthquakes in 2007 and 2010 in Kochkor region of Naryn district, about 40 % of the rebuilt construction has received varying degrees of damage and requires reconstruction once again.

There are numerous examples like this throughout the country when new houses and other industrial and social facilities were built without complying with the concept of "building better and more stable than it used to be," and later collapsed under the pressure of subsequent disasters.

In addition, according to the requirements of MES, some of the families were subject to displacement from potentially dangerous areas to safe areas. However, the allocation of new land by local authorities in many cases was delayed due to problems with the transformation of land for new buildings. This means that people continued to live in hazardous areas exposed to new risks.

The solution of problems associated with reducing the vulnerability of the population is complicated by the fact that many owners of old and non-resistant houses, even though well aware of the risk they are exposed to, and understanding the need for measures to improve their stability, are simply unable to do so due to lack of money in the family budget.

Moreover, people who are building new homes neglect building standards for the same reason of insufficient funding. A vivid confirmation of this is the fact that buildings in the southern part of Bishkek are located on tectonic faults, while those in the north are in areas of high groundwater levels. Furthermore, about 40-50 % of the houses in the so-called "adobe belt around Bishkek" are being built without adhering to building codes and regulations.

In recent years, in 47 residential areas around Bishkek, more than 30,000 individual houses have been built, out of which about 60 % were built without a coherent project, permits, compliance and accounting requirements for earthquake resistance. This is due to the low financial resources of builders and the high cost of construction materials. Lacking funds, they build mud houses of sun-dried bricks in violation of building norms. All these factors lead to the fact that entire neighbourhoods are non-resistant to earthquakes.

During strong earthquakes, houses like those displayed in the photographs may also be destroyed, as it happened in the village of Nura.

Due to the critical lack of material and financial resources, many urgent strategies, programmes, plans and practical measures in the area of civil protection are insufficiently implemented, including:

- provision of financial and material reserves for civil protection, ensuring radiation, chemical, biomedical, explosion, fire, seismic and environmental safety;
- improvement of technical equipment and control of civil protection forces, especially aviation, engineering, fire and rescue units. For example, the MES Department of Aviation currently has only one helicopter which is not in operation as it requires a major overhaul. This means that due to a lack of helicopters the MES is not able to carry out surveys or cannot fly urgently to remote emergency zones. Moreover, practically all search and rescue units need upgraded special



**Photograph 5: Residential areas around Bishkek.**

Source: [www.vb.kg](http://www.vb.kg).

vehicles, ammunition and equipment, not to mention the shortage of funds for planned maintenance, replenishment of fuel and lubricants and other current needs;

- improvement of the physical endurance of industrial and social facilities (buildings, structures, communications, infrastructure, equipment, etc.) to the effects of earthquakes and other hazardous natural processes and phenomena. For example, with the support of USAID and UNICEF a project to assess the safety of all school buildings and kindergartens was carried out in Kyrgyzstan in 2012. The outcome: 2,222 schools (5,583 buildings) and 806 pre-school institutions (1,198 buildings) were inspected. The survey revealed that 3,625 school buildings and 869 preschool buildings required immediate action for major repairs and reinforcement, and 1,167 school buildings and 196 preschool buildings were considered accident-prone and required demolition. According to the director of the Scientific Research and Design Institute of Earthquake Engineering, the implementation of programmes to restore and improve the safety of schools and kindergartens for the next seven years called for about 237 billion soms (over 5 billion USD). The national budget could allocate only about 100 billion soms, i.e. less than half the amount requested, and therefore the rest of the money was to be provided from other sources;
- improve the level of professional development of state authorities, qualification, awareness, training of local communities and population. For example, many

programmes (seminars, trainings, exercises, etc.) aimed at improving the professional training of public authorities and the qualification of specialists in emergency situations are realized only in the presence of technical and financial support of international organizations.

*2. The presence of serious gaps and weaknesses of institutional, organizational and administrative nature, and the human factor – inappropriate (often negligent) attitude of officials in pursuing assigned tasks related to civil protection due to objective and subjective reasons.*

Ministries and agencies, local state administrations and local self-government in accordance with the requirements of the Law “On Civil Protection” are required to conduct activities to forecast and prevent emergency situations, work and implement organizational and engineering measures to improve the sustainability of industrial and social facilities, to coordinate with the state authorities decisions on the allocation of land for construction of residential, office and industrial buildings and facilities.

There are cases in Kyrgyzstan when individual governments and officials improperly (often carelessly, negligently, recklessly) perform their tasks in the field of civil protection, which ultimately leads to increasing the vulnerability of the population and territories to disasters.

With the connivance of officials, for the construction of tens of thousands of houses plots of land in areas of tectonic fault or high groundwater levels in the so-called “adobe belt around Bishkek” were allocated, where about 40-50 % of housing is being built without compliance with building regulations.

Because of deficiencies of institutional, organizational and administrative nature, certain part of the population is not adequately informed about the risks to which it is exposed in the community and the steps necessary for security. Unfortunately, despite the measures taken, authorities have failed to educate the population on life safety.

Not all local state administrations and local governments pay due attention to educate the population how to protect themselves in emergencies, including earthquakes, provide timely notification about the threat or emergency situations, plan funds to stockpile material, technical, food, health, individual and collective resources for protection.

Currently, only direct material damages are taken into account in Kyrgyzstan. There are no estimates on the losses during emergencies. This means that the country lacks a proper analysis of the impact of disaster on the economic performance, macroeconomic imbalances, the reduction of employment, reduction of income and material well-being of the individuals and households, the impact on the national economy, GDP, the levels of exports, imports, income, poverty and other socio-economic indicators.

In the event of emergency situations of natural and industrial nature, along with the urgent measures to eliminate the consequences, relevant state agencies often do not carry out a thorough analysis of the reasons that have had negative impact and steps are not taken to hold accountable managers from the executive authorities, local self-government and business companies for late fulfilment of their functions in forecasting and preventing emergency situations.

A very serious negative factor in disaster risk management is that every year all caused damages and losses from emergencies are written off with the reference “to blame the disaster.” There are rare cases when officials and citizens bear any responsibility for violating the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic in the field of civil protection, or the established norms, rules and standards. That is why the MES specifications and instructions in civil protection, which are binding for ministries and agencies, local state administrations, local authorities and organizations, regardless of ownership, can be ignored and not enforced.

Despite the high seismic risk of earthquakes in Kyrgyzstan, a law on seismic safety has not been adopted yet, which would greatly streamline the work of executive authorities, local governments, business entities regardless of ownership, as well as citizens to ensure seismic safety in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In 2009, the Kyrgyz Scientific Research and Design Institute of Earthquake Engineering of the State Agency for Architecture and Construction under the Government initiated draft law “On seismic safety.” However, this bill was not adopted due to the recent events in April 2010, known as the “April revolution.”

*3. The lack of safety awareness of personal responsibility for their health and life, as well as for the lives of relatives and friends, preservation of material and cultural values is one of the main reasons for the high vulnerability of the population and territory of Kyrgyzstan.*

The term safety awareness refers to the level of development of the individual and society, characterized by the significance of life safety in the system of personal and social values, common stereotypes of safe behaviour in everyday life and in dangerous conditions and emergency situations, the degree of protection against threats and hazards in all spheres of life. In other words, the safety culture is a stage in the development of an individual or society characterized by the attitude to life safety and labour activities, and most importantly, by active work to lower the level of hazards.

The most stringent administrative measures and laws are not able to adequately reduce vulnerability of the individual, society and the state to disasters in the absence of citizens’ attitude to life safety, understanding of personal responsibility for their health and life, as well as for the lives of relatives, friends and the people around.

The population is obliged to observe the laws and other normative legal acts in civil protection and take safety precautions in their daily activities, to learn how to protect the population and territories from emergency situations, how to give first aid, to obey the rules for the use of collective and personal protective equipment, to follow established rules of conduct under threat and emergency, to assist public authorities and organizations in the aftermath of emergencies. Another important aspect of risk management is the culture of behaviour of the population during disasters. To what extent is our population prepared to respond in the event of an emergency?

Thus, not only children, but most adults in Kyrgyzstan are not aware of the basic rules of behaviour in times of emergency and how to give first aid. This means that our population lacks safety awareness. For this reason, during emergencies people are helpless; they lack the skills to respond independently and organize themselves.

Very often people, even when they are warned about the possibility of a disaster, just ignore these warnings and do not take precaution that could help them minimize the risks of becoming victim to natural disasters.

With regard to emergency response, it is necessary to emphasize the so-called “human factor.” There are cases when citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic who live in potentially dangerous areas, despite the acquisition of new land and government aid in the form of long-term loans for housing, continue to further use sites found to be unsuitable, often in spite of the warnings of seismologists and MES regulations.

Our society is now at a delicate stage of development when the priority question for most people is how to feed and provide basic items for their families while security issues are often overlooked.

The analysis of the current state of risk management of earthquakes in Kyrgyzstan taking into account the Nura-Alay 2008 earthquake demonstrated the need for drastic measures to further improve the state system of civil protection and enhance the effectiveness in protecting the population and territories from emergency and crises.

## Practical recommendations

These recommendations aim at improving the state system of civil protection, increasing the efficiency of risk management in earthquakes and other disasters, enhancing the effectiveness to protect the population and territories, increasing the results and reducing vulnerability, reducing human and material losses caused by earthquakes and other disasters.

*1. The primary objective of the state system of civil protection at this stage shall be the identification, assessment, monitoring and analysis of risk factors of disasters, as well as the expected consequences.*

To do this, it is necessary to achieve four basic objectives: identify the risks, threats and vulnerability, as well as the expected social and economic consequences, the need for prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction as a result of disasters.

*Objective 1:* To determine, predict, organize by type, location, intensity, frequency, probability and other parameters of existing risks of earthquakes and other disasters (natural disasters, large-scale accidents, catastrophes) currently threatening the Kyrgyz territory and population. Moreover, it is necessary to pay special attention to predict possible synergies, or in other words, combination of natural and industrial disasters. The synergetic nature of such disasters in mountainous areas means that one dangerous natural phenomenon (e.g., earthquake and / or landslide) causes a chain (cascade) of other phenomena. Often, the subsequent phenomenon is not inferior, but in many cases its destructive force exceeds the initiating event.

*Objective 2:* To analyse the vulnerability, organize data about possible consequences of disasters, large-scale accidents and catastrophes (destruction, human and material losses, including physical, social, economic, environmental damage and loss).

To date, 60-80 % of the first two major tasks have been accomplished, but not in all parameters, which does not allow to manage fully effectively existing disaster risks. It is

necessary to provide sufficient funding and to carry out all necessary arrangements for the prediction and prevention of emergency situations.

*Objective 3:* To determine what proactive measures and what material and financial resources are necessary to prevent possible emergencies and to minimize human and material losses.

*Objective 4:* In case of disasters, it is necessary to determine the resources and finances to ensure full recovery and reconstruction of all damages, always taking into account the concept of “building better and more stable than before.”

By accomplishing these objectives, one can get a full analysis of existing risks, consequences in the event of disaster, preventive work required to protect the population and territories, minimization of human and material losses, as well as resource requirements and finances that will have to be provided in case preventive measures are not taken.

The result of this work will prove that it is easier today to invest as much as possible to prevent and reduce the risk of emergency and crisis situations than later to spend ten times more on the mitigation of their consequences, reconstruction and restoration of damages.

*2. It is necessary to organize and bring to a logical completion the inventory and certification of all potentially hazardous facilities and sites, to identify their departmental and territorial affiliation, to develop an implementation plan for each of them to ensure sustainable safe operation, to prevent threats or emergencies, indicating the responsible agencies (according to industrial and territorial affiliation), priority, time, financial and material resources.*

Currently, this work is in process; however, it has not been completed yet. The departmental or territorial affiliation of many potentially dangerous sites has not been defined: there are no owners to take responsibility for them. As a rule, these abandoned sites generate risks, yet no one is responsible for the negative consequences.

*3. The state civil protection system needs to adjust and implement further organizational and practical activities for effective management of risks of earthquakes and other disasters, overall planning and implementation of measures to protect the population and territories from possible emergencies.*

During the implementation of this activity, it is necessary to use the principle of “going from the small and simple to the bigger and more complex.” This approach assumes that the organizational and practical work for the effective risk management in case of earthquakes and other disasters, overall planning, implementation of measures to protect the population and territories from possible emergencies needs to start from a small/simple local level – industrial and social facilities, villages, ail district (urban neighbourhoods, neighbourhoods), to greater/complex – rural areas, urban areas, small towns, districts, large cities, including Bishkek and Osh.

In Kyrgyzstan, this approach to disaster risk management has been used for many years when the MES and other state bodies and local self-governments, with the support of international and non-governmental organizations, through the implementation of

projects reduce disaster risks, both at institutional level (kindergartens, schools, potentially dangerous facilities), and at the level of local communities in the villages and districts.

If this work is systematized and brought to all communities, then it will certainly lead to effective risk management of earthquakes and other disasters, enhance the effectiveness of measures to protect the population and territories, give tangible results in reducing vulnerability and reduce human and material losses caused by emergency and crisis situations, both in districts, cities, regions, and the country as a whole.

*4. Revise regulations, develop mechanisms and take organizational and practical measures to improve the status, role and responsibility of local authorities in the field of civil protection, prevention and management of crises.*

The concept of “local government” means that all local issues, including the protection of population and territories from disasters, shall be independently—based on their own interests and under their responsibility—resolved by local authorities and local communities through representative and executive bodies in aiy1 districts and mayors, as well as through direct participation of the citizens.

The current Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 15, 2011 no. 101 “On Local Self-Government,” Article 18 “Questions of local significance” states: “For the functioning and development of the system of life support, socio-economic planning and the provision of public social and cultural services, local governments shall take into account the following: Item 22 – to assist in the prevention and liquidation of disaster consequences.”

Moreover, the Law “On Civil Protection” of July 20, 2009 no. 239, Article 10 “Duties of local state administrations and local authorities in the field of civil protection” contains nine items, including items on the prognosis and prevention of emergency situations, preparation and maintaining a state of readiness of the necessary forces and resources for civil protection, and training of the population to act in emergency situations. Hence, the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 15, 2011 no. 101 “On Local Self-Government” shall make the necessary additions to increase the level of the duties and responsibilities of local authorities.

*5. Revise regulations, develop mechanisms and implement effective organizational and practical measures to enhance the role and responsibility of enterprises, organizations and institutions, regardless of ownership, in the field of civil protection, prevention of disasters and liquidation of their consequences.*

It is necessary to ensure that companies, organizations and institutions, regardless of ownership and departmental affiliation, plan and implement the necessary measures to ensure: safety of workers, the population and the surrounding area; prevention and management of crises; financial resources; training of workers to deal with the threat or an emergency. In addition, they shall, if needed, create a local warning system, as well as specialized rescue teams.

Companies, organizations and institutions, regardless of ownership, which have caused the emergency, shall be liable for damages to businesses and individuals, the environment, industrial and social facilities. It is necessary to make amendments to the

Law “On Civil Protection” in terms of increasing the responsibilities of organizations in the field of civil protection.

*6. Strengthen the overall control and responsibility of public authorities, local governments, organizations and population for mandatory compliance with the laws and other legal acts in civil protection, architecture, urban planning, construction of industrial and social facilities.*

It is necessary to terminate the practice of ascribing the loss of life, destruction of homes, industrial and social facilities, significant economic damage and losses to natural disasters, accidents and catastrophes only. Therefore:

- It is necessary to prescribe legal provisions requiring that officials and citizens guilty of failure to implement the established norms, standards and regulations for the prevention and elimination of emergency situations, failing to protect people, the environment, as well as industrial and social infrastructure from emergencies, contributing to the creation of conditions and preconditions for the emergence of accidents and disasters, are held responsible.
- The Kyrgyz Government shall make the relevant provisions which require that in the event of natural and industrial disasters, along with urgent measures to eliminate the consequences for each event, a thorough analysis of the causes is conducted; where appropriate, heads of executive authorities, local governments and business entities are to be held responsible for late fulfilment of their functions to prevent emergency situations.
- It is necessary to amend the regulations, to develop and implement mechanisms providing for administrative, criminal and financial responsibility of legal entities and individuals responsible for any emergency and crisis situation which has caused the loss or damage of industrial and social infrastructure, injury or loss of life, including through compensation for moral and material damage. More specifically, it is necessary to amend the Law “On Urban Planning and Architecture of the Kyrgyz Republic” to increase the liability of urban planning for some types of offenses, in particular for failing to set the level of durability, reliability, stability, earthquake resistance of buildings and structures and their operational characteristics, for unauthorized reconstruction of buildings and structures, change of architectural design, details and other decorative elements, violation of the regulations for determining land for construction, the rules for issuing building permits, for unauthorized construction of facilities, unlicensed design and construction works, noncompliance with the regulations of public architecture and construction bodies.

It is necessary to strengthen the role of supervisory bodies for timely decision-making and the elimination of violations found as a result of audits carried out, as well as to establish a close relationship with law enforcement agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic.

7. *Take practical measures to provide an objective and uniform assessment of the actual and potential socio-economic damage, loss and needs during emergency and crisis situations.*

To this end, it is necessary to use a global methodology—adapted for Kyrgyzstan—to assess the damage, loss and needs in time of disaster:

- to analyse the socio-economic consequences which include an assessment of the possible impact of disasters on the economic performance: temporary macroeconomic imbalances, temporary reduction of employment, reduction of income and material well-being of the individuals and households. To determine the degree of impact on the overall economy of the country, GDP, levels of exports, imports, income, poverty and other socio-economic indices;
- to determine the funding, necessary to ensure a full recovery and reconstruction, with strict compliance with the concept of “building better and more stable than before.” The concept of “building better and more stable than before” means that the objects affected by the disaster shall be reconstructed taking into account their maximum resistance to possible future disasters;
- to initiate, under the decision of the Kyrgyz Government, the process of requesting and obtaining the necessary international assistance that goes beyond national resources, to study the experience in the implementation of existing global methodology to assess the damage, loss and needs in time of disaster. The application of this methodology would establish a common unified approach for government agencies, local governments, organizations, businesses and individuals in assessing possible (predicted) and actual (after an emergency) damages, losses and needs during any particular emergency as well as potential and actual impact on facilities, businesses and industries.

The assessment goal is the development and implementation of programmes and action plans for disaster relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation of industrial and social facilities affected by disasters, as well as measures for the prevention and reduction of risks of future disasters.

8. *Make a radical decision to suspend the issuance of long-term preferential loans for the construction of individual houses to persons whose homes were destroyed by natural disasters (mortgage loan at the amount of 200,000 soms – about 4,000 USD).*

Allocated funds are extremely insufficient for the construction of new seismic resistant housing, and the state is often unable to provide timely disbursement of concessional long-term loans. Due to the constantly increasing number of people affected by natural disasters and the lack of budgetary funds, there are a growing number of families who are not eligible for concessional loans.

First, the state shall not be held responsible for restoration of houses built by citizens often without elementary respect for building standards, and second, it is simply not able to provide the necessary funds from the republican budget for construction in compliance with the concept “building better and more stable than before” to ensure their maximum resilience to future disasters. Mechanisms that fail to solve existing problems

in providing safe housing for the affected population “encourage” irresponsible attitude of citizens to their own safety and are also a “heavy burden” on the state treasury. Therefore, they must be suspended and other solutions need to be found.

It is necessary to continue allocating funds for the repair and restoration of residential houses which were built in compliance with building regulations and received minor or partial damage, through the issuance of mortgage loans in the amount of 50,000 soms (about 1,000 USD) from the republican budget.

It is also necessary to continue providing one-time grant aid funds in the amount of 50,000 soms (about 1,000 USD) to people willing to build their own new houses in compliance with the concept “building better and more stable than before” to ensure that they achieve maximum resilience to future disasters.

*9. Develop and implement a mechanism for voluntary insurance of property with partial state support in the form of lump-sum grants and tax relief.*

To do this, we shall learn from the experience of other countries where the insurance system has been successfully used for many years. First, citizens shall be interested to insure their homes, and second, they have to be afraid of the consequences if they have no insurance. Voluntary insurance of property will attract funds from the population and other extra-budgetary sources to compensate for damages in time of emergency and crises.

Mass insurance of houses will allow distributing the damage to houses among their owners and users, among all insurers, which, naturally, can significantly mitigate the severity of the cost of damages. Under such circumstances, there is the possibility of defining a sufficiently low premium rates and instalments, providing mass coverage and insurance reserves, allowing for effective coverage. For example, in Turkey, where 98 % of the territory is in seismic zones, property insurance is common, due to which it is possible to reconstruct and rehabilitate houses affected by earthquakes.

*10. Develop and implement mechanisms for long-term (20-30 years or more) mortgage loans at the lowest interest rates, with partial state support in the form of lump-sum grants and tax breaks for the population affected by natural disasters.*

To implement this mechanism, it is necessary to receive the support of international donor organizations with programmes investing in disaster risk reduction, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. Insurance companies would not insure dilapidated and non-resistant to earthquakes houses. The owners of such properties, facing the risk or upon destruction, in order to improve their living conditions would willingly take advantage of the services of long-term (20-30 years) mortgage lending (30,000 USD or more) at the lowest interest rates. Thus, they will replace the old housing to build or buy a new safe house or apartment.

*11. To complete as soon as possible the development, adoption and entry into force of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On the Seismic Safety,” and also to develop a programme to reduce seismic risk and to establish mechanisms for their implementation.*

The development and adoption of the draft law “On the Seismic Safety” and the Programme to reduce seismic risk and the mechanisms for their implementation will make it

possible to establish the organizational and legal norms of seismic safety, to streamline the work of state agencies, local governments and organizations regardless of ownership in the assessment of seismic danger, earthquake engineering and early warning of the population in order to protect citizens, reduce the socio-economic damage and losses from earthquakes.

Allocation of state funds to support the victims of the earthquake is not the best way to protect citizens. It would be much more efficient to invest in the training of the population to respond to earthquakes and strengthen homes.

*12. To take organizational and practical measures to raise awareness, training of local communities and the public on issues of civil protection, disaster risk management, compliance with safety measures in daily activities, preventing violations, which may result in emergency and crisis situations.*

The scale of disasters could be substantially reduced if the local community and the population were well informed and interested in creating a culture of disaster prevention and resilience, which in turn dictates the need for dissemination of relevant knowledge and information on hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities. Local communities and citizens—being informed about the risks they may be exposed to in certain places in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic and the necessary steps to security—will also be interested in taking precaution to reduce vulnerability and build resilience. For this purpose, it is necessary to develop a Comprehensive programme to reduce disaster risk and vulnerability and to build capabilities for emergency preparedness at the community level.

With regard to integrating management activities and disaster risk reduction at the community level, it is necessary to involve MES professional experts and managers and specialists of local governments who require special training. Substantial technical support can be provided by international and non-governmental organizations working in the field of disaster risk reduction.

It is also necessary to continue and expand efforts to establish community-based voluntary rescue teams, to provide the necessary assistance in their training and technical equipment. To this end, it is necessary to involve the media to disseminate useful information, to disseminate knowledge and promote the ongoing work of disaster management at the local level. Particular attention should be paid to information what residents can do to mitigate the effects of earthquakes and other disasters (especially in regard to strengthening buildings, furniture, homes, water storage, food and medicine, as well as home insurance). Illustrated booklets “What to do in case of an earthquake” should be distributed free of charge in shops, stations or other public places.

Civil protection techniques shall be practiced from childhood, from kindergarten, and training and exercises shall be practiced continuously.

This primary level shall be the starting point for the development and implementation of strategies, programmes and plans for prevention and risk reduction, raising preparedness under the threat, the creation of forces and means of response, the construction of early warning systems, measures to minimize human and material losses. In the pro-

cess of implementation of this activity, it is necessary to study and learn the lessons of international experience.

*13. It is necessary to improve the early warning system, the collection and transmission of operational information concerning the threat or emergency, and crisis management centres.*

Currently, Kyrgyzstan has developed a Programme to create and implement in 2014 OKSION. The Programme aims to achieve the following objectives: shorten the emergency warning period of governmental civil protection bodies and the population; increase awareness of safe behaviour under the threat of an emergency situation, the level of preparedness of the population concerning life safety; increase the information impact on early rehabilitation of the population affected by emergencies; improve monitoring of radiation and chemical rates and the order in crowded places.

It is essential that the Programme on the creation and implementation in 2014 of OKSION and EGDDS-112—a single “hot line” for receipt and transmission of information and management of all duty and dispatch services operating in the country—provide efficient emergency response. It is necessary to ensure that all people in the country know about the existence of these systems and use them when needed.

It is essential that all citizens, even the residents of the most remote and outlying settlements, could receive or transmit emergency information about the threat or emergency in a timely manner. It is also necessary to ensure the permanent operation of early warning systems since in case of emergency many communications fail, power is cut and communication is terminated.

*14. It is necessary to ensure the readiness of government civil protection forces and the resources of state bodies and local authorities to take action under the threat and to conduct search and rescue and reconstruction works.*

This recommendation aims to enhance the adoption of organizational and practical measures to create volunteer fire and rescue teams from the local population in each community and town. It is necessary that rescuers arrive at the place of emergency no later than the so-called “golden hour” – the time when the victims can be assisted most effectively.

Kyrgyzstan has already set up a relevant legal framework – Law dated 21 January 2000, no. 35 (as amended by the Law of 25 October 2011 no. 182) “On Rescue Services and the Status of Rescuers” and Decree of the Kyrgyz Government dated January 14, 2002 no. 19 “On Approval of the rescuers and volunteer rescue formations of the Kyrgyz Republic,” which is supposed to expand the prerogatives and review financing for volunteer fire and rescue teams.

There is still a lot to be done; the establishment and maintenance of voluntary fire and rescue units shall be the responsibility of local communities and local governments, while national bodies shall provide support and assistance. This work is already in progress. There is good experience and we shall build on it, including by using technical and methodological support by international organizations.

The Law “On Civil Protection” stipulates that the population of the Kyrgyz Republic has the right to join voluntary (public) rescue teams and is obliged to learn the methods of protection of the population and territories in emergency situations, provision of first aid, use of collective and personal protective equipment, to assist public authorities and organizations in the aftermath of disasters.

It is also important that all strategically important (hydroelectric, etc.) and potentially dangerous sites, especially those using for their production highly toxic substances, also had a special form of civil protection and maintained high level of alert when facing a threat or emergency.

*15. It is necessary to develop and implement special programs aimed at reducing vulnerability to emergencies and crises of unprotected and vulnerable population groups: women, children, the elderly, the disabled, terminally ill, as well as the extremely poor.*

No population group is excluded from the ravages of emergency and crisis situations, environmental and industrial disasters; however, the real vulnerability of a group is determined by its socio-economic status, the volume of civil and social rights and access to resources for disaster mitigation and assistance.

Practice shows that for women, children, the elderly, the disabled, terminally ill, as well as the extremely poor disasters bring disproportionately more severe physical and psychological pain and suffering.

It is necessary in the process of disaster risk reduction and response to emergency and crisis situations to ensure first the security and protection of school and pre-school institutions, specialized hospitals (children’s hospitals, maternity homes, neuropsychiatric hospitals, the veterans hospital), orphanages, boarding schools, nursing homes, homes for the disabled, as well as houses and apartments, where there are large families, families of single mothers, families with disabilities, families experiencing extreme poverty.

Each rescuer shall be aware that during search and rescue operations he shall, first of all, assist the most vulnerable population groups and take into account their special needs. Rescue teams shall include specialists-psychologists and female rescuers.

*16. All organizational and practical measures to improve the state system of civil protection, increase the efficiency in disaster risk management, enhance the effectiveness of measures to protect the population and territories shall be implemented taking into account the current Kyrgyz policies, programmes, projects and plans for adapting to climate change.*

For the effective disaster risk management it is imperative to take into account the increased risk of climate change which at this stage can have tangible negative impact and complicate the already significant exposure of the population and territory of Kyrgyzstan with its hazardous natural processes and phenomena entailing emergency and crisis situations.

The experience gained in the management of emergency and crisis situations shall be a good lesson for Kyrgyzstan for the future and lead to a conscious search for new ways and effective solutions to the problems of disaster risk reduction, protection of population and territories from emergency and crisis situations, minimization of human and material losses.

In managing the risks of emergency and crisis situations, international experience shall be taken into account, as well as the recommendations of the international community to ensure priority of disaster risk reduction at the national and local levels with a strong institutional basis for their implementation.

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# Short Biographies of the Editors and Authors

## **Alamanov Salamat**

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic, a graduate of the Faculty of Geography, Moscow State University, with a degree in "Hydrology." Candidate of Geographical Sciences, professor. He has more than 90 scientific publications (books and articles) on geography, geoecology, territorial security, border settlement, use of natural resources, international cross border relations. Former Head of Meteorology and Hydrology Department of the Kyrgyz National University. As an Ambassador, he led the group for border talks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1995-1997). Former head of the governmental Regional Issues Department (1997-2010). From 1995 to 2010 leader of the government delegations of the Kyrgyz Republic for talks on delimitation and demarcation of state borders with China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Currently Head of the Geography Department of the Institute of Geology of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of the Kyrgyz Republic.

## **Alymbaeva Aida**

Aida Alymbaeva is a postgraduate student in political science at Goethe University (Germany). Aida graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology in the US, where she received a master's degree in public policy. She is a graduate of Edmund Muskie's FREEDOM Support Act Fellowship of the US Department of State. Aida headed the Social Research Centre at AUCA for 6 years (2005-2011) and worked in other research centres. She has extensive research experience; she was a research fellow with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (Norway), the Institute for Public Policy at Duke University (USA), the Institute for Public Policy (Poland). Aida is the author of two books and a number of scientific articles. Her research interests include civil society, the political elite, political institutions, oversight of the state services.

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Colonel of the Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic, a graduate of Rostov Military Artillery School and the Military-Political Academy (Moscow). PhD. He has more than 40 scientific publications (books and articles) on international and military security. From 1974 to 2008 he was in active military service; he took positions from group commander

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## **Berbaeva Chinara**

Graduate of the Kyrgyz National University. After graduating from the University, she started her career in the International Department of the Ministry of Emergency Situations and worked there for 10 years (2001-2011). Her next place of work was the Secretariat of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction of the KR (2011-2013); she was the direct initiator of the establishment of this institution. She was also involved in the United Nations Development Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic and the German Society for International Cooperation in Kyrgyzstan (GIZ) as an expert consultant on disaster risk reduction (2011-2013); she was a representative of the Ministry of Emergency Situations in the Centre of emergency and risk reduction in Almaty, Kazakhstan (2013-2014). She has extensive research experience and experience with non-profit organizations. Also is one of the authors of the Concept and strategy of complex safety of the population and territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in emergency and crisis situations to 2020, and developer of many documents of lawmaking in the field of civil protection.

## **Juraev Emil**

Emil Juraev is a professor of political science and international relations at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA). He received his doctorate in political science (PhD) at the University of Maryland (USA). His research interests include: constitutionalism and constitutional development, institutional theory, the problem of democratization and the politics of the Central Asian countries. Some of his publications deal with the problems of security and development in Afghanistan.

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### **Murzakulova Asel**

Associate Professor at Bishkek Humanities University, Doctor of Political Science, an expert at the analytical centre "Polis Asia." Author of several books and more than 30 scientific publications on international relations, ethnic conflicts, regional security, nation-building and migration. In 2012, she was awarded a special prize for the best research work on the integration of the Eurasian Development Bank for the monograph "Inter-parliamentary institutions of the CIS: problems of stability and integration in the post-Soviet space" (Bishkek, 2012). In 2008, she was invited by Davis Centre at Harvard University, and in 2013 she was a visiting researcher at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2006-2008, she worked as an expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. She also served as Director of the Centre for Academic Development BSU (2012), and national expert for UNDP (2011 and 2012).

### **Osmonaliyev Kayrat**

Doctor of Law, Professor, Vice-Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of the Kyrgyz Republic "Dikambayev," visiting professor of Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, lieutenant colonel from the militia. He has served for 17 years in the internal affairs bodies and the drug control of the Kyrgyz Republic. A chairman of the Public Supervisory Board under the State national security committee (2011-2013). He was a distinguished graduate from Omsk Higher Police School of the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation (1994), graduated from the Police Academy of Russia (Moscow, 1997). He was invited as a fellow researcher at the University of Uppsala (Sweden) in 2004, consultant of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (Vienna, Austria, 2005). He has more than 100 publications in criminology, constitutional, criminal and international law, including security, published in Russia, Germany, Sweden and Kyrgyzstan.

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Professor Todor Tagarev is Head of the Department "Information Technologies for Security" and the Centre for Security and Defence Management at the Institute of Information and Communication Technologies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He is also an Associate Senior Fellow at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). He has extensive experience in policy development and implementation in security and defence, supported by practical work in government bodies, has profound theoretical knowledge and research experience in the fields of cybernetics and security. He specializes in the security sector reform, primarily from organizational management perspective.

Professor Tagarev was Minister of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria from March to May 2013. He worked as Director for Defence Planning and for Armaments Policy in the Bulgarian Ministry of Defence. From 2004 to 2008, he headed the “Security and Defence Management” Department at Rakovski National Defence Academy in Sofia. He is Editor-in-Chief of the Editorial Board of “Information and Security: International Journal” (<http://procon.bg/view-volumes>), as well as the monograph series on “Security and Defence Management,” published by DCAF. Professor Tagarev is also a member of the editorial boards of the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes, publishing “Connections: The Quarterly Journal,” and of the “Journal of Defence Management.”

## **Ukashev Dzhergalbek**

Dzhergalbek Ukashev graduated from the Moscow Higher Command School for Road and engineering troops with a degree in “Civil Defence.” His entire career for more than 40 years was associated with disaster risk management and emergency prevention and management in the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the KR. He enhanced his professional skills in Senior Central Officers’ Courses of the Civil Protection of the USSR, courses and trainings in the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, and Russia. He was an authorized representative of MES at the Centre for Emergency and Disaster Risk Reduction in Almaty, Kazakhstan (2013-2014); he worked for the United Nations (UN) in Kyrgyzstan as a coordinator of the joint project between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the United Nations in KR “Enhancing Coordination for Disaster Response in the Kyrgyz Republic” (2008-2010). He worked as a consultant in many international projects on disaster risk reduction (World Bank, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration). Dzhergalbek Ukashev has expertise in the field of disaster risk management, teaching, public speaking and coaching experience. He participated in the development of many legislative and regulatory acts in the field of civil protection, such as the Law “On Civil Protection.” He was awarded with the following state awards: “For Service to the Motherland in the USSR Armed Forces 3rd degree,” the medal “For Military Merit,” Honorary Diploma by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

## **Umetalieva Aynura**

An expert and consultant on monitoring and evaluation in the NGO “Channel Research” (Belgium). Aynura graduated from the Academy of Management under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic with the support of Hans Seidel Foundation (Germany) and has a master’s degree in management of non-profit organizations. She is also a graduate of Osh State University, where she earned two degrees – “Foreign Languages” and “Management.” Aynura worked for 14 years for the UNDP in Osh and for three years headed the Peace and Development Programme of UNDP. She has extensive experience in the field of conflict prevention and has been involved in projects to strengthen cross-border cooperation with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

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In 2005, on the occasion of the anniversary of UNDP in Kyrgyzstan, Aynura received a diploma from the Permanent Representative of the UNDP in Kyrgyzstan for her longstanding and effective work in UNDP. She is also the author of the works “Analysis of early warning in Batken district” (2002), “Analysis of early warning in Batken region” (2003) and “Analysis of the vulnerability in Dara Ayil Okmotu” (2001).

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