

Weekly Newsletter

Issue 1, Monday 4 July 2005, review of 23 – 30 June 2005, in Russian and English

The Newsletter is published by the FTI/IFES Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project.

Welcome to the first issue of the Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project's newsletter!

We are glad to present to you the first weekly issue of the Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project's newsletter. This newsletter contains information about conflicts and tension related to the electoral process and the overall political situation. The newsletter is composed based on information collected by 36 representatives of the civil society, academic circles, media and law enforcement agencies that monitor the situation in Kyrgyzstan. This report is a starting point for research of dynamics of the situation in the country.

This first edition has been sent to a limited number of organizations and individuals active in civil society, state structures and international organizations. We would be grateful if you forward this bulletin to your contacts that may be interested in receiving this information.

You can subscribe or unsubscribe from this mailing. For more information, please see at the end of this newsletter.

Should you have any comments and suggestions, please send them at: ew@osce-academy.net.

Thank you!

Center for Early Warning

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1. Hot spots:

The camp of Uzbek refugees in Suzak rayon, Jalalabad oblast. The situation around Uzbek refugees remains difficult. Tahskent demands that refugees suspected for organizing mass disturbances currently residing in the refugee camp be extradited. The international community urges Bishkek not to extradite the refugees to Uzbekistan where, as many organizations believe, they will be tortured and mistreated. The local population demands that the refugees be expelled from the territory of their rayon.

Kara Keche, Jumgal rayon, Naryn oblast. Local residents led by Nurlan Motuyev, the leader of the Joomart Youth Political Movement, captured the largest Coal Open-pit Mine in the country Kara-Keche

and occupied the offices of the Besh-Sary, Akjol, and Shabdan Companies. Negotiations are being attempted between the parties. A specially created governmental commission is working.

2. Weekly review

Election-related issues

- Several cases of leaflets are being disseminated in South Kyrgyzstan urging citizens to vote exclusively for a religious candidate (Aksy, Kara-Suu).
- In Bishkek leaflets intended to discredit Felix Kulov were noticed on June 30. The leaflet authors accuse F. Kulov of connection with the ex-President Askar Akayev. Leaflets call for creation of a new tandem of “K. Bakiyev - D. Usenov”. Currently, there is no information as to who is behind dissemination of such leaflets.
- In Panfilov rayon of Chui oblast a group of young men was noticed who urged the rayon’s residents to vote against all candidates. The group members refused to share any information about who they are, and claimed that they only represent the people.
- In Aksy rayon of Jalalabad oblast, on the night of June 27-28, unknown individuals destroyed banners and campaigning materials of the candidate T. Bakir uulu.
- In Naryn, on June 25 a woman attempted to disrupt the meeting of constituents with candidates J. Jeksheyev and T. Bakir uulu. An unidentified woman attempted to take the microphone away from the speakers, while crying and shouting incoherent phrases. Only intervention on part of the law enforcement officers allowed the meeting to continue.
- In Bokombayevo village of Ton rayon of Issyk-Kul oblast, on June 25 local residents expressed their resentment of J. Akuliyev, a proxy of candidate K. Bakiyev. They interrupted the meeting demanding that he leave the territory of Ton rayon. According to local residents, J. Akuliyev during the time when he was a member of the Parliament elected from this constituency failed to perform his duties and ignored the needs of his constituents.

Issues not related to elections

- On June 25, in Batken oblast ethnic Tajiks, residents of the village of Khushier of Uzbek enclave of Sokh, captured the mosque located at the Kyrgyz border in Sogment village. Captors said that the mosque has to belong to Tajiks. Currently, negotiations are taking place and the mosque has been freed from captors. The Demarcation Commission commenced the border delimitation work.

3. Trends and expectations

Overall, the past week was rather calm. The level of public tension in the capital and regions of the country was assessed by the project monitors as “low”. In most rayons local population assesses the situation as “better than the week before”. Exceptions include few villages where tension is more than “high” (see Sections 1 and 2).

People are concerned by incidents related to redistribution of property that many of them associate with criminalization of Kyrgyz politics. Thus, the population of the city of Osh and the entire Osh oblast are unhappy with impunity of participants of a shoot-out that occurred near the Alai Hotel in the center of Osh on May 13, 2005. Another example of an incident that causes discontent of the population and relates to redistribution of property is delay in resolution of the issue concerning the coal open-pit mine of Kara-Keche, located in Jumgal rayon of Naryn oblast (see Section 4). It is worth noting that in both cases disputed issues are being resolved by force. The level of trust of population to governmental and judicial entities, especially in the regions, is still quite low.

However, the events that generate the most interest today pertain to the upcoming Presidential Election. Many residents of the capital and regions are concerned by the process of clarification of voters lists. According to our information, certain rayon electoral commissions refused to provide the list to representatives of the Coalition for Democracy and Civic Society that monitor voters lists throughout the country. The main problem related to the lists is the issue of thousands of internal migrants that in order to be able to vote need to get an absentee card at the area of residence registration site (*propiska*). Due to high cost of trips, many of them will not be able to exercise their most fundamental right this year. At the same time, results of a survey at Osh bazaar revealed that most internal migrants still intend to participate in the upcoming election. Most of them were unaware of the need for obtaining an absentee card at the residence registration site. Such a circumstance can trigger some problems during the Election Day especially in the areas where many internal migrants will come to vote (in the vicinity of Osh bazaar, Dordoi market, city outskirts, etc.). It is worth noting that grievances triggered by this circumstance could be used by various forces as an instrument to discredit the upcoming election.

It is worth noting that in several rayons (Karasuu and Nookat) the population is concerned by rumors that among the supporters of the electoral campaign of Tursunbai Bakir uulu are representatives of extremist religious organizations.

4. Conflicts in “hot spots” and recommendations on their resolution

1. Uzbek refugee camp, Suzak rayon, Jalalabad oblast

The situation regarding the Uzbek refugees is still quite complex. Early last week, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Republic of Uzbekistan issued a request to have the convicted refugees and those suspected of organization of mass disturbances extradited. According to our information, currently the Uzbek refugee camp has 427 people who fled to Kyrgyzstan following the events of May 13, 2005 of whom 410 adults (33 men and 77 women) and 17 children. 29 refugees were placed in the Osh Investigation Detention Facility of whom 12 individuals are convicted fugitives and the other 17 are those suspected of organization of mass disturbance and religious extremism. Several international organizations voiced their concern that upon return these refugees will be tortured and mistreated and petitioned the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic not to extradite these people to Uzbek authorities.

The situation is being exacerbated by the fact that in addition to being a member of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment¹, Kyrgyzstan is also a member of Minsk Convention on Legal relations and Legal Assistance in Civil, Family, and Criminal Affairs of 1993 according to which it must extradite an individual held on its territory for criminal investigation, if the crime committed by such an individual is subject for punishment by laws of both countries and provides for imprisonment for a period of at least one year.

Another circumstance aggravating the situation around the refugee camp is the negative attitude of local residents toward the refugees from Andijan. Refugees are perceived as fugitive convicts and as disseminators of radical religious ideas. In addition, local residents are afraid that these refugees will stay in Kyrgyzstan and will forever contend for being issued a piece of land. Representatives of the public and local self-governance bodies of Suzak rayon after visiting the refugee camp demanded that the refugees return to their homeland threatening to forcibly deport them from the territory of Kyrgyzstan. According to unconfirmed information, on June 30, 2005 at 10:00 in the village of Changyr-Tash of Suzak rayon a peaceful rally was supposed to take place where protesters would demand to have the temporary refugee camp be relocated outside of the rayon territory. Human rights activists who chose to remain anonymous expressed their concern that Uzbek security services may be supporting such expressions of “people’s” grievances in order to put pressure of Kyrgyz authorities and resolve the issue of extradition of refugees to Uzbekistan.

Currently, Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with UN experts is interviewing 29 Uzbek refugees detained in the Osh Investigation Detention Facility and 427 refugees from the refugee camp in order to decide on the whether to grant them an official refugee status. To date, 130 individuals have been subjected to this screening and clearance procedure. The decision on extradition will be made once the experts issue an official statement.

The Government of Kyrgyz Republic is in a very difficult situation since Uzbek authorities refuse to wait for the decision of international experts. Kyrgyzstan is now facing a dilemma: to extradite some of the refugees to the Uzbek authorities and be condemned by the international community or to refuse extradition and seriously undermine the “close economic and political relations” with the closest strategic partner in the region. The real solution to the situation may be the one that provides for resettlement of the refugees in third countries which the Assistant UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Kamel Morjane, mentioned. However, Mr. Antynio Guterres, the High Commissioner, clarified that the possibility of resettling groups of the Uzbek refugees only pertains to those who are currently in the worst danger. According to him, such resettlement is possible only upon completion of the procedure of consideration of these people’s applications for refugee status. Today the situation is such that a lot will depend on the official statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan and the UN and on how quickly this statement will be made.

Practical recommendations

For civic society: hold a meeting sometime during next week with representatives of local self-governance bodies and public of Suzak rayon to convince them to wait for the interview results. It is necessary to explain to the local population that immediately upon announcement of the investigation results, the criminals and extremists identified will be either extradited to Uzbekistan or taken into custody in Osh.

For law enforcement agencies: strengthen oversight over the villages adjacent to the refugee camp and increase camp security.

For international organizations: formulate as soon as possible the joint petition to Tashkent to take some pressure off Kyrgyz Government.

2. In Jumgal rayon tension is still high around the Kara-Keche coal open-pit mine.

The tension in Kara Keche is still high. On June 6, local residents numbering as many as 300 people led by Nurlan Motuyev, leader of the Joomart Youth Political Movement, captured the largest coal mine of Kara-Keche and occupied the offices of Besh-Sary, Akjol and Shabdan companies. Their

actions also paralyzed the coal mining process and were about to cause a fuel crisis in the country by making the “black gold” prices triple (according to Vecherniy Bishkek Newspaper information).

The main demand of the Jumgal population and Nurlan Motuyev is to get the coal deposit nationalized. After a brief encounter between the captors and the people of Joldoshbayev negotiations were held. As a result of a meeting with the governor, N. Motuyev agreed to free all the Kara-Keche coal open-pit mines except for those belonging to Besh Sary Company.

Negotiation measures are being undertaken between the parties: a Government/Parliament commission headed by Dastan Sarygulov traveled to Kara-Keche. Jumgal residents believe that Joldoshbayev’s people are equipped with arms and ready to apply force.

Currently the open pits are freed and an inventory is being made. In addition, another commission was created to inspect the condition of each coalmine, the percentage of enterprises’ investment, cost of equipment, etc. This is being done because in the future a project of creating a state enterprise is planned that will combine all existing coal-mining companies with their appropriate shares in compliance with which they will be getting their profit with only one condition, that 51% of shares would belong to the state, and the other 49% to the private enterprises.

Additional measures are being attempted to mitigate the conflict: another meeting was held on June 27 with participation of J. Azylov, Naryn oblast Governor, N Motuyev and Daniyar Usenov, the 1st Vice Prime Minister. Very recently, the Commission suspended the license issued to Besh Sary for 3 months. Today the owner of this company can only generate revenue from leasing equipment to the temporary state enterprise “Komur”. Komur will commence development of the Besh Sary coal open-pit mine. The people have calmed down, Besh Sary employees will not lose their jobs and will be able to continue working in the mine. The situation around the other owners is still unclear.

Despite diligent work being performed by the commission and efforts of the local authorities aimed at restoration of stability in Jumgal rayon, the tension in the region is quite high. Many people are concerned not as much by the ownership of the mine, as by how well they will be prepared and provided with fuel for winter. To date, this situation is yet to be resolved.

Practical recommendations

For government and local self-governance bodies: maintain the compromise achieved and avoid conflict escalation; avoid Joldoshbayev personally meeting with population in absence of law enforcement agencies, develop a more meticulous mechanism of transfer of this coal open-pit mine to state ownership.

For civil society: be ready to get involved in negotiations between the conflicting parties.

5. Announcements

You can subscribe/unsubscribe from this mailing list.

Russian version:

Send a message containing text: <SUBSCRIBE “your e-mail address”> or <UNSUBSCRIBE “your e-mail address”> at ewlist_ru@osce-academy.net

English version:

Send a message containing text: <SUBSCRIBE "your e-mail address"> or <UNSUBSCRIBE "your e-mail address"> at ewlist_eng@osce-academy.net

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Prevention Database: The Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project appeals to organizations and individuals interested in organizing conflict mitigation activities to register in the Project database. The database will allow us to promptly engage you in the development and implementation of violence prevention measures.

Crisis Emergency Fund: The Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project is also announcing a small grant program intended for implementation conflict and violence prevention measures.

For more information about the Database and Emergency Fund please contact Violeta Yan at: 264/27 Manaschi Sagynbaya, phone: 996 (312) 64-43-60, 64-46-58, fax: 996 (312) 64-44-63, e-mail: fti@infotel.kg

About the Project:

The Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project was initiated by the Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) to prevent violence in political conflicts by creating a mechanism of forecasting/investigating conflicts and implementing appropriate preventive measures. The project is funded by OSCE and UNDP, and the Swiss and US governments.

In order to closely monitor the situation in the country, the Project created a national network of monitors selected among active members of the civic society and representatives of academic circles. Overall, 36 monitors observe the situation throughout the country and maintain a continuous communication with the Center for Early Warning (CEW).

CEW processes the information collected, prepares recommendations on interventions needed for violence prevention, and publishes a Weekly Newsletter.

The EWVP Early Intervention Component develops and implements action plans aimed at prevention of violence in close collaboration with governmental bodies, NGOs and international organizations. The Project also offers small grants for implementation of violence prevention measures.