

Weekly Bulletin

Issue 12, 21 September 2005, review of 13 – 20 September 2005

The Bulletin is published in the framework of the “Early Warning for Violence Prevention” Project

The information in this bulletin is intended for use by individuals and organizations willing to make a peaceful intervention in a particular conflict situation. The Early Warning Center strives to provide accurate information while disseminating information timely to make prevention and early intervention possible. A variety of sources are used, including eyewitnesses, mass media, civil society representatives, officials and other knowledgeable people.

In this issue:

1. “Alerts”
2. Weekly review
3. Trends and expectations
4. Recommendations
5. Announcements

1. Alerts

The dismissal of General public prosecutor Beknazarov A. on September 19 causes mixed reactions and puzzlement among population and political leaders.

2. Weekly review

- On September 14, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic forwarded a diplomatic note from the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Uzbekistan** to the governor of Batken oblast, Aijigitov S. The note contained **statements on illegal actions of Kyrgyz border guards** in the area near Andijan water reservoir (Uzbekistan). It describes how local government bodies and residents of Batken rayon (Burgondu village, Kyrgyzstan) have hindered construction work in connection to protection of the “Selketme” pump station in Rishtan rayon. This pump station supplies potable water to the residents of Rishtan city in Fergana oblast. According to the head of the Batken regional administration, Shadymanov A., the territory on which Fergana oblast administration plans to carry out construction for protection from mudslides, is currently under dispute. Therefore it is necessary to suspend construction until the process of delimitation and demarcation of borders is completed. At present, the state administration of Batken oblast is preparing a letter of response. It is possible that the obstructive actions regarding the mudslide protection were a response of Kyrgyzstan to the unilateral cancellation of the gas supply contract by Uzbekistan.
- On September 15, **36 hectares of land were occupied opposite the US Embassy** in Bishkek. This was organized mainly by representatives of public associations (kooms) “Asanbai,” “Altyn kazyk” and other land occupants. Representatives claimed that there were approximately 700 people, whereas according to information from the National Security Service there were about 200-300 people. Initiators of the action explained the occupation by the fact that within the past half year they have not received land, even though they have authorization to receive land plots.

Participants marked the land plots with shovels. The city mayor, representatives of the Office of Public Prosecutor, the architectural department, akims of all rayons and representatives of law enforcement bodies arrived at the place. Agreement was achieved when authorities agreed to make a decision on granting land plots before September 22. If this does not happen then land occupants threatened to arrange repeated occupancy of land in the area around the US Embassy (60 hectares of these lands are intended for a park zone), and that they would, without permission, begin construction on 36 hectares which do not belong to the park zone.

- On September 19, **Azimbek Beknazarov was dismissed** from the post of General public prosecutor by decree of President Kurmanbek Bakiev. The official reason for his dismissal, according to representatives of the state commission on investigation of the Karasuu events on September 5, was that Beknazarov A. committed violations by releasing two arrested persons Saparali Akanov and Aibek Chomoev. They were suspected of participation in the events at hotel “Alai” but were released by the State Office of the Public Prosecutor on a written statement not to leave the area.
- Next morning on September 20, in response to Beknazarov's dismissal, **a meeting took place in front of the President’s Administration consisting of a group of about 70 people**, who expressed dissatisfaction. According to the protesters “Akaev's people are involved in this resignation.” Moreover, they announced the establishment of a committee to protect the rights of Beknazarov. By the evening the committee membership totaled more than 100 people.
- On the afternoon of September 20, around the **market in the village Karajygach in Aksy rayon of Jalalabat oblast, more than 3000 persons came** to discuss the issue and local leaders made speeches. They furiously expressed their protest against the dismissal and demanded that Beknazarov be restored in his position. In the rayon center Kerben three buses with people came although no actions followed. According to Azattyk radio, protesters pose an ultimatum to the government: “Either Beknazarov is restored in his position or we march towards Bishkek”.

3. Trends and expectations

The week from September 14 to 20 passed calmly. The main event of this week is the dismissal of General public prosecutor Beknazarov A. and his statement that he will from now on stand in opposition to the current government.

The dismissal of General public prosecutor Beknazarov A. represents the first dismissal of one of the main personalities of the March events and brings a certain twist to the political area of Kyrgyzstan.

In briefly analyzing the motivations for his dismissal it is possible to list the following. The official reasons announced by the commission after investigation of Karasuu events are violations committed by Beknazarov A., namely: 1) the fact of releasing two suspects in the case of shootings near hotel “Alai”, Akanov S. and Chomoev A., on a written warning not to leave the area; 2) destabilization of situation in Karasuu city. The reason for resignation stipulated by the official version is that the government authorities listened to the protests of residents of Karasuu, who were not satisfied with the search for participants in the murder of Junusov A. and Abdiev S. (driver). At the same time, a role in Beknazarov's resignation was also played by the criminal structures through discrediting the bodies of the Office of Public Prosecutor. These criminal structures showed themselves on the political field for the first time during the September meetings in Karasuu as fighters against injustice and even stated that in case of necessity “we will conduct our own investigation of murders in Karasuu city” (See Weekly bulletin No. 10).

Regarding the informal reasons which are circulating in the environment of politicians there is the opinion that persons with connections to President Bakiev K., and with the former President Akaev

have allowed the latter to put demands to the President to replace ex-General public prosecutor Beknazarov A. by a more manageable figure. On September 20, the President refused an audience with Beknazarov A.

In the afternoon of the same day at a press conference in the office of NGO "Civil Society against Corruption", Sartbai Jaichybekov, Beknazarov's lawyer, stated that the decision on dismissal had no legal grounds for three reasons: first, the state commission on investigation of Karasuu events is illegitimate, because there was no notification about its purpose, its creation was not transparent, and the period of its work is unknown; secondly, the information on any dismissal from a post should be publicly announced within the period of a working day instead of after the end of the day as it was in this case; and, thirdly, the reason of dismissal of Beknazarov A. from the post announced by the commission does not have force as the link between the released two persons and their participation in the murder of director of the market in the Kara-Suu has not been brought to light.

The secretary of the Security Council, Miroslav Niyazov, in an interview with AKI-Press explained the situation regarding the resignation of General public prosecutor KR, Beknazarov A. as follows: "I think that the popularity of the person should not relieve him from responsibility. He should be accountable. From this point of view, certainly, I consider that Beknazarov's actions went beyond the scope of any framework. In our opinion, lately, the State Office of Public Prosecutor was used as a tribune. Actually, the person probably assumed an exaggerated notion of the role and position of bodies of the Office of Public Prosecutor. Therefore measures have been taken...".

Special attention deserves the fact that the following day Busurmankul Taabaldiev, a member of the commission which initiated the dismissal of Beknazarov, was appointed in the position of acting General public prosecutor.

Throughout Kyrgyzstan various reactions about the news are observed. In the village Karajygach in Aksy rayon, about 3000 people gathered to express dissatisfaction with the dismissal. Similar reactions to the unexpected news were observed in Naryn oblast. Representatives of NGOs and parties, and the wider public, regard the removal of Beknazarov from his position as a «low and pre-arranged step of the government against the non-corrupt official who was fighting against corruption, which was flourishing before and after March of this year». They view his dismissal as the beginning of organized «hunting» of former companions, who with their honesty bothered and did not suit the corrupt circles. They assume that Rosa Otunbaeva, the minister of Foreign Affairs, may be the next target of such removals. In general, the Naryn people consider the work of the state commission created by the government to investigate the Karasuu unrest incompetent and their explanations unsubstantiated.

A contrasting reaction can be observed in the city of Osh where opinions are divided into two. One part of the population perceives the dismissal of the General public prosecutor as a correct decision of President Bakiev, as they believe that Beknazarov was turning corrupt. As examples they mentioned not only the two released persons that were accused of participating in the "Alay" hotel events, but also the release of accused former prime minister Nikolay Tanaev, director of joint stock company "Renton group" Eduard Pak, and Jaisanbaev, head of company «Kyrgyzmunaizat». Another part of interviewed persons in Osh city see a political background in Bakiev's decision and they doubt there is a direct link between the officially stated reasons of dismissal and the real motivations behind it.

Beknazarov stated on the same day in a radio program that he does not have intentions to raise up people or to provoke disorder. Beknazarov A. has already stated at a press conference, moderated by Sadyrbaev D., that he would join the opposition groups together with Sadyrbaev D. and added that "Kulov F. will join us" (Akipress – 20/09/05). Confrontations between parliament members could possibly take place. While Sadyrbaev D. positions himself as oppositionist and supporter of Beknazarov A., parliamentarian Kongantiev K. "puts under doubt the rationality of the discussion about the dismissal of the General public prosecutor". (Akipress – 20/09/05).

At present, and connected with the recent dismissal of a number of officers, there is a circle of potential candidates for the role of the opposition, who have authority and are able to get solid support in military and political circles not only in Kyrgyzstan, but also Russia. These are the resignations of

the vice-commander of the Border Control Forces of the National Security Service, Kaiypov A., first vice-president of National Security Service, Mamytov T., and also Chotbaev A., commander of the National Guard.

The trend of using active methods of putting pressure upon the state bodies by land claimants continues. One example of such methods is the seizure of lands opposite the US embassy building on August 30 and September 15. In both cases the intention was to compel government bodies to: 1) enter into dialogue with land occupants; 2) to choose either of the following ways of solving the problem, either distribute land within the scope of the specified land plots or accept the occupancy and distribution of lands at the discretion of land occupants themselves. According to Ryskulbekov O., one of the leaders of Public Association “Altyn Kazyk”, because their demands have been ignored by authorities, they are forced to undertake such actions (up to potentially using physical resistance) so that government bodies would solve the problem. At the same time land claimants have shown readiness for compromise. One of the variants proposed by Public Association “Altyn Kazyk” stipulates saving of city lands by allocation of a land plot for construction of multi-storied condominium. Generally, the situation is escalating and attempts to resolve the conflict through use of force is not excluded (all actions are accompanied by presence of one or two buses with policemen). In the case of occupancy of state assets (for example, blocking the governmental highway or approach of land occupants towards the state residence “Ala-Archa”) it is possible that law enforcement bodies will use force.

Information updates:

- Collection of signatures for dissolution of the parliament. There is a trend of intensification of confrontations between opponents of the dissolution of parliament and “Erkindik” party, which at the present moment has collected about two hundred thousand signatures calling for a referendum (www.pr.kg – 16/09/05). Mild criticism is expressed in the mass media by representatives of government bodies and management, members of parliament such as Baibolov K., Sarpashev T., Sabirov A., Sherniyazov B. and others, and also General public prosecutor Beknazarov A. (www.pr.kg – 16/09/05). Parliament member Sarpashev T. stated on radio “Azattyk” on September 16 that “we will work against this idea and conduct explanatory work among voters about the groundless dissolution of Jogorku Kenesh. It is a political struggle; therefore we are ready to take decisive actions”. Another parliament member, Baibolov K, said that dissolution of parliament will provoke a political crisis in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, according to the executive secretary at the headquarters of “Erkindik” in Jalalabad oblast, Kylychbek Mamatayev, the party faces tough confrontations in the form of phone calls and threats from unknown persons with the demand to stop gathering signatures.

4. Recommendations

Recommendations for resolution of problem regarding land claimants

- *The Government* – the recommendations provided in Bulletin No. 10 remain valid;
- *The NGOs* – **a)** The recommendations provided in Bulletin No. 10 remain valid; **b)** To conduct consultations with all groups of land occupants in order to identify those who are ready to invest their own money in construction of multi-storied condominiums; **c)** To engage experts (economists, accountants, lawyers, engineers, architects) for rendering step-by-step consultations on lawful construction of private condominiums – on the selection and legal purchase of land plots, composing project and budget documentation, coordination with oversight bodies, and registration of real estate property right. The group of land claimants (Public Association “Altyn Kazyk” and “Asanbai”) is inclined to reach a compromise solution to the housing and land issue and is ready to invest resources in construction of private multi-storied condominiums in the event that their requirements on the allocation of land plots are accepted by the authorities. The main members of

these public associations are people of middle age, many of whom did not earn enough to purchase an apartment, but are able to invest in construction of jointly-owned condominiums.

5. Announcements

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

English version:

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The previously issued weekly bulletins are available on the website www.fti.org.kg .

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Intervention 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.

Rapid Reaction Emergency Fund: The Early Warning for Violence Prevention Project is also announcing a small grant program intended for implementation conflict and violence prevention measures. More information can be found on the website www.fti.org.kg.

For more information about the Database and Emergency Fund please contact Violetta 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 to prevent violence related to political conflicts by creating a mechanism of forecasting/investigating conflicts and implementing appropriate preventive measures. The project is initiated by the Foundation for Tolerance International and the International Foundation IFES and supported by OSCE, UNDP, and the Swiss and US governments. The project started in June 2005.

In order to closely monitor the situation in the country, the Project created a national network of monitors selected among active members of the civil society and representatives of academic circles, media and law enforcement agencies. Overall, 36 monitors observe the situation throughout the country and maintain permanent communication with the Center for Early Warning.

The Center for Early Warning processes the information collected, prepares recommendations on interventions needed for violence prevention, and publishes a Weekly Bulletin.

The 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.