

Weekly Bulletin

Issue 5, 3 August 2005, review of 26 July – 1 August 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.

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1. Alerts

This week there are no new alerts.

2. Weekly review

- On July 25, Kyrgyz Info news agency reported that three residents of Osh oblast were accused of participation in the events that took place in Andijan on May 13. The Office of the Public Prosecutor of Osh oblast informed that this was based on criminal cases submitted by the Uzbek authorities. One of the accused was taken into custody and the others were released after providing a written statement not to leave Osh city. The Uzbek authorities accused citizens of Kyrgyzstan of attempting to organize an armed coup to overthrow the existing Uzbek regime as well as of terrorism and murder. Investigation has begun and the fate of the suspects will depend on its results.
- On July 27, about 300 residents of Jeti-Oguz rayon blocked the road leading to Kumtor goldmine. Previously, on July 18, residents of five villages of this rayon held a meeting demanding compensation from Kumtor Operating Company for the damage that resulted from a spillage of potassium cyanide into Barskoon river seven years ago. At this meeting the villagers had appealed to the Kyrgyz government for assistance, and threatened to block the road. In the event that the government and the company will not meet their demands, protesters further plan to march to the Kumtor mine. According to information on www.pr.kg of 01.07.2005, acting first vice prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, Felix Kulov, has already signed a decree on the creation of a state commission to investigate the issue and to stabilize the situation in the rayon.
- On July 27 and 28, with the assistance of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the migration service department of the Kyrgyz Republic, 439 refugees from the Republic of Uzbekistan that were located at the temporary camp in Sasykbulak of Suzak rayon were taken to other third side countries on seven planes from the airport of Jalalabad. At the moment refugees are in Romania and will be sent to the final point of destination after completion of all appropriate

procedures. Among possible destination countries are Canada and Australia. According to the deputy Public Prosecutor of KR, Dzheenalieva N., "UNHCR refused to give refugee status to three persons; four refugees who left the country remain in question, because they have been given refugee status even though their cases were not investigated completely. The fact that these persons committed serious crimes of a nonpolitical nature was not taken into account prior to granting them refugee status." (www.pr.kg 01.08.2005). A representative of UNHCR in Bishkek stated that in his opinion the Office of the Public Prosecutor did not receive sufficient proof of guilt of these four Uzbek citizens.

- Between July 26 and 29, several clashes occurred between two groups of land occupants and residents of Lebedinovka village, near micro-district "Tunguch". The conflict started when authorities promised to allocate to the Coordination council of land occupants 50 hectares of arable lands for individual construction in micro-district "Tunguch", on the basis of six hundred square meters per claimant. However, because of land shortage the land occupants attempted to take an additional 29 hectares, which was occupied about 2 years ago by a group of self-builders. The residents of Lebedinovka village thereupon protested against the allocation of arable lands for individual construction. In their opinion, this land belongs to Lebedinovka village council. After three confrontations, mostly between women, the conflicting parties took a wait-and-see attitude pending the decision of authorities. Late on July 27 there was a rumor that a decision was taken to the benefit of the Coordination council. However, no written confirmation has been submitted to date. All parties plan to remain on the seized land until the official decision of the authorities is announced.
- On July 29 at midnight, according to the authorized representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in southern Kyrgyzstan, Bektura Adanova, the Kyrgyz journalist Erkin Jakubzhanov was released. He was detained on July 16, 2005 by the Uzbek border guards at the customs post "Dustlik" while attempting to obtain an interview with them (www.pr.kg 30.07.2005).

3. Trends and expectations

During the week from July 25 till July 31, the country as a whole appeared to be calm. Re-elections in two constituencies took place in a quiet atmosphere. The situation with refugees from Uzbekistan is close to being resolved. Two events raised attention – land seizure in microdistrict Tunguch in Bishkek and the blocking of a road between Barskoon and Kumtor gold mine in Issyk-kul oblast.

On July 31, **re-elections** for Jogorku Kenesh took place in two constituencies, namely Kurshab (Osh oblast) and Kurulush (Bishkek). In Kurshab constituency the voter turnout was low, a little over 20 percent. Preliminary results show that 1953 people voted for candidate Orozbaeva M. and 342 voted for Madumarov A. Based on information from radio "Azattyk," the chairman of Kurshab district election commission Marapat Arynaliyeva said that many complaints were submitted to the district election commission by observers and supporters of Orozbaeva M. (newspaper Obshestvenniy Reiting). The Central Election Commission will make a final decision. In Kurulush constituency the winner was Kabai Karabekov. On September 18 re-elections will take place in Universitetskiy district of Bishkek.

Border tensions. Residents of the border areas in at least three oblasts continue to express dissatisfaction with complications related to crossing the borders of neighboring countries. For example, in Jalalabad oblast the residents of Shamaldy-Sai village complain about extortion and confiscations by the border guards of Uzbekistan. On the Kazakh border, residents of Manas rayon of Talas oblast, complain that they are exposed to rough treatment and extortion from the Kazakhstan border guards and customs officers. On the Tajik border in Batken rayon the situation can become more intense because of the interethnic character of the residents living near the border. On July 26, there was an incident that resulted in a fight during which three residents of Kalach village of Tajikistan and two residents of Maksat village of Kyrgyzstan were beaten. According to residents of Maksat village, they constantly live in fear for their safety and the safety of their families. Residents say that it

does not promote the development of good relations between neighbors. Growing poverty and unemployment aggravates the problem.

Expectations:

There is a possibility that protesting residents of five villages of Dzhety-Oguz rayon will undertake a march on the Kumtor mine.

Further conflicts may occur in Osh and Bishkek should the current problems about land allocation for individual construction not be resolved.

4. Brief summary of events in July 2005

The month July passed relatively calm, including election day. Twenty-two events related to the political situation were reported in the weekly bulletins. The highest number of events took place in Osh and Jalalabat oblast, followed by Bishkek and Naryn oblast. The highest levels of tension were noted in relation to the refugee camp in Suzak and land seizures in Bishkek and Osh. Furthermore six border conflicts, five property distribution conflicts, two election conflicts, two trade conflicts (involving Chinese traders) and three cases of religio-political activism were reported. Several beatings and one incident involving weapons (grenades) took place. Groups have expressed discontent among others by demonstrations (six), road blockage (two), disseminating leaflets (two) and by attempting to seize a public building (one).

5. Announcements

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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.

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 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.

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.