

# CENTRAL ASIA OBSERVATORY

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KYRGYZSTAN

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## Highlights

May and June of 2010 became tragic months for citizens of Kyrgyzstan, especially residents of its southern provinces who were drawn into permanent bloody conflicts with a number of dead and wounded among civilians.

Despite the severity of losses, on 27 June citizens showed up at polling stations to vote for the nation's new Constitution that established a parliamentary political system in Kyrgyzstan.

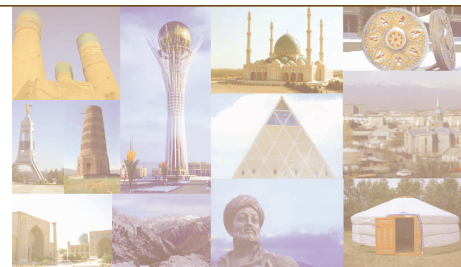
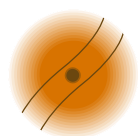
## Internal affairs

On 12 May, a mourning ceremony dedicated to the memory of those who perished during the April events took place on the outskirts of the nation's capital and was attended by members of the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. On the same day, rallies were staged in central Bishkek with various political forces voicing diverse socioeconomic and political demands. Tension in the capital had been fuelled by numerous rumours concerning upcoming provocative acts on the part of opponents of the Provisional Government. Residents of the capital had been uniting into popular vigilante teams ever since the April events spilled out onto the streets, patrolling them and assisting law enforcement bodies in preventing crime. However, on the following day, administrative buildings were captured in the three southern provinces of Kyrgyzstan and rallies staged by supporters of the ousted President Bakiyev. In the morning, the building housing the state provincial administration was captured in Osh, the largest city in south Kyrgyzstan, with clashes taking place between opponents and supporters of the Provisional Government. By the evening protesters had captured

Osh city airport. In Jalal-Abad, the second-largest city in south Kyrgyzstan, supporters of the former president also captured the building of the Jalal-Abad state provincial administration and initiated an indefinite rally demanding the return of the ousted president. Houses of the former president's closest relatives were burned down in his home village in the suburbs of Jalal-Abad. In Batken, about 50 people led by the former akim (governor) and members of the Ak-Jol and Jany Kyrgyzstan political parties penetrated the building of the state provincial administration and demanded that their minion be appointed to the governor's office.

On 14 May, information sites published intercepted telephone conversations of the organizer of disturbances in Kyrgyzstan, the former head of the Bakiyev administration and head of Jany Kyrgyzstan (New Kyrgyzstan) political party, Usen Sydykov. Among those who negotiated with Sydykov was the leader of the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, a multiple-term member of Parliament, Iskhak Masaliyev. The conspirators' plan provided for the simultaneous capture of power in Bishkek and the three southern provinces after which Communist leader Masaliyev was to gather members of the Parliament dissolved in April to elect a new head of the state. The Provisional Government believes that revenge seekers were preparing the return to power of the former president Bakiyev, with the very act funded by his elder son Marat, who was in Kazakhstan and had issued \$1 million to arrange and implement the capture of buildings, the participation of civil disturbance participants, purchase of weapons, etc. On the same day, Usen Sydykov was captured in one of the districts of the Osh province and was charged with crimes provided for in Article 233 - "Mass Disturbance" - of the country's criminal code. Communist leader Masaliyev was arrested and taken

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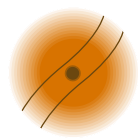
to the detention facility of the State National Security Service of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Despite the fact that on 14 May the Provisional Government regained control over the nation's southern provinces, on 19 May, Jalal-Abad yet again saw disturbances that led to casualties and fatalities. Pretexts for the disturbances included careless statements by the leader of the Jalal-Abad Uzbek minority community Kadyrjan Batyrov for which he later apologized. Unfortunately however, the pendulum of mutual grievances and accusations between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities was aptly taken advantage of by revenge seekers who again captured the building of the provincial state administration and opened fire on the supporters of the Provisional Government. During the chaos in Jalal-Abad and its outskirts, tens of citizens were wounded and maimed, two people died and the building of the University of People's Friendship was burned down. For the sake of citizens' safety, on 19 May the Provisional Government called a state of emergency in the city of Jalal-Abad and the Suzak district of the Jalal-Abad province, installed a curfew effective from 8 pm to 6 am, and sent additional law enforcement and military units to Jalal-Abad. Criminal cases were initiated against brothers of the former president and his supporters based on crimes provided for in several articles of the criminal Code. On 19 May, the Provisional Government passed a Decree "On President of the Transition Period" that bestowed powers of President of the Kyrgyz Republic upon Roza Otunbayeva with the powers expiring on 31 December 2011 and prohibiting her from participating in the presidential elections in 2011. The Decree was to be approved at the popular referendum scheduled to take place on 27 June this year.

On 20 May, somebody posted on the popular YouTube website intercepted telephone conversations of individuals whose voices were identified as those of the brother and son of the

ousted president Bakiyev. During the conversation, Maksim and Janysh Bakiyev discussed a plan to recapture power in the country with the assistance of mercenaries and close associates of the former president who were still in Kyrgyzstan. According to the conspirators, by capturing major administrative buildings in the capital such as those housing Parliament and the government, as well as central TV channels, and by disavowing members of the Provisional Government, they would have created an opportunity for themselves to appoint their protégés and minions to the offices of President, Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament. The cynicism with which these individuals discussed a prospective overthrow and deaths of the Kyrgyz citizens shook the country. Unfortunately, however, the new authorities failed to mobilize law enforcement and paramilitary forces to arrange preventive measures. Only three weeks later, Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces fell prey to the bloodiest interethnic clashes that Kyrgyzstan has witnessed in its modern history.

During the night of 10-11 June, the city of Osh saw the start of provoked disturbances in which the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities of the city became involved. Stores, cafes and offices were set on fire; peaceful citizens were shot, disinformation was disseminated, starting with rumours of atrocities committed by the Kyrgyz and Uzbek sides. These disturbances quickly spread to rural areas of the Osh province where hundreds of young and middle-aged men started arriving to protect their compatriots. The conflict threatened to spill over to other regions of Kyrgyzstan and acquire an international dimension by sucking Uzbek citizens into the whirlpool of violence. Aware of the danger of this violence spreading, the Provisional Government declared a state of emergency and a curfew in Uzgen, Osh and the adjacent districts on 11 June. However, by the evening of 12 June, shooting started in Jalal-Abad and the outskirts of this provincial centre. Several mercenary teams set fire to the buildings of the provincial

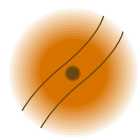


television, university, customs, houses of local residents, and shot both Uzbek and Kyrgyz people, provoking interethnic clashes. The city was left without electricity and gas. On 12 June, the Provisional Government declared a partial mobilization of the populace and called up retired law enforcement officers. With armed clashes continuing in the south, on the same day the government permitted its forces to shoot to kill after the pertinent decree had been signed by Roza Otunbayeva. In Jalal-Abad and Jalal-Abad province, a state of emergency and curfew were declared. The Uzbek population of Kyrgyzstan began to stage massive departures from the country, seeking refuge in neighbouring Uzbekistan. Several cross-border districts of Uzbekistan set up camps for the refugees from Kyrgyzstan, mostly women and children. It is still difficult to establish the exact figure of Kyrgyzstani refugees of Uzbek ethnicity who fled from the bloody clashes since official figures and information provided by international and public organizations differ greatly. But refugee numbers clearly run into hundreds of thousands, not to mention the vast number of internally displaced people since ethnic Kyrgyz people started moving to more peaceful northern regions of the country. Citizens of Kyrgyzstan who lived in provinces that were not affected by the conflict started arranging the collection and shipment of humanitarian aid right from the start of the conflict. International and local humanitarian organizations sent their aid missions to Osh and Jalal-Abad. Experienced state commanders and managers sent to the conflict area by the Provisional Government started taking measures to curb disturbances, restore vital infrastructure of the city and villages, deliver food and medicine, and other vital items to local residents.

However, the scale of destruction and human losses sustained over a mere few days of June turned out to be unprecedented. In Jalal-Abad, about a hundred residential houses and more than 30 administrative and commercial facilities were burned down, with

many buildings subject to looting and trashing. Even bigger losses were sustained by residents of the Osh city where, according to various sources, 1,000 to 2,000 people perished. Entire neighbourhoods of single-storey houses mostly populated by ethnic Uzbeks (makhallas) were burned down. Multi-storey buildings where Kyrgyz and Uzbek people lived together suffered to a lesser degree. There were many instances of Kyrgyz citizens risking their lives to hide and save their Uzbek neighbours from the raging crowds. The streets of Osh were barricaded as residents attempted to prevent armed cutthroats from entering their quarters and neighbourhoods. By 15 June, the situation in the conflict area started stabilizing and the first refugees started trickling back from Uzbekistan to their homes; on 20 June the media reported the massive return of the Kyrgyzstani Uzbeks. The government of the Kyrgyz Republic promised to assist the victims in reconstructing their homes and restoring their businesses and to investigate the causes of the June events that led to numerous victims. A special state commission to investigate the June events in two southern provinces of Kyrgyzstan has already started working; an international investigative commission has arrived and is expected to produce an independent report on the causes of the Osh and Jalal-Abad tragedies. Rather than waiting for the Commission to announce its findings, members of the Provisional Government have formed their own opinions and characterized the events in the south as terrorism and accused supporters of the former president -particularly his brothers and nephews- of complicity in organizing the disturbances. The State National Security Service (SNSS) detained 20 snipers in south Kyrgyzstan, 7 of whom turned out to be foreign citizens.

In the midst of this tense and complex situation, on 27 June the country held a referendum on the adoption of a new constitution and the swearing in of Roza Otunbayeva as Transition President. On 2 July the Central Electoral Commission announced



the official results of the referendum according to which 90.55% of voters said “yes” to a parliamentary political system in Kyrgyzstan and entrusted the President’s mandate to Roza Otunbayeva, whose modest inauguration was held in Bishkek on 3 July.

### **Foreign and international policy**

Great assistance in localizing the June bloodshed in South Kyrgyzstan was provided by the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov. His assessment of the events in Kyrgyzstan as a provocative act on part of destructive forces that had nothing to do with the Kyrgyz or Uzbek population of Kyrgyzstan prevented the conflict from spilling over into the international arena. Firm assurances from Islam Karimov that not a single Uzbek soldier would set foot on Kyrgyz soil and that ethnic Uzbek and Kyrgyz citizens of Kyrgyzstan would themselves restore peace and order stripped the disturbance organizers of the opportunity to involve neighbouring states in an inter-state conflict.

Far less interest in assisting Kyrgyzstan was expressed by countries of the Collective Security Agreement Organization (CSAO). Russia’s president was addressed by the Kyrgyz Government on the second day of the clashes with a request for peacekeeping forces to be sent to the zone of conflict. The Russian Federation limited its involvement to consultations with its CSAO partners and promises of humanitarian aid, which triggered discussions among the opponents of the current regime in Russia itself. The collective Security Agreement Organization contending for the image of post-Soviet anti-NATO offered logistical assistance and cooperation in identifying the organizers of disturbances in Kyrgyzstan.

It should be noted that on 13 May Vladimir Rushailo, a former minister of internal affairs and secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation was appointed as the Russian president’s special

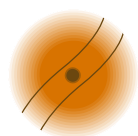
representative for developing relations with Kyrgyzstan. A Kazakh diplomat was later sent to Kyrgyzstan with the same mandate. Simultaneously, Belarus diplomats urgently left Bishkek fearing the wrath of the Kyrgyz citizens who demanded the extradition of former president Bakiyev, currently at large and residing in Minsk.

Another member of the Bakiyev family, his son Maksim, sought political asylum in the United Kingdom with which Kyrgyzstan does not have an extradition treaty on individuals declared wanted. It should also be noted that the “inspirer” of the disturbances made it to Great Britain despite an Interpol search and the efforts of the Latvian law enforcement agencies that Kyrgyzstan contacted requesting that the son of the former president be arrested.

### **Economy and business enterprise**

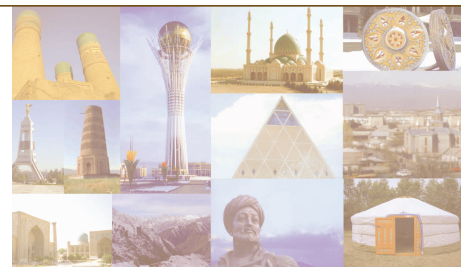
In May, the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Kyrgyz Republic found in commercial banks and returned to the state treasury about \$257.5 million of the \$300 million of the Russian loan received and embezzled by close associates of former president Bakiyev. The nationalization process initiated immediately after the April events continued in May and June when the new authorities nationalized the largest TV channels formerly owned by the former president’s son, “Pyatyi Kanal” (Channel 5) and “Piramida” (Pyramid). The nationalization also affected the largest commercial bank of the nation, “AsiaUniversalBank,” formerly owned by president Bakiyev’s son Maksim and his business partners. The nation’s banking system is still afflicted by various problems in terms of loan volumes and attracting deposits.

The full blockade of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border that lasted until 20 May and the subsequent blockade of Kyrgyz exports caused Kyrgyz businesses to sustain major losses as well as affecting the nation’s economic



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indicators. The Kyrgyz business community seriously suggested that the Kyrgyz authorities apply pressure at the highest levels -including Kyrgyzstan's WTO membership- to resolve the problem of goods turnover between the two nations. Calls for the opening of the state border were supported by the Kazakh youth movement "Abyroi" which was concerned about the price hikes on the Kazakh market.

Meanwhile, the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic passed a decree on fiscal preferences, privileges and delays for individuals and legal entities that had suffered from disturbances in South Kyrgyzstan. Measures to support enterprises that had suffered from the April events in the capital of Bishkek were also prepared. In the light of the ever-declining economic activity in almost all industries, these measures obviously affected the status of the government's budget, which showed a deficit of 13.5 billion Kyrgyz soms by June 2010.

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