THE POGROMS IN KYRGYZSTAN

Asia Report N°193 – 23 August 2010

International Crisis Group
WORKING TO PREVENT CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An explosion of violence, destruction and looting in southern Kyrgyzstan on 11-14 June 2010 killed many hundreds of people, mostly Uzbeks, destroyed over 2000 buildings, mostly homes, and deepened the gulf between the country's ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. It was further proof of the near total ineffectiveness of the provisional government that overthrew President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April 2010, and is now trying to guide the country to general elections in October. Given the government's slowness to address the causes and consequences of the violence, the danger of another explosion is high. Even without one, the aftershocks of the looting, murder and arson could seriously damage Kyrgyzstan's ailing economy, cause a significant outflow of ethnic Uzbeks and other minorities, and further destabilise the already fragile situation in Central Asia in general. The route back to stability will be long and difficult, not least because no reliable security or even monitoring force has been deployed in the affected area. It should start with an internationally supported investigation into the pogroms, as visible an international police and diplomatic presence as possible to discourage their recurrence, and close coordination on effective rebuilding of towns and communities.

The most disturbing and dangerous consequence of the violence is that the central government has now lost de facto control of the south. Melis Myrzakmatov, the mayor of Osh, a ruthless and resolute young nationalist leader, has emerged from the bloodshed with his political strength, and his extremist credentials, stronger than ever, and is now the south's pivotal political figure. Given this, there is a strong risk that any attempt at investigation or even reconciliation will be subordinated to many politicians' desire to enlist his support for the October elections. The government seems reluctant to challenge this nationalist mood, which it clearly feels is popular within the majority Kyrgyz community. If the south remains outside of central control, there is a strong risk that the narcotics trade, already an important factor, could extend its power still further, and that the region could quickly become a welcoming environment for Islamist guerrillas.

Though the government blames external elements, including Islamic militants, the pogroms in fact involved many forces, from the remnants of the Bakiyev political machine to prominent mainstream politicians and organised crime, especially the narcotics trade.

Most of the violence took place in Osh, Kyrgyzstan's southern capital, with a less bloody outburst in and around the region's other main city, Jalalabad. The forces that stand behind the violence have not yet been fully identified. This is unlikely to happen without an exhaustive and professional international investigation. Certain things are, however, clear. Although the profound belief in the Uzbek community that the pogroms were a state-planned attack on them is not borne out by the facts, there are strong indications that prominent political figures, particularly in Osh city, were actively, perhaps decisively, involved. Most security forces in the region, who in Osh currently answer to local leaders rather than the capital, were slow to act or complicit in the violence. The pattern of violence in Osh moreover suggests a coordinated strategy; it is unlikely the marauders were spontaneously responding to events. The criterion that guided looters in all the districts attacked was ethnic, not economic. June's violence had been prefigured by serious ethnic and political tension in Jalalabad in May. At the time, however, this was largely ignored by the central government and the international community.

Successive governments have failed to address ethnic tensions in the south, or even admit their existence. Many features of the 2010 violence strongly resemble the last round of bloody ethnic clashes, in 1990. At that time there was no attempt to address the root causes of the problem, and the same phenomena burst to the surface in an even more virulent form twenty years on. During the intervening two decades, state neglect and economic decline have deepened social deprivation, increasing the pool of poorly educated and mostly unemployed young men who, in 2010 as in 1990, proved particularly susceptible to destructive rhetoric.

One of the most striking differences between 1990 and 2010 was that twenty years ago a large number of elite Soviet troops were deployed in the region for six months to normalise the situation. This time, a weaker government facing a greater challenge has refused any external help, arguing that it can handle the situation itself. Even the token and already delayed deployment of 52 police advisers by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been the target of repeated protests by nationalist demonstrators who seek to weaken the central government. Few international observers or foreign governments believe that the government is capable of assuring the bare minimum of governance in coming months; an embarrassingly unsuccessful attempt to remove Myrzakmatov has weakened the government, and the president, even further. It has also reinforced Myrzakmatov's hold on the south.

The international community's response to the crisis was inglorious. Most countries deferred to Russia, which declined to send peacekeepers and has since predicted the country's disintegration. The UN Security Council did nothing. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) deployed with laudable speed, while key UN agencies were initially frustrated by internal security rules that even some senior UN officials felt were excessively constricting – and which played into the hands of local officials in Osh who appeared keen to limit the number of outsiders in the area. Looting of aid convoys was a serious problem for some time after the Osh authorities announced that order had been restored.

The situation throughout the country remains tense. In the south, however, it is explosive. The government tries to maintain a facade that the situation is returning to normal. In fact the Osh authorities are pursuing a punitive anti-Uzbek policy that could well trigger more violence – and in the view of many observers, Kyrgyz and international, may be intended to do just that. Moderate ethnic Kyrgyz are aggrieved at sweeping foreign allegations that have made them the villains of the crisis. Meanwhile, there is already talk within the Uzbek areas of Osh – largely secular and middle class, a long way from the Islamists' core constituency in the south – of the welcome that the jihadi guerrillas would receive if they stepped up their activities in the south. The conversations are so far restricted to a tiny segment of the Uzbek community. Without prompt, genuine and exhaustive measures to address the damage done by the pogroms, however, the country risks, sooner or later, another round of terrible violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Kyrgyzstan:

1. Support a full, open and internationally backed enquiry into the events in May 2010 in Jalalabad, and June in Osh and Jalalabad.
2. Take a strong public stand against positions of extreme nationalism and ethnic exclusivity put forward by prominent national and regional politicians.
3. Cooperate with and support immediate deployment of OSCE police mission to Osh, international humanitarian organisations and diplomatic presence to reduce the likelihood of new violence.

To the International Community:

4. Call for and support a thorough enquiry into the events of May-June 2010, with central roles assigned to international organisations with expertise in this field such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Make it clear that further aid to the Kyrgyz government will be conditional upon such an investigation.
5. Elaborate a unified strategy for the reconstruction of the south, involving extensive on-ground monitoring – including the early deployment to Osh of the OSCE police mission and other international humanitarian and diplomatic observers – the recognition of cultural sensitivities and the need to avoid worsening conflict risks.
6. Ensure that no international aid funds go to the Osh government as long as it advocates an exclusionary ethnic policy and refuses to submit to the authority of the central government.
7. Engage in a long-term program of police reform and training, sweeping reforms of the judiciary and legal system.
8. Start the process of seeking a framework for the equitable coexistence of all ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan.

To the Members of the UN Security Council, in particular the U.S. and Russia:

9. Undertake active contingency planning on a priority basis, jointly and severally as appropriate, so that in the event of another explosion in the south threatening lives and the stability of Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asia region, the international community or key members and institutions will be in a position to respond in a timely and effective manner.

Bishkek/Brussels, 23 August 2010

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THE POGROMS IN KYRGYZSTAN

I. INTRODUCTION

It is little coincidence that the latest outburst of inter-communal violence took place at a time when Kyrgyzstan's central government was seriously weakened. History was in fact repeating itself.[1] In 1990, when at least 600 died in ethnic violence according to official estimates, the Soviet Union was moving rapidly towards disintegration, and local political forces were manoeuvring to fill the power vacuum. Twenty years on, a weak and tentative provisional government was struggling to present a semblance of leadership and steer the country through to elections in October.

By 2010 Uzbeks had replaced Russians as the second largest ethnic group in Kyrgyzstan. According to the 2009 census, there were 768,000 Uzbeks, many employed in agriculture and commerce, and 419,000 Russians.[2] Inspired by the democratic claims of the regime that overthrew Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April 2010, and by the fact that many provisional government leaders were from the north and thus traditionally more sympathetic to the Uzbek minority, Uzbeks once again were tempted to propose greater linguistic and political representation. They underestimated a strong feeling within Kyrgyz society that any concessions on linguistic and cultural grounds to the Uzbeks threaten Kyrgyzstan's own cultural survival. They also underestimated the readiness of many Kyrgyz politicians to make an anti-Uzbek position part of their political platform.

At 27.8 million, the population of Uzbekistan dwarfs Kyrgyzstan's 5.3 million inhabitants. Even moderate Kyrgyz note with dismay that Russian is more widely heard in Bishkek, and Uzbek in Osh, than their own language. As of July 2010, all except some 30,000 of Kyrgyzstan's Uzbeks live in the southern part of the country. They constitute the majority in a number of major districts, including Karasuu and Uzgen, just outside Osh city, and make up over 40 per cent of that city's population.[3]

Osh and Jalalabad oblasts (regions) account for 44 per cent of Kyrgyzstan's population, some 2.1 million people.[4] Their history since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been one of diminishing options in education, health and employment. With the disappearance of major Soviet industrial and agricultural enterprises that had provided tens of thousands of jobs, the region slipped into an increasing reliance on subsistence farming and labour migration, cross-border trade and narcotics smuggling. If Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in Asia, Osh and Jalalabad are at the bottom of most national economic, social or demographic indicators.

Half the population of Osh region and 40 per cent of Jalalabad region is classified by the government as poor, that is, earning less than $38 a month.[5] While ethnic Kyrgyz view the Uzbeks as perceptibly wealthier, slightly more Uzbeks are in fact classified as poor. Just under 47 per cent of the Kyrgyz household heads were so described in

[1] For further reading see Asia Briefing N°102, *Kyrgyzstan: A Hollow Regime Collapses*, 27 April 2010; Asia Briefing N°97, *Central Asia: Islamists in Prison*, 15 December 2009; Asia Report N°150, *Kyrgyzstan: The Challenge of Judicial Reform,* 10 April 2008; Asia Briefing N°79, *Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm*, 14 August 2008; Asia Report N°118, *Kyrgyzstan's Prison System Nightmare*, 16 August 2006; Asia Report N°109, *Kyrgyzstan: A Faltering State*, 16 December 2005; Asia Report N°97, *Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution*, 4 May 2005; and Asia Report N°42, *Central Asia: The Politics of Police Reform*, 10 December 2002.

[2] In 1990 Uzbeks numbered 550,096, Russians 916,558.

[3] Crisis Group communication, National Statistical Committee, July 2010; "Kyrgyzstan: Delicate Ethnic Balance", IRIN, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 15 August 2010, www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89526.

[4] "Перепись населения и жилищного фонда Кыргызской Республики 2009 года" ["The Census of the Population and Housing of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2009"], National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, vol. 1; "Основные социально-демографические характеристики населения и количество жилищных единиц" ["Major Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Population and Housing Units"], 2009, pp. 63-64.

[5] Poverty data provided to Crisis Group by the National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic on 8 July 2010.

a 2007 study, as opposed to 55.5 per cent of Uzbeks.[6] The two regions have the highest population growth rates, the lowest rates of contraception use, and, other than the capital, Bishkek, the greatest population density.[7] School drop-out rates are the country's highest, class sizes are among the largest, nationwide scores in basic mathematics, science and reading skills are the lowest.[8] Osh region has the lowest average salary – half the national monthly average of $141 (6,049 som) – and the highest official unemployment rate.[9] While official figures are massively underestimated, a former governor of Osh estimates that the real rate is over 20 per cent. Health care delivery is among the country's worst. The area is almost completely ignored by foreign investors. Osh region had the lowest amount ($700,000) in foreign direct investment nationwide in 2008, the last year for which such data are available.[10]

Approximately 30 per cent of the population are young people between fifteen and 25, usually unemployed and given the minimal level of education of many, barely employable.[11] Young people, both urban and rural, formed the bulk of the marauders on the streets in June.

Research for this report was carried out in Osh and Jalalabad between 29 June and 13 July 2010. As is often the case after episodes of extreme violence, many witnesses were still in shock, confused or unsure about dates and details. With this in mind, key interviews were where possible carried out twice. Although many videos of the events are available, few are of much use. Most are circulating anonymously, without dates or times for the images. Some are edited in such a way as to compromise the narrative; others, especially the so-called confessions of "mercenaries", usually scared young looters, were obviously made under conditions in which the subjects feared for their lives. Many videos of atrocities are being distributed by mobile phone, perpetuating fear and anger rather than shedding light on events.

All official studies of the 1990 ethnic violence were classified, and no attempt was made to address its root causes, thus laying the groundwork for the violence of 2010. This time, the government again seems hesitant to endorse a thorough investigation, obviously fearful that this could further exacerbate political and social tensions. The causes, organisation, participants and the consequences of the pogroms can only adequately be assessed by an exhaustive and impartial enquiry. Given the political and ethnic polarisation in Kyrgyz today, this will be a serious challenge.

[6] "Kyrgyzstan: Poverty Assessment Report (2007)", World Bank, vol. I, p. 15, www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/10/31/000020439_20071031085518/Rendered/PDF/408641KG0v1.pdf.

[7] "The Census", National Statistical Committee, op. cit., pp. 61, 79; "Социально-экономическое положение Кыргызской Республики: январь-декабрь 2009" ["The Socio-Economic Situation of the Kyrgyz Republic: January-December 2009"], 2009, p. 120; "Уровень жизни населения Кыргызской Республики 2004-2008" ["Living standards of the Population of the Kyrgyz Republic 2004-2008"], 2009, p. 36.

[8] "Out of School Children in the Kyrgyz Republic", UNICEF, 2008, p. 15, www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/OUT-OF-SCHOOL-Eng.pdf; "Учимся для жизни: результаты международного сравнительного исследования фунциональной грамотности 15-летних учащихся PISA-2006" ["Learning for life: outcomes of the international comparative study on functional literacy among 15-year old students PISA-2006"], Centre for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods, 2008, pp. 131, 132, 128-129, www.testing.kg/files/pdf/PISA06_NatRep_KGZ.pdf.

[9] "The Socio-Economic Situation of the Kyrgyz Republic: January-December 2009", National Statistical Committee, op. cit., pp. 97-98. The official figures are massively underestimated: a former governor of Osh estimates that the real rate is over 20 per cent. For more, see "Статистический ежегодник Кыргызской Республики" ["The Annual Statistical Hand Book of the Kyrgyz Republic"], National Statistical Committee, 2009, p. 376.

[10] "The Annual Statistical Hand Book of the Kyrgyz Republic", National Statistical Committee, op. cit., p. 412.

[11] "The Census", National Statistical Committee, op. cit., p. 86; Suiunbek Syrdybaev, Zaure Sydykova and Gulnara Kudabaeva, "Youth: A Strategic Resource for Kyrgyzstan", UNV-UNDP White Paper, 2008, www.un.org.kg/en/publications/publications/article/5-publications/3454-youth-a-strategic-resource-for-kyrgyzstan.

II. JUNE 1990

In 1990, the Soviet Union began its final descent into disintegration. The Baltic states were loosening their ties with Moscow and May 1990 had seen the unprecedented spectacle of anti-perestroika demonstrators hijacking the May Day celebrations on Red Square. Centrifugal tendencies had even reached Central Asia, the far edge of the Soviet Union. That March, a group of ethnic Uzbek members of the Kyrgyz Communist Party called for an Autonomous Soviet Republic to be formed within the confines of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, to answer the needs of the Uzbek minority.[12] So-called informal groups (неформалы), activists often with a strongly ethnic-based program, emerged in both Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities.

Violence in June 1990 was triggered by a land dispute in Osh involving two such groups. Kyrgyz activists from Osh Aymagi, demanded that authorities hand over land belonging to a *kolkhoz* (collective farm), whose workers and residents were predominantly Uzbek. The activists' aim, according to a contemporary KGB account, was to create a "purely Kyrgyz settlement".[13] Uzbek activists protested, and after six demonstrators were killed, went on a rampage, attacking police and Kyrgyz communities. There was looting and depredation on both sides. Most accounts agree that during the first days of the unrest, the Uzbeks had the upper hand, then groups of Kyrgyz arrived from the surrounding countryside, inflicting serious casualties on them.[14]

The violence was finally halted by the deployment of over 2,000 members of the Soviet airborne. It was six months before Moscow felt the situation had normalised to the point that the troops could be withdrawn.[15] Asked in a June 2010 newspaper interview to compare the 1990 violence with the events of 2010, Colonel-General Vyacheslav Achalov, who had commanded the airborne deployment, said the situation in 2010 was worse. "The new Kyrgyz government cannot get [the situation] under control", he said. The provisional government "does not have capable people, everyone is scared of taking responsibility. The police are scared, and so is the military".[16]

KGB[17] reports written immediately after the 1990 unrest noted a number of factors that had contributed to the bloodshed. These included a perception among poorer ethnic Kyrgyz that Uzbeks were becoming more prosperous, too "free and easy" in their behaviour and controlling the markets. Uzbek demands for autonomy also caused friction. Uzbeks claimed that predominantly ethnic Kyrgyz police and political officials sided with ethnic Kyrgyz protesters.[18] The KGB reported that Kyrgyz villages in the mountain area of Alay sent groups to the city to fight the Uzbeks, and that ethnic Kyrgyz demanded that police and local authorities arm them. KGB investigators also recorded that someone had marked the walls of many homes with the words "Uzbek" or "Kyrgyz" to identify the residents.[19]

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[12] Заявление … председателю совета национальностей От группы членов КПСС, ветеранов ВОВ, труда, проживающих в г.Джалал-Абаде, Ошской области Киргизской ССР [A Declaration … to the Chairman of the Council of Nationalities from a group of members of the CPSU, veterans of the Great Patriotic War, Labour, residing in the city of Jalalabad, Osh Oblast of the Kirgiz SSR]. Available at www.nlobooks.ru/rus/magazines/nlo/196/328/378. The letter raised many issues that continue to concern the Uzbek community, including under-representation in administrative bodies, and tension between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz, especially youth on both sides.

[13] Секретная докладная записка начальника Управления КГБ по Ошской области первому секретарю Ошского обкома Компартии Киргизии У. Сыдыкову [Secret report-note by the head of the KGB Directorate for Osh oblast to the secretary of the Osh oblast committee of the Communist Party of Kirghiziya, U. Sydykov], 24 June 1990.

[14] Crisis Group interview, Kyrgyz academic, Bishkek, 15 July 2010. The interviewee noted that, as 70 per cent of the casualties were Uzbeks, the Soviet prosecutor-general's office blamed the Kyrgyz for the unrest. In fact, he added, "it was Uzbeks who started it all, just like this time".

[15] "Киргизия: насилие в возвращенной форме" ["Violence in a recurrent form"], Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 17 June 2010, www.mk.ru/politics/interview/2010/06/17/510606-kirgiziya-nasilie-v-vozvraschennoy-forme.html.

[16] Ibid.

[17] These are (1) Докладная записка председателя КГБ Киргизской ССР Д. Асанкулова о событиях в Ошской области [Report-note by the Chairman of the KGB of the Kirghiz SSR D Asankulov on events in Osh oblast], compiled for the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kirgiziya A. Masaliyev, 14 June 1990; and (2) Секретная докладная записка [Secret report note], op. cit.

[18] Following the unrest ethnic Uzbeks called inter alia for the resignation of all members of the city and oblast party committees. One KGB note remarked that a "significant part of the population, including a number of officials, succumbed to provocative rumours". Such a veiled remark nonetheless represented unusual criticism at the time of Soviet state and communist functionaries. KGB notes, op. cit. The addressee of one of the KGB reports, Osh Party Chief Usen Sydykov, was widely accused of responsibility for the 1990 unrest. He went on to become a close Bakiyev associate, and in May 2010 was accused of helping organise anti-government demonstrations. See Section IV.

[19] In 1990 homes of KGB officials were also identified.

The Kyrgyz authorities produced several studies on the unrest, distribution of which was limited to a few top leaders. There was little public discussion of the events, and few efforts to dispel any of the "myths" that emerged during the violence, an academic involved in the reports recalled. It was better this way, the academic added. Ethnic relations are not appropriate for public discussion. He continued, people are "very primitive" and "do not understand the nuances of such issues".[20] Most of the factors and features noted by the KGB in 1990 were to resurface in 2010.

[20] Crisis Group interview, academic, Bishkek, 15 July 2010.

III. 2010

A. Regime Change

On 7 April 2010, following several months of intensifying anti-government protests, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was overthrown after street clashes in Bishkek that left 86 people dead. A few weeks earlier, a group of opposition leaders had formed the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the People's Kurultay (assembly) to coordinate the protests. On 7 April the CEC assumed power, with Roza Otunbayeva as president, declaring that it would stay in office for six months to oversee a new constitution and both parliamentary and presidential elections planned for October 2010.[21] Popular expectations were low, as many new leaders had previously served the old regime, and the opposition has long been bedevilled by infighting.[22]

The provisional government indeed turned out to be unruly and disunited. Leaders took unilateral decisions. One deputy premier remarked that she sometimes heard about government personnel changes from the media.[23] Another senior leader arbitrarily suspended the operations of a bank paying state pensions and salaries.[24] Otunbayeva's first deputy, Almaz Atambayev, occasionally surprised foreign visitors with his erratic behaviour, and during the 10-14 June crisis disappeared completely from the public eye. When he resurfaced, he caused more alarm by announcing that the unrest in the south was so well planned that similar problems could be expected in the capital and elsewhere.[25]

[21] For further details, see Crisis Group Report, *Kyrgyzstan: A Hollow Regime Collapses*, op. cit. Subsequently the decision was taken to delay presidential elections until December 2011, with Roza Otunbayeva remaining in office until then. She was inaugurated on 3 July 2010.

[22] For the situation in 2004-2005, see Crisis Group Report, *Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution*, op. cit.

[23] "Э.Ибраимова признает, что во Временном правительстве 'есть проблемы' по четкой кадровой политике" ["E.Ibraimova admits that the Provisional Government 'has problems' regarding a clear personnel policy"], Akipress news service, 22 April 2010, www1.kg.akipress.org/news:197701.

[24] The decision was only reversed, by presidential decree, after a senior member of the National Bank complained of political sabotage in the build-up to the 27 June referendum on the new constitution. "НБКР обращается с просьбой к ВП вернуть процесс национализации АУБа в правовое русло" ["NBKR calls on Provisional Government to restore the legal framework of AUB nationalisation"], Akipress news service, 18 June 2010, http://business.akipress.org/news:89471.

[25] "События на юге Кыргызстана были настолько хорошо спланированы, что ждем провокаций в городе Бишкеке и

While the economic and social situation deteriorated, and the new government stumbled from crisis to crisis, one of its dominant figures, Omurbek Tekebayev, pushed through a hastily drafted constitution, replacing the presidential system of government with a parliamentary one. The new constitution was passed in a nation-wide referendum on 27 June. Despite frequent waves of anxiety fed by rumours of further violence, the government failed signally to reassure the population that it was in charge and to maintain the regular dialogue with its people that the situation required. As weeks went on, insecurity worsened, with waves of panic passing through Bishkek and northern towns.

Meanwhile measures that the new government promised would be priority issues dropped off the agenda. There was no word of an investigation into the violence of 7 April. There was no indication of an investigation into fuel deliveries to the U.S. airbase at Manas International Airport, which had allegedly channelled millions of dollars to the Bakiyev regime. Instead there were increasing complaints of corruption on the part of those close to the government. These included the seizure of private businesses – a phenomenon long associated with the Bakiyev regime. In the business world "threats, grabs and raiding have become the norm", said Ravshan Jeenbekov, deputy chair of the main pro-government party, Ata-Meken.[26]

B. THE SECURITY ORGANS: NEUTRAL OR HOSTILE?

A particular source of anxiety, both inside the government and generally in Kyrgyz society, was the strong suspicion that the country's security services, army and especially the interior ministry were not fully loyal to the new regime. Some leading politicians, a number of whom were targeted by police or security services during the Bakiyev years, avoided relying on them. "We are not sure what side they will come down on if we call for their assistance", said one party leader who was protected by burly, body armour-clad young men with automatic rifles, provided by a relative who is in the private security business.[27] The government seemed to prefer to call on volunteers – *druzhinniki* – some paid by private benefactors, to keep the peace. Members of the opposition with strong links to the security services, like Felix Kulov, a former prime minister and interior minister, or police general Omurbek Suvanaliyev, say the security services were demoralised after the events of 7 April when police and other forces were attacked and badly mauled by anti-government demonstrators.[28] Foreign observers and some Kyrgyz officials believe the malaise goes deeper.

After a visit to Bishkek in May, one senior Western official remarked that the security organs and the police seemed to be observing the political situation with interest, waiting to see who would win.[29] Senior Kyrgyz government officials agree. After 7 April few changes were made in the top levels of the so-called power ministries: defence, interior, the state security committee, emergency situations and the state prosecutor's office. The Kyrgyz government was unable to provide Crisis Group with the number of such changes, but one senior security official conceded that these rarely went lower than deputy minister.[30] Given the previous regime's placement of Bakiyev loyalists in all key security positions, this situation presents the government with a dilemma: risk unrest by replacing disloyal security officials or risk subversion by allowing them to remain.

Loyalty to the previous regime was based on personal interest, not ideology. The Bakiyev regime developed a system which, in exchange for unquestioning loyalty, allowed key players near total impunity, and thus boundless opportunities for corruption. Especially in the power ministries, a senior security official said, "all aspects of state power are corrupt – police, military, state security, border guards, the prosecutors, the courts, everything".[31] This problem is even more pronounced in the south, the heartland of the previous regime, where Bakiyev and his influential brothers took care to appoint security officials who were loyal to them and who in turn benefited handsomely from their largesse.

Чуйской области" ["Almazbek Atambayev, events in the south were so well planned that we expect provocations in Bishkek and Chui Oblast"], 24.kg news service, 15 June 2010, www.24.kg/politic/76502-almazbek-atambaev-sobytiya-na-yuge-kyrgyzstana.html. This time we are ready, he told journalists. We have already deployed an APC (armoured personnel carrier) at a checkpoint outside of the capital. If necessary, we will put a second one there.

[26] "Инвестиционный исход, Киргизию покидают российские и казахские бизнесмены" ["Investment exodus. Russian and Kazakh businessmen are leaving Kirgizya"], Nezavisimaya Gazeta Daily, 16 August 2010, www.ng.ru/cis/2010-08-16/6_invest.html.

[27] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 7 June 2010.

[28] Crisis Group interview, Felix Kulov, Bishkek, 16 June 2010; Omurbek Suvanaliyev, Bishkek, 5 July 2010.

[29] Crisis Group interview, senior Western official, June 2010.

[30] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 29 July 2010.

[31] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 29 July 2010.

The president and his brothers had established a family empire in the south that controlled most aspects of the economy, both legal and shadow. A key element of this, Western officials, Russian parliamentarians and members of the current government say, was the drug trade, allegedly overseen by Janyshbek Bakiyev, the president's brother and chief bodyguard. The family's business interests in general, meanwhile, were supervised by Akhmat Bakiyev, long described as the "shadow governor-general" of the south (see below, section IX). In late May 2010, the secretary of the National Security Council, General Alik Orozov, told a newspaper that some police and security officials were still being paid by the Bakiyev family: "in the daytime law enforcement officers search for the Bakiyev brothers, and in the evening take them food".[32]

As one very high-ranking official explained, "in the south all law enforcement organisations and security services are sick with a disease. If they are not personally loyal to Bakiyev, a lot came to power under him. Generals and high [security] officials feel very vulnerable". Most senior security officials and politicians are "very saddened that power has left the south", and passed to a predominantly northern Kyrgyz political leadership. This causes the new government "a lot of difficulties".[33] Following the president's unsuccessful effort in August to remove the mayor of Osh, the city's police chief joined a rally in support of the mayor.[34]

C. THE MAYOR OF OSH: "A QUITE DIFFICULT MAN"[35]

When a regime changes in Kyrgyzstan, a whole system of patronage has to be restructured. This covers not only politics but business and usually the criminal world, as the three elements are tightly connected and often overlapping.[36] A nimble politician can take advantage of the transition and breakdown of the old patronage systems to fill the political vacuum.

Melis Myrzakmatov moved fast to consolidate his position in Osh. A businessman and former member of parliament from the Bakiyev-era ruling Ak Zhol party, Myrzakmatov was appointed mayor in January 2009. After Bakiyev's overthrow, Myrzakmatov briefly positioned himself as a loyalist of the deposed president and, according to two sources, met Bakiyev when he fled south. Sensing that Bakiyev's position was weakening, he quickly threw his weight behind the new government.[37]

A rally in central Osh on 15 April offered a telling illustration of his organising techniques. Myrzakmatov called the meeting in support of the provisional government. While the provisional government is free-wheeling to the point of dysfunction, press accounts say the organisation of the mayor's rally left nothing to chance. Local government employees and students were ordered to turn up and bussed in. And when former President Bakiyev and his security appeared on the edge of the square, trying to stage a demonstration of their own, a group of "young guys in sports costumes"[38] peeled off from the mayor's group. They charged at the former president and his security, attacking their cars. Bakiyev left in some haste, by one account jumping into a vehicle as it pulled away.[39] This was Bakiyev's last attempt to appeal to his people before he left the country, fleeing first to Kazakhstan and then to Belarus.[40]

By June 2010, Myrzakmatov was the unchallenged leader in Osh, both city and region, and a major political force throughout the south. The power agencies, police, security and others, took their orders from him, not Bishkek.[41] And, despite so unceremoniously chasing his former pa-

[32] "Кое-кто в силовых структурах Кыргызстана до сих пор получает зарплату от Бакиевых ..." ["Someone in Kyrgyzstan's security structures even now is taking a salary from the Bakiyevs"], Kyrgyznews website, 24 May 2010, reprinting article from Delo newspaper, 19 May 2010, www.kyrgyznews.com/readarticle.php?article_id=3353.

[33] Crisis Group interview, high-level official, Bishkek, 22 July 2010.

[34] "Southern Kyrgyz mayor challenges gov't authority", Associated Press, 20 August 2010.

[35] Crisis Group interview, high-level official, Bishkek, 22 July 2010.

[36] For linkages between crime and the political elite under two previous presidents, see Asia Report N°81, *Political Transition in Kyrgyzstan: Problems and Prospects*, 11 August 2004; and Crisis Group Report, *Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution*, op. cit. The latter report noted that the term businessman covers "a range from effectively criminal authority figures to fairly well respected entrepreneurs".

[37] Crisis Group interview, long-term political observer, Osh, July 2010; senior government official, Bishkek, 26 July 2010.

[38] The reference to sports costumes carries a specific connotation in post-Soviet politics and points to the nexus of politics, crime and business in the city. It suggests an informal security team hired by businessmen, politicians or other figures of authority, recruited from sport-clubs – martial arts specialists and similar. Among those who said that the mayor has such a detail are a senior government minister, a long-time observer of Osh politics quoted, and former Osh police chief General Suvanaliyev.

[39] "В Оше столкнулись противники и сторонники Курманбека Бакиева" ["In Osh opponents and supporters of Kurmanbek Bakiyev clash"], Kloop.kg, 15 April 2010.

[40] Ria-Novosti news service, Moscow, 16 April 2010, www.rian.ru/politics/20100416/223076124.html.

[41] Crisis Group interview, high official, 22 July 2010; senior Western diplomats, July 2010.

tron from Osh's main square, he was careful not to lose contact with the family, numerous sources maintain.[42] As a veteran observer of Osh politics put it, he keeps a foot in each camp – the provisional government and the Bakiyev clan – "but answers to neither".[43]

IV. MAY 2010 IN JALALABAD: THE WATERSHED

In mid-May a wave of political unrest hit Jalalabad city, about one hour's drive from Osh, and the home of former President Bakiyev and his family. At the time the complicated skein of events, with their back and forth of allegation and counter-allegation, were ignored by most observers inside and outside Kyrgyzstan. This was deeply unfortunate. May in Jalalabad prefigured June in Osh: the unreliability of the police and state security structures; the passivity or impotence of central government; Kyrgyz fears of resurgent Uzbek assertiveness; the dominant role played by individual political parties, groups or individuals; and the sharply differing, confusing and highly partisan accounts of events. Had these issues been addressed firmly in May by the central government – and had the international community, Crisis Group included, paid enough attention to press the government to do so – events in Osh might have been mitigated or prevented.

After fleeing Bishkek on 7 April, Bakiyev and close relatives took refuge in their home village of Teyit (Тейит in Russian), 8km from Jalalabad, from where they launched desultory efforts to seize back power in various southern localities, including the failed rally in Osh. When they could not mobilise serious opposition to the new regime, Bakiyev fled the country on 15 April. Other family members, notably his brother Akhmat, remained in hiding in the area and continued, the government says, to organise protests. Janysh Bakiyev reportedly took refuge in Gorno-Bakakhshan, Tajikistan.[44]

The Bakiyev family launched their most serious challenge to the new regime on 13 May. Bakiyev loyalists, allegedly funded by one of the president's brothers, and organised by a close aide, Usen Sydykov, briefly seized the regional administrative headquarters in Batken, in the far south west of the country, along with those in Osh and Jalalabad. The first two takeovers quickly fizzled, but a stand-off ensued in Jalalabad, compounded by the reluctance of state security and police to intervene. Two political parties in the forefront of support for the provisional government stepped in to restore order. One was Ata-Meken, led by Omurbek Tekebayev, at the time a deputy president and one of the most influential politicians in post-Bakiyev

[42] Crisis Group interviews, southern Kyrgyzstan, 13 July 2010; high-level official, Bishkek, 22 July 2010; opposition politician, Bishkek, 25 July 2010; senior official, Bishkek, 27 July 2010.

[43] Crisis Group interview, long-term political observer, Osh, 2 July 2010.

[44] Kyrgyz officials claim that he is being hidden by colleagues in the drug business. See for example: "А. Орозов: Ж. Бакиев - с наркобаронами в Горном Бадахшане" ["A. Orozov: J. Bakiyev is with the narco-barons in Gornobadakhshan"], Kyrgyz News website, 19 May 2010, www.kyrgyznews.com/readarticle.php?article_id=3331. A. Orozov is secretary of the National Security Council.

Kyrgyzstan. The other was Rodina, a southern, predominantly Uzbek party headed by an Uzbek businessman, Kadyrjan Batyrov, a bitter enemy of the Bakiyev family.

A. BATYROV AND RODINA

Rodina in particular and secular Uzbeks in general were enthusiastic supporters of the new government, a rarity in post-7 April politics. Most Kyrgyz citizens welcomed Bakiyev's overthrow, but were discouraged by the paucity of new faces in the provisional government. Rodina on the other hand, had suffered serious setbacks under Bakiyev and was energised by the president's ouster. In late 2007, Bakiyev's advisers had decided to abolish the unspoken political agreement whereby opposition parties were allowed a modest number of parliamentary seats if they were not too persistent in protesting against electoral fraud.[45] The party, founded in January 2007 in anticipation of parliamentary elections, found itself excluded from both the national parliament and local legislatures, and was largely quiescent until 7 April.[46]

Batyrov, Rodina's leader, had made a swift, substantial fortune in the wild capitalism that followed the USSR's collapse. A shop manager in Soviet times, he was one of the first post-Soviet tycoons – lumber merchant, broker in Russia's first post-communist stock exchange, owner of a number of factories in Russia and elsewhere, as well as an airline, Batyr Avia.[47] In the late 1990s he founded a university and other educational institutions in Jalalabad catering to Uzbeks, thus assuring himself considerable support among Uzbeks who otherwise wondered about the origins of his wealth. Unlike some key figures in the new provisional government, Batyrov actually favoured the shift to a parliamentary system, something that Tekebayev, an ethnic Kyrgyz from the Jalalabad area, passionately advocated.[48] Despite some doubts among educated Uzbeks, in 2010 he remained the most influential leader in the Uzbek community.

On 8 April, the day after Bakiyev's overthrow, Batyrov addressed a celebratory rally of some 5,000 Uzbeks. He called on the new government to "pursue a policy of equality and justice".[49] He stressed that Uzbeks wanted to play a role in this new phase of the country's history. Kyrgyzstan's Uzbek citizens would "no longer be observers" of events. As tension mounted a few weeks later, Batyrov emphasised the moderation of Uzbek demands, denying any interest in an autonomous Uzbek region in the south – a demand that in 1990 had inflamed tensions between the two communities – and noting that he had proposed to a commission discussing a new constitution that the Uzbek language be given legal status in majority ethnic Uzbek areas of the south.[50]

The seizure by Bakiyev supporters of the Jalalabad regional administrative building on 13 May gave Batyrov the chance to prove his support for the provisional government and his movement's muscle. Rodina, along with Tekebayev's party, Ata-Meken, fielded some 3,000 activists, armed with staves, blunt instruments and some firearms.[51] Slightly more than half came from Rodina, according to an eye-witness.[52] They converged on the building and after clashes in the centre of the city accompanied by intense gunfire, forced Bakiyev's supporters from it. Two people were killed and 49 injured, according to official figures.[53] A number of Kyrgyz media reports played down Rodina's role in ending the seizure. A freshly-created Committee for the Defence of Kurmanbek Bakiyev on the other hand declared indignantly that Batyrov

[45] See Crisis Group Briefing, *Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm*, op. cit.

[46] Batyrov had been active in southern politics since the late 1990s, when he was a prominent member of the Party of People's Unity and Concord, which was founded in 1998 and formed the basis of Rodina.

[47] Summary bio-date can be found on Батыров Кадиржан Алимжанович, http://who.ca-news.org/people/462.

[48] See for example his comments in atamekenkg.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2732:2010-05-19-10-5915&catid=99:politic&Itemid=29.

[49] "Джалалабад — в центре мировового внимания" ["Jalalabad – in the centre of world attention"], 24.kg news site, 9 April 2010, www.24.kg/investigation/79031-v-aksyjskom-rajone-dzhalal-abadskoj-oblasti.html. The report specifically notes that the demonstrators were Uzbeks.

[50] Ata-Meken news service, 19 May 2010, www.atamekenkg.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2732:2010-05-19-10-5915&catid=99:politic&Itemid=29. Interestingly the interview was published at a time when anger at Batyrov was reaching fever pitch. The press service did not criticise or express any reservations about the opinions expressed. The constitutional proposal on Uzbek language disappeared without trace.

[51] Crisis Group interview, Osh journalist who filmed the scene, Osh, 30 June 2010; Jalalabad journalist who covered events, Jalalabad, 3 July 2010.

[52] Crisis Group interview, Osh journalist who filmed the scene, Osh, 30 June 2010. Batyrov later claimed that Ata-Meken activists out-numbered Rodina supporters, but his remarks closer to the events, in speeches on 14-15 May, imply the opposite. Transcript of speeches in Jalalabad, made available by a Kyrgyz NGO, Citizens against Corruption. Internal evidence indicates that the speeches were made on 14-15 May 2010.

[53] Azimbek Beknazarov, "Summary of 3 months activities of the general prosecutor's office", Kabar news service, 7 July 2010, http://kabar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2984&Itemid=3607/07/2010 14:49. Beknazarov was deputy chair of the provisional government with responsibility for prosecutors and the judicial system.

"who is protecting the provisional government, used weapons against the supporters of Kurmanbek Bakiyev".[54]

B. THE TEYIT BURNINGS: A "RUBICON" IN ETHNIC RELATIONS

That night an event took place that, in the view of many observers, galvanised Kyrgyz suspicions of a resurgent Uzbek menace. A mob burned houses belonging to former President Bakiyev and his relatives in Teyit. Most accounts hold Batyrov responsible. He denied the accusations, insisting he had wanted to seize the houses, which he described as the Bakiyev family's "general staff", but that the buildings were torched by others, possibly Bakiyev supporters who wanted to destroy evidence. He also complained that Ata-Meken leaders had joined him on the march to Teyit, and called on them to give their version of events.[55]

Few ethnic Kyrgyz believe the denials. The incident was, in the words of a very high-level Kyrgyz government official, "a rubicon" in ethnic relations.[56] The Kyrgyz reaction, the official said, was "how do you Uzbeks dare to burn houses on our territory?"[57] The incident was "crucial in forming a Kyrgyz aggressive mass among the population as a whole", the official noted.[58] This led to demonstrations in Jalalabad, demands for the governor's resignation and Batyrov's arrest. On 19 May, Batyrov's university, now viewed by ethnic Kyrgyz as the "bastion of evil", the words of the official quoted above, was ransacked. Three were killed in an exchange of fire.[59] This was likely not a spontaneous event. A university employee told a Kyrgyz media site that the Jalalabad education authorities had informed school principals before the attack that Batyrov's property would be taken away from him and he would be arrested.[60] Batyrov was in fact charged with a number of offences connected to the burning of the Bakiyev houses,[61] and is now believed to be living abroad, by some reports in Dubai. In Jalalabad a curfew was declared on 19 May. On 1 June it was lifted.

Batyrov's treatment contrasts sharply with that of Usen Sydykov, Bakiyev's former close aide and the man accused of fomenting the unrest in Jalalabad on 13-14 May. On the evening of 13 May, the provisional government's State Security Committee made public a number of taped phone conversations in which, they said, Sydykov discussed plans for unrest in Osh and Jalalabad. State Security described Sydykov as "the direct organiser and coordinator" of all anti-government actions in the south.[62] He was later reported to be in the square in the centre of Jalalabad during the clashes on 13 May, but fled the scene.[63]

On 14 May he was arrested by Osh police who stopped two cars carrying him and other associates. In the second vehicle they found two automatic rifles and ammunition, along with two-way radios.[64] When the prosecutor's office filed charges connected to the 13-14 May events – including murder and the organisation of mass unrest – Sydykov was not named.[65] He was, however, subsequently charged with an attempted coup and seizure by force of state power.[66] In early July, however, he was

[54] "Жанара Молдокулова: Экс-депутат парламента Кыргызстана Кадыржан Батыров применил оружие против сторонников Курманбека Бакиева" ["The ex-deputy of the Kyrgyz parliament Kadyrjan Batyrov used weapons against the supporters of Kurmanbek Bakiyev"], 24.kg news site, 14 May 2010, www.24.kg/community/74074-zhanara-moldokulova-yeks-deputat-parlamenta.html.

[55] "Кадыржан Батыров: Обращение к народу Кыргызстана" ["Kadyrjan Batyrov: Address to the people of Kyrgyzstan"], YouTube, uploaded 24 May 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uTHSdWQ0i4-.

[56] Crisis Group interview, high-level official, Bishkek, 22 July 2010.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] "А.Бекназаров дал отчет о проделанной работе за три месяца" ["A. Beknazarov reported on work carried out over the past three months"], Kabar news service. 7 July 2010, http://kabar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2984&Itemid=3607/07/2010. Batyrov has cited a call to protect the revolution by Beknazarov, like him a Jalalabad native, as his justification for taking his supporters into the city on 14 May.

[60] "Хроника осады: Взгляд изнутри" ["Chronicle of a siege: the view from the inside"], 24.kg news service, 20 May 2010, www.24.kg/community/74521-xronika-osady-vzglyad-iznutri.html. On 12 June, the first day of unrest in Jalalabad, the university was torched.

[61] "A. Beknazarov reported on work carried out over the past three months", Kabar news service, op. cit.

[62] "Кыргызстан: Обнародована «прослушка» телефонных переговоров Усена Сыдыкова –главного организатора антиправительственных акций пробакиевского толка" ["Wiretaps have been made public of phone conversations of Usen Sydykov, the main organiser of Bakiyev-oriented anti-government actions"], Ferghana.ru news service, 14 May 2010, www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=14718&mode=snews. The article also published a copy of a state security document, dated 12 May, approving a wire tap on Sydykov. This referred to possible widespread unrest in the capital and in the south between 12 and 17 May.

[63] Transcript of speeches in Jalalabad, 14-15 May, speech of Bektur Asanov, Governor of Jalalabad.

[64] "Пресс-служба Ошского областного управления внутренних дел сообщила подробности задержания Усена Сыдыкова" ["Osh oblast directorate of internal affairs makes public details of the detention of Usen Sydykov"], Ferghana-Akipress news service, 15 May 2010, http://fergana.akipress.org/news:80581.

[65] "Summary of 3 months prosecutor activity", op. cit.

[66] "Усен Сыдыков выпущен под домашний арест" ["Usen Sydykov released to house arrest"], Azattyk news site (RFE/RL

transferred from prison to house arrest, in view of his advanced age and poor health.[67] A senior security official says he is now advising a number of major political parties from his home.[68]

The Teyit burnings may well mark the beginning of a narrative of Uzbek revenge that has now become well-rooted in large parts of the Kyrgyz community. As one well-educated Kyrgyz professional from Jalalabad recalled, the incident convinced him of the truth of stories that had long been circulating – "that the Uzbeks had been planning their revenge since 1990, hiding weapons in their mosques, just waiting for the time to strike".[69] In the days to come, a number of Kyrgyz politicians – including the mayor of Osh and senior government officials – repeatedly asserted that Batyrov made a series of inflammatory speeches on Uzbek-language TV stations in Osh. One frequently repeated version cited Batyrov calling for "retribution for 1990".[70] In the transcript of the speeches by Batyrov and others, no such statements can be found.

C. "THE SECURITY ORGANS DID NOT FORGIVE HIM"

A moderate Uzbek still in a senior government position in the south describes such allegations as "rubbish". Batyrov's real offence, the official averred, was to criticise the political and security forces that had, in May 2010 as in May 1990, been "passive in the face of a threat to the state". This had bred a "sense of impunity" (безнаказанность) among enemies of the regime, and had led to the May disturbances. Batyrov's problem was that he said it in a very blunt manner, the official recalled. "The security organs did not forgive him".[71]

Batyrov did, in the course of an adrenalin-infused meeting on 14 May, criticise bitingly and at length the state security and the police for their "loyalty" to the Bakiyev regime. "The police and the SNB (State Security), whom we trusted, today did not justify our trust. And they will not justify it", he said, according to a transcript of his speech. He called for the creation of a "people's militia" of 100 Uzbeks and 100 Kyrgyz to help hunt down the Bakiyev supporters – the "criminals" – who were jeopardising stability in Jalalabad. He also belittled the Kyrgyz activists who had joined the assault on the provincial administration building. Other speakers in the meetings used language like "equal rights" for Uzbeks that could, given Kyrgyz hypersensitivity to signs of an Uzbek political revival, have deepened suspicions.[72]

At a time when the central government was once again hesitating, perhaps hoping to cut a deal, perhaps unable to do anything because of the unreliability of the country's security services, Batyrov was in essence preparing to take the law into his own hands. "He went too far", commented an official in Bishkek. Mobilising the Uzbek community increased "Kyrgyz nationalist paranoia"; moreover the idea of a Batyrov-backed "popular militia" in a major southern city may have been viewed as a challenge to other ambitious politician-businessmen who were seeking to move into the vacuum left by the fall of the Bakiyev clan.[73]

Prominent Kyrgyz leaders, in particular Tekebayev, distanced themselves from Batyrov. Tekebayev denied that he and Batyrov had ever enjoyed more than distant professional contacts.[74] One long-time observer of Central Asian affairs suggested that the central government had simply abandoned Batyrov in the hope of avoiding further violence.[75] A senior security official, meanwhile, believes that those who wanted to incite ethnic tension in the south "set Batyrov up", inciting him to a level of activism that would provoke many Kyrgyz nationalists.[76] With hindsight, another official remarked later, after Jalalabad, the danger of a "pre-emptive strike" against Uzbeks by someone or other on the nationalist end of the political spectrum "was very high".[77]

Kyrgyz language service), 3 July 2010, www.azattyk.kg/content/news/2089687.html.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 29 July 2010.

[69] Crisis Group interview, Jalalabad oblast, 3 July 2010.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Crisis Group interview, southern Kyrgyzstan, 13 July 2010.

[72] Transcript of speeches in Jalalabad, op. cit.

[73] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 27 July 2010; telephone interview, Kyrgyz politician, 27 July 2010.

[74] "В Кыргызстане лидер партии «Ата-Мекен» Омурбек Текебаев опроверг сведения о том, что имеет дружеские отношения с небезызвестным Кадыржаном Батыровым" ["In Kyrgyzstan the leader of the Atat-Meken party, Omurbek Tekebayev, rejected information that he had friendly relations with the far from unknown Kadyrjan Batyrov"], 24.kg news service, 13 July 2010, www.24.kg/politic/78676-v-kyrgyzstane-lider-partii-laquoata-mekenraquo.html. Tekebayev claimed not even to have Batyrov's phone number.

[75] Sanobar Shermatova, "Киргизский Юг и узбекский вопрос" ["The Kyrgyz south and the Uzbek question"], Ferghana.ru news site, 8 June 2010, www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6602.

[76] Crisis Group interview, senior security official, Bishkek, 29 July 2010.

[77] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 25 July 2010.

V. POGROMS

A. BEGINNINGS

Violence erupted late in the evening of 10 June in the centre of Osh. Most accounts say that an argument between young Uzbeks and Kyrgyz, inside or near a hall with gambling machines, flared out of control a little after 11pm. Whether the fight was spontaneous or provoked remains one of the most important unanswered questions in the events of June. Several Osh residents said the town centre had been tense in the days before, but some noted this was not uncommon in the summer, when groups of young people from both communities lingered on the streets. One inhabitant recalled seeing a large group of "aggressive" Uzbek and Kyrgyz youth in the centre of town on the evening of 10 June, as he went to evening prayers. At that point he was merely irritated that so many unemployed youth were hanging around.[78]

When the fight started young men from both communities phoned friends to come and help.[79] Police converged on the area, as did local politicians trying to calm the situation. At some point there was either an attempt to inflame the mood or a clumsy effort to stop the fighting: two eyewitnesses interviewed separately said people in a car or cars started to shoot into the air, adding to the tension. One witness noticed a single car, a BMW 735 model without plates;[80] the other says the shooting came from two vehicles.[81] The fighting escalated. By one in the morning, the majority of Osh residents were probably aware that something terrible was happening. Around that time an Uzbek newspaper editor, roused by phone calls from the centre of town, went outside to see what was happening. Her part of town, known locally as Eastern district, is on high ground overlooking the city. She could hear gunshots and see smoke over the centre. The streets around her house were packed with people, she recalled, who were watching and listening to the events.[82]

In the early hours of the unrest a large group of young Uzbeks reportedly broke shop windows and smashed cars in the centre of Osh, and attacked Kyrgyz. The rumour spread that Uzbeks had attacked a university dormitory, raping, mutilating and killing young Kyrgyz women. This was quickly transmitted by mobile phone around the city and to surrounding villages, and proved to be one of the most tenacious atrocity myths of the pogroms. It still receives wide currency on some websites that have sprung up in defence of one or the other ethnic group.[83]

The incident almost certainly did not happen. The security guard on duty at the dormitory that night said that a crowd had thrown stones, but had not entered.[84] Other researchers were told the same thing, and in July Azimbek Beknazarov, the provisional government deputy chairman in charge of the judiciary and prosecutor's office, told a Russian newspaper that the incident had never taken place.[85] Later that night, around 3-4am, Osh's former police chief estimates, young Kyrgyz had appeared on the streets.[86] Soon after daylight on 11 June, rioting was in full swing. The main market, where the bulk of the traders were ethnic Uzbeks, was ablaze.

Unrest spread from Osh to Jalalabad on 12 June, with violence and destruction in Bazar-Kurgon and Jalalabad city itself. Though brutal and destructive, there were considerably fewer deaths – 54, two thirds of them Uzbek, according to local officials.[87]

B. A WELL-ORGANISED MOB

For the next few days, rampaging bands, almost exclusively ethnic Kyrgyz, had the streets to themselves. They moved confidently around the city and were rarely, if ever, impeded by security forces. In the first hours, most local residents say, they seemed to be urban youth in their late teens, including students. Later reinforcements came from villages north of the city, like Kurshab, and as in 1990, in particular from the mountain district of Alay, 80km, or 90 minutes drive from Osh. A resident of Kurshab, a predominantly ethnic Kyrgyz village 45 minutes by car from Osh, recalled that his village learnt of the unrest by early morning on 11 June. "Everyone here has a cell phone, and a relative there", he explained. They were told that their brothers were under attack by Uzbeks in

[78] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 2 July 2010.
[79] Crisis Group interview, Uzbek resident of Vostochny, Osh, 4 July 2010; Kyrgyz student, Osh, 11 July 2010.
[80] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 4 July 2010.
[81] Crisis Group interview, Uzbek resident of Navoi street area, Osh, 3 July 2010.
[82] Crisis Group interview, Barno Isakova, Vostochny district, 2 July and 7 July 2010. She says Vostochny was later attacked by marauders, gunmen in civilian clothing and an APC. She counted 21 bodies after the attack, and said that the local clinic confirmed 61 dead.
[83] For example, Osh Reality: www.osh-reality.info/.
[84] Crisis Group interview, dormitory security guard, Osh, 6 July 2010.
[85] "Ну, конечно, бардак будет" ["Of course, it will be a cock-up"], *Kommersant*, 12 July 2010, http://kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?fromsearch=fd555cd5-fe52-4580-8d23-1d991dfc01dd&docsid=1412452. Other officials have since confirmed that the incident did not take place.
[86] Crisis Group interview, General Omurbek Suvanaliyev, Bishkek, 5 July 2010.
[87] Crisis Group interview, Jalalabad, mid-July 2010.

Osh and that young Kyrgyz women had been raped. They were told the Kyrgyz were outnumbered, he said, "we had to redress the balance". Two people from his village were killed in the fighting.[88]

The mobs that roamed Osh were not for the most part mindlessly set on random destruction. They were well organised and often well supplied. As they stayed in some Uzbek districts for a day or more, residents had the opportunity to observe them closely. Many witnesses say that small groups of ten to fifteen young marauders answered to one person, usually a somewhat older male, dressed in casual or sports clothes.[89] A Russian resident of one of the worst damaged districts, Cheremushki, was able to observe events with relatively little risk because of his ethnicity. He noted that supplies – drinking water, vodka, flammable liquids – were periodically brought to the marauders near his apartment block. One area, he said, seemed to be an assembly point, where 30 to 40 people would "clump together and discuss things". Close by was a small kitchen. The witness said firearms were handed out from the back of a BMW 735 without number plates.[90]

Attacks on many Uzbek districts followed a similar pattern. Gunmen armed with automatic rifles led the way. They were usually described as being older than the looters, sometimes dressed in black, at other times in sports clothing or camouflage. (The latter does not necessarily indicate members of the military; camouflage pants and jackets are often worn by anyone doing manual labour.) The gunmen would fire at any defenders, forcing them back from defensive barricades. The smallest number of gunmen mentioned in any incident was five or six, the largest twenty to thirty. The choice of homes or businesses destroyed was made on the basis of ethnicity, not financial gain. The next stage, burning and then looting, went on for several days and was meticulous in its execution.

VIDEO TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY HOURS

During the night and early morning of 11 June, a witness surreptitiously filmed looters gathered near his home, in the centre of Osh at the intersection of Kurmanjan Datka and Aravanskaya Street. Young men, mostly armed with metal bars and staves, assemble on a street corner in the centre of the city. A uniformed policeman as well as a small group of heavy set men in their 30s or 40s, dressed in track suit tops and casual jackets, are with the younger men, and seem to be playing a consultative or leadership role. The older men are deliberate and unhurried in their movements. Several come in cars, which they leave casually on the street.

A later sequence shows some of the same group – thick set men and young marauders, greeting a military column moving past. The marauders lift their sticks and bars in salute. A few soldiers wave. One man in a track suit, with an automatic rifle hanging from his shoulder, trots across the road, between two armoured personnel carriers (APCs) in the military column, and at least two gunmen stand at the roadside, waving and making no attempt to hide their weapons. The source of the footage says that the military column returned later, this time with young civilians on the trucks alongside the soldiers. On a number of occasions, he added, the older men seemed to be despatching groups in various directions.[91]

C. CHEREMUSHKI

Cheremushki, a predominantly Uzbek district, was the target of extensive looting and arson. The attack started during afternoon prayers on Friday 11 June.[92] The looters stayed on for several days. Kyrgyz-owned shops and a gas station some 400 metres from the area under attack continued to function during the pogroms and were untouched. Residents said that local officials appealed for assistance, but no one came.[93] At one point an ethnic

[88] Crisis Group interview, Kurshab, Osh oblast, 13 July 2010. In 1990 the news also spread quickly into surrounding communities, carried by long-distance bus drivers.

[89] Crisis Group interview, local official in one district who gathered testimonies from numerous residents, early July 2010. A similar description was given by a Russian resident of Cheremushki, a resident of Vostochny district and a resident of the Uvamskaya street area, the site of later violent clashes.

[90] Crisis Group interview, Cheremushki district, 30 June 2010, reinterviewed 12 July 2010.

[91] The video was made available to Crisis Group in Bishkek on 29 June 2010.

[92] Crisis Group interviews, residents, 29 June-13 July 2010.

[93] Just after 3pm on Friday afternoon, Cheremushki residents told journalists that the district was blocked by APCs and troops. Firing was taking place, armed civilians had already entered the area, but troops stayed round the edge of the district, not intervening. Очевидцы: В городе Оше в микрорайоне «Черемушки» власти и силовики не контролируют ситуацию ["Eyewitness: In Cheremushki district, Osh, the government and security forces do not control the situation"], 24.kg news service, 11 June 2010, www.24.kg/community/75847-ochevidcy-v-gorode-oshe-v-mikrorajone.html.

Russian resident went out on the street, unmolested by the looters. "It was as if I wasn't there", he said.[94] One looter told him he had come to help "our Kyrgyz brothers" who were under attack. They were looting because the Uzbeks had "started to live too wealthily". When he asked why they were burning houses as well as looting them, another looter told him not to ask questions: the attacks had nothing to do with him.[95] The Russian lived in one of the apartment blocks scattered through the district. These are usually inhabited by non-Uzbeks – Slavs, Tatars or Kyrgyz – and were mostly untouched, in Cheremushki as in other affected areas of the city.

Most of the Cheremushki *mahalla*, or district, consisted of single storey houses that open onto a courtyard where flowers, fruit and grapes usually grew. Out of 277 houses destroyed in Cheremushki, according to figures reported to the mayor's office, six or seven were Kyrgyz, the rest Uzbek. Three apartments were also damaged.[96] The words Uzbek or Kyrgyz were scrawled on the walls of many homes. Occasionally houses were marked as Russian or Tatar; some had anti-Uzbek slogans written on them. Most non-Uzbek houses were untouched, even in extensively damaged areas. On one section of a badly destroyed street, the home of a representative of the Tajik diaspora was unharmed. On a side street the comfortable home of a retired senior police officer was not attacked, while others around it had been burned. Elsewhere large houses said to be owned by Kyrgyz were left alone. The pattern was similar in most other areas destroyed during the pogroms.

D. The Use of Armoured Vehicles

The provisional government admitted that two of its APCs were seized by marauders in Osh. One broke down, while the other was quickly recaptured by Kyrgyz special forces, officials maintain.[97] The number of APCs seen across the city, however, indicates that several were active during the violence, usually in support of the marauders. APCs, some tracked, some wheeled, served specific functions, according to witnesses in numerous parts of the city. A witness in Osh district, in the centre of the city, said that one was used on 11 June to clear barricades in the area, facilitating the looting and destruction of 128 homes.[98] Also on 11 June, a group of Uzbek residents who lived close to the regional hospital watched an APC approach the barricade they had built. They thought it was coming to help. Instead the APC, which had a mixture of civilians and men in uniform on it, destroyed the barricade, opened fire and torched the area.[99] On other occasions an APC was deployed to regain the advantage for the looters. In Cheremushki, a witness recalls, whenever the marauders encountered serious resistance "they called up an APC". This happened several times, the witness added.[100]

In Vostochny district an APC opened fire with a large calibre cannon on a bulldozer that was helping build a barricade.[101] On 12 June an APC flying a large Kyrgyz flag led a small column of looters, travelling in pickups, along the main street; the column stopped frequently to check the ethnicity of shopkeepers and café owners.[102] On 12 June a crowd led by an APC was reported to have burned 23 houses on Navoi street.[103]

APCs were also used in the Uvamskaya street area, in the eastern part of the city, where there were intense clashes during the latter part of the pogroms. One APC was rammed by a Kamaz heavy truck; another was said to have become stuck in a large hole dug by the defenders using an excavator.[104] Residents estimate 43 people were killed there, and 487 houses destroyed.[105]

[94] Crisis Group interview, Cheremushki resident, 30 June 2010, reinterviewed 12 July 2010.
[95] Residents of other areas report similar conversations with looters. In Tuleiken district on Friday 11 June, a car without plates drew up to a barricade in an ethnically mixed area. A Kyrgyz resident asked the occupants what they wanted. One told him to relax, saying in bureaucratically-couched words of reassurance that their area was "not subject to a sweep" (зачистка). Crisis Group interview, Kyrgyz resident of Tuleiken neighborhood, 1 July 2010. In another part of the city a Russian resident asked for one of the weapons being handed out. He was told to go away, this was not his struggle. Crisis Group interview, July 2010.
[96] Crisis Group interview, Cheremushki, 2 July 2010.
[97] Crisis Group interview, high-ranking official, 22 July 2010.
[98] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 9 July 2010.
[99] Crisis Group interview, Uzbeks living next to the provincial hospital, Osh, 2 July 2010.
[100] Crisis Group interview, Cheremushki, 2 July 2010.
[101] Crisis Group interview, Uzbek resident of Furkat, Osh, 5 July 2010. The barricade was being built between Furkat and Vostochny districts.
[102] Crisis Group interview, restauranteur, Osh, 7 July 2010. He was able to convince the marauders that he was not Uzbek and his house was spared. During the pogroms, however, his Uzbek son-in-law was killed in Vostochny district. Officials later demanded a 10,000 som (about $220) bribe for a death certificate.
[103] Crisis Group interview, Uzbek resident of Navoi street area, Osh, 4 July 2010.
[104] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 9 July 2010, reinterviewed 11 July 2010.
[105] Personal communication, 29 July 2010.

E. WEAPONS SEIZURES AND DISTRIBUTION

There are numerous reports that police, military and border forces surrendered weapons or voluntarily handed them over to the crowd during the unrest.[106] "Strangely enough (troops and police) parted with their weapons practically without a fight or a regret. I will say more: the surrender of a military arsenal often happened voluntarily", said Omurbek Suvanaliyev, Osh chief of police during the pogroms.[107] An ethnic Russian member of the Afghan veterans' unit, mobilised by the government to help keep order, criticised the Kyrgyz army and police for their lack of discipline and training, as well as their "fraternisation" with the looters and those intent on what he called genocide.[108]

Weapons were also handed out by unidentified civilians and politicians. Crisis Group was told of weapons being delivered to marauders and Kyrgyz civilians in Cheremushki and Southeast district.[109] Senior Bishkek politicians with southern connections may have also distributed weapons. A government minister asserted that a senior opposition politician did so during the unrest.[110] A southern regional government official read from what was probably a police report, describing how the son of a leading member of the provisional government had raided the Nooken police station, some 25km from Jalalabad, during the violence. The politician's son and his accomplices seized seven automatic weapons and several handguns, which they then used for an attack on the nearby village of Bazar Korgon, during which several people were killed.[111] A prominent opposition politician admitted that a member of his party in the south had "with the permission of the [local] mayor and in his presence received weapons in June, during the events, and had distributed them to people for their protection. Afterwards he returned them all".[112]

A local Kyrgyz politician in Osh said, approvingly, that "city officials" had also distributed weapons.[113] After the pogroms, officials tried to retrieve the weapons. In one such instance, a witness said an army major appeared at his door with a printed list of automatic weapons. The witness recalled that there were about twenty items on the sheet of paper, with serial numbers and recipients' addresses. Someone had received a weapon and given the witness's address. The major was discomfited to learn that the address was false.[114]

F. EXPLAINING THE VIOLENCE

1. The official version

In late June the State National Security Service issued what is essentially the official version of the Osh and Jalalabad pogroms. By their account, three groups had been involved: the Bakiyev family; representatives of "national cultural centres" – Uzbek organisations in this instance – and a broad alliance of Islamic terrorists, including the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the Islamic Jihad Union, the Taliban and the United Tajik Opposition. By this account the Bakiyev family had met twice with Islamists: the president's younger son Maxim negotiating with them in Dubai in April, and two unnamed Bakiyev family representatives finalising a $30 million deal in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan, the next month, "in the personal presence of Mullo Abdullo".[115]

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[106] Crisis Group interview, senior security official, Bishkek, 29 July 2010. As is the case with all statistics connected to the violence, officials and politicians offer wildly differing estimates of the number of automatic weapons seized. These range from about 160, according to the security official cited in this footnote, to 2000, in the opinion of several leading politicians.

[107] "Я не хочу стать соучастником губительной политики" ["I do not want to be an accomplice in a disastrous policy"], *Kommersant*, 22 June 2010, http://kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1390360&NodesID=5; and Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 5 July 2010.

[108] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 30 June 2010. The Afghan veterans were widely praised as the most disciplined unit on the streets after the violence. Ethnic Uzbek veterans of Afghanistan also volunteered, but their assistance was declined.

[109] In Southeast district, the weapons were distributed by young men in a black BMW 5 series, as usual without plates. Crisis Group interview, July 2010.

[110] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 21 July 2010; a senior security official later made the same allegation; Crisis Group interview, 29 July 2010.

[111] Crisis Group interview, southern Kyrgyzstan, 13 July 2010.

[112] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 28 July 2010. The politician complained that the party official is now being threatened with prosecution.

[113] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 1 July 2010.

[114] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 30 July 2010, reinterviewed 12 July 2010.

[115] "Спецслужбы Кыргызстана утверждают, что к беспорядкам на юге республики близкие бывшего президента Курманбека Бакиева привлекли международные террористические организации" ["Kyrgyzstan's special services assert that people close to former president Kurmanbek Bakiyev involved international terrorist organisations in the disorder in the south of the republic"], 24.kg news site, 24 June 2010, www.24.kg/osh/77409-specsluzhby-kyrgyzstana-utverzhdayut-chto-k.html; "Кенешбек Душебаев: У нас есть доказательства, что Бакиевы договаривались с представителями международных террористических организаций" ["Keneshbek Dushebayev: we have proof that the Bakiyevs sought an agreement with international terrorist organizations"] 24.kg news service, 24 June 2010, www.24.kg/osh/77418-keneshbek-dushebaev-u-nas-est-dokazatelstva-chto.

Certain leaders of "national cultural centres" had aided and abetted the unrest with their demands for an additional state language and other concessions. One had also put up $100,000 to organise unrest in Osh. The mention of national cultural centres and their demands is a clear reference to Batyrov and his supporters, a number of whom were subsequently arrested, some of them on weapons offences.[116]

Some senior officials distanced themselves from this sweeping conspiracy. A deputy head of the provisional government, Azimbek Beknazarov, declared soon after the fighting subsided that the "third force had come from inside the country". "I am convinced that those around Kurmanbek Bakiyev and Kadyrjan Batyrov were the third force", he declared.[117] Osh's chief of police during the violence, meanwhile dismissed the idea of outside provocation out of hand. "There was no third force", Omurbek Suvanaliyev told a Russian newspaper.[118]

The government did not explain why the Taliban would be interested in pogroms in Osh; the IMU and Islamic Jihad Union do not see eye to eye on jihadist tactics, and, as organisations with a strong ethnic Uzbek component, would seem to have little reason to kill their own people – especially in an area which is thought to provide sanctuary to fighters from both organisations. The United Tajik Opposition ceased to exist with the end of the Tajik civil war in 1997, and is viewed by the IMU as apostate for betraying the jihad by negotiating a peace agreement with the Tajik government. Mullo Abdullo, a former Tajik guerrilla leader with strong Taliban connections, was accused in 2009 of leading an incursion into the Tavildara region of Tajikistan. He was never located there, however, and former comrades in arms claim that serious drug problems have long ruled out his participation in military operations. There was, finally, no explanation of why the "national cultural centre" leaders who, the previous month, had led attacks on the Bakiyev family would now side with them, directly or indirectly.

2. Two narratives

Private conversations with Kyrgyz officials, including very high level ones, tend to focus on local factors in explaining the pogroms. There are two dominant narratives. One suggests premeditated Uzbek malice, the other an almost accidental flare up. Both adhere to the so far unproven assertion that the Uzbeks were heavily armed, and depict the Kyrgyz as responding spontaneously to a perceived threat. In summary, they run as follows:

1. The Uzbeks were heavily armed and had carefully planned their uprising. An increasingly hard-line narrative, common in the Kyrgyz political establishment and adopted by some leaders, states or implies that the Uzbeks had conspired to launch a coup de main to strengthen their political position in the country. Numerous officials and observers, including a senior security official, say that Uzbeks had, since 1990, been creating arms caches in their mosques, waiting for the right time to strike.[119]
2. A more moderate account, encountered less often but voiced by some very senior figures, also holds that the Uzbeks were armed. "I am sure of it", said one high-level official. "The police are [ethnic] Kyrgyz, the courts are Kyrgyz, the prosecutors are Kyrgyz. The truth is that every official is on the side of the Kyrgyz". It was therefore "natural that Uzbeks would acquire weapons to protect themselves". To further complicate matters, Kadyrjan Batyrov "started to work very loudly. Northern Kyrgyz had come to power. We are much more liberal; the Uzbeks felt good with them [sic]. They felt freedom had come".[120]

The official who enunciated the second narrative tried to explain the cultural background to the violence – again deviating from external force theory. Referring to reports, from international organisations and others, that a prominent politician, Kamchibek Tashiyev, and deputy government chairman Azimbek Beknazarov had both been involved in anti-Uzbek violence, the official explained: "Tashiyev and Beknazarov are very southern people. Their mentality is that [ethnic] Kyrgyz should be protected. They blame the Uzbeks, and say they do not respect our culture. If we were not in power, they [the

html. One of the reports warned that the Islamic Jihad Union had reinforced its fighters and were planning attacks on government buildings and other targets. None were subsequently reported. The second figure in the government, Almazbek Atambayev, had previously claimed unnamed counter-revolutionaries had paid $10 million for the Osh pogrom. See footnote 25.

[116] "Установлена причастность исламских экстремистов к событиям на юге Кыргызстана" ["The involvement of Islamic extremists in events in southern Kyrgyzstan has been established"], Kabar news service, 24 June 2010, http://kabar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2091&Itemid=77.

[117] "Азимбек Бекназаров: Третья сила, стоявшая за конфликтом на юге Кыргызстана, была внутренней, а не внешней" ["Azimbek Beknazarov: the third force behind the conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan was internal, not external"], 24.kg news service, 26 June, 2010, www.24.kg/osh/77186-azimbek-beknazarov-tretya-sila-stoyavshaya-za.html

[118] "Я не хочу стать соучастником губительной политики" ["I do not want to be an accomplice in a disastrous policy"], *Kommersant*, 22 June 2010, http://kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1390360&NodesID=5.

[119] Crisis Group interniew, Bishkek, 29 July 2010.

[120] Crisis Group interview, high official, 22 July 2010.

Uzbeks] would crush us. Look how Kyrgyz are treated in Uzbekistan". The official added that there had been reports that Tashiyev was involved in "bloody events", but doubted Beknazarov was, "though he might have been biased in some way".[121]

Barring detailed evidence from the security organs, neither the theory of a "third hand" nor the different narratives of an armed Uzbek uprising seem convincing. They do not explain the use of APCs, for example, the presence of gunmen who are usually described as ethnic Kyrgyz, and the crisp coordination between the crowd and older Kyrgyz men, or the ease with which the marauders and gunmen moved through the streets of Osh, unchallenged by the authorities.

These issues need to play a central role in any serious enquiry, national or international, into the events. Another issue that frequently emerges in conversation with officials and requires further investigation is the alleged role of Osh city authorities in the violence, including the mayor.[122] As noted earlier, city officials were seen distributing weapons, which military officers tried to retrieve after the violence ended. An official in Jalalabad, asked to explain why the casualties in that city had been so much less than Osh, replied: "because the local authorities were not involved".[123] While rejecting allegations of organising the June pogroms, the mayor offered in August his own analysis of the events, during his confrontation with the central government. Asked by a Russian newspaper about the June violence, he answered: "I know just one thing. The Uzbeks were encroaching on Kirgiziya's sovereignty. We repulsed them".[124] Soon after his victorious confrontation with the government, his new ally, deputy prime minister Azimbek Beknazarov, reportedly praised him as the central player during the June crisis: "When in June all the generals ran and hid, only Myrzakmatov was able to deal with the situation".[125] "The Kyrgyz aren't at war with us", said one demoralised local official, showing visitors round a destroyed *mahalla* in Osh. "The local government is".[126]

[121] Ibid. Tashiyev had in fact been publicly accused by the head of the State Security Service on 24 June. "так кто же устроил резню на юге?" ["So who organised the slaughter in the south?"], Delo newspaper, 1 July 2010 http://delo.kg/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=108&Itemid=77.

[122] Crisis Group interview, senior government minister, July 2010; Crisis Group interview, high-level official, Bishkek, 22 July 2010.

[123] Crisis Group interview, Jalalabad, 13 July 2010.

[124] "Директивы правительства не имеют на юге юридической силы" [Government directives do not have juridical force in the South], Kommersant Daily newspaper, 19 August 2010, http://kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1489447&NodesID=5

[125] "Мелис Мырзакматов заявил, что остается мэром города Ош" [Melis Myrzakmatov annouced he is remaining as mayor of Osh"] fergana.akipress.org news site, 20 August 2010, http://fergana.akipress.org/news:92251/

[126] Crisis Group interview, Osh, July 2010. The local authorities told *mahalla* officials in early July not to speak to foreigners. One of those who received these instructions says he was led to believe his family would suffer if he disobeyed the order.

VI. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

A. THE BAKIYEV FAMILY ROLE

Although there was considerable speculation that the Bakiyev family would mount a determined effort to win back power, and while it is quite clear they have enough money to bankroll such an effort, it is doubtful that Kurmanbek Bakiyev himself would have much of a stomach for a fight. Some who worked with him said he was one of the more passive members of the family, often pressured by his younger son, Maxim, and his brother and chief bodyguard Janysh. Both were ambitious and ruthless, and harboured presidential pretensions. They had little love for each other, which may have made the president's life even more difficult. The president, meanwhile, stayed out of sight for large periods of time in the last years of his rule, and seemed to have a diminishing interest in politics. His absences were variously attributed to poor health, a drinking problem, or a new young and unofficial family. It was no great surprise, therefore, when he left the country a little over a week after his overthrow. His departure undermined the family's efforts to bring him back to office.[127]

Despite the clumsiness of their attempts to establish a power base in the south, the Bakiyevs continued to preoccupy the provisional government. "Frankly, they [the provisional government] became rather obsessed with [the Bakiyevs]", said a government adviser.[128] After the debacle in Osh in April, it was logical for the Bakiyev clan to focus on Jalalabad, the family home base. Yet here as well they suffered setbacks. The government nonetheless remains convinced that the Bakiyevs could bring them down. To buttress this fear, they usually cite a 35-minute obscenity-packed conversation that was posted on YouTube on 19 May.[129] In it Maxim and Janysh Bakiyev discuss plans to take back power. One idea has stuck in the minds of many officials: plans to hire 500 well-trained thugs[130] to overthrow the government. Officials have mentioned this frequently in discussions of the pogroms, in their claims that snipers were firing indiscriminately at both sides to inflame inter-ethnic rage.

The tape makes it clear that the 500 thugs were to carry out a coup in Bishkek. This was to happen before the 27 June referendum, and would take just a few hours, the two men agreed. Four or five buildings would be seized, including the parliament, defence ministry, security headquarters and television stations. They anticipated no resistance: the government's credibility was at rock bottom. The two men agree that they need just the gunmen – "no under-aged [kids]", they insist, presumably a reference to the crowds they had used unsuccessfully in the south.

They also admit that all their plans suffer from a major disadvantage. The "Boss" who would be the "legal" and "legitimate" leader of all this, was not interested. Maxim says that he discussed the coup plans with the Boss. "He said 'I don't want to'". Various references in different contexts to the Boss leave no doubt it is the former president. The conversation implies that Kurmanbek Bakiyev had been traumatised by an earlier attempted show of force that had turned menacing. Janysh agreed, "he won't go through with it". There has been no confirmed sighting of the 500 Bakiyev-hired thugs. Instead of the coup, the family tried, with no success whatsoever, a powerplay in their own home area on 13-14 May by seizing regional administrative buildings. The failure of this suggests that their plans considerably exceeded their ability to execute them. The real limits of their skills as conspirators are caught by Maxim's first words on the tape: he remarks with a self-congratulatory laugh that he and his uncle can talk freely. No-one, he says, would have had time to detect the new phone number they were using for this conversation.

This is not to say that the pogroms did not involve any members of the clan or, perhaps, former Bakiyev officials now looking to burnish their nationalist credentials. It seems likely, however, that the government is overemphasising the extent of the Bakiyev conspiracy to justify its own impotence in the face of the Osh tragedy. It is especially noteworthy that Mayor Myrzakmatov told a journalist on 16 June that there was no evidence that the Bakiyev clan was behind the pogrom.[131] No marauders or

[127] For more on Bakiyev family dynamics, see Crisis Group Briefing, *Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm*; and Crisis Group Report, *Kyrgyzstan: A Hollow Regime Collapses*, both op. cit.
[128] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 22 July 2010.
[129] The conversation is in four parts on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KB8GAnNM78&feature=related; www.youtube.com/watchv=UTeKQRMYmSA&feature=related; www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZolZJUA8B80&NR=1;www.youtube.com/watch?v=biR2qlMqc88&feature=related. English subtitles were added to the recording at some point. These are partial, inaccurate and were not produced by a native speaker. Maxim Bakiyev's abundant use of obscenities seems in particular to have bewildered the translator.

[130] The term used was the untranslatable отморозки, which implies someone whose mental functions are in deep freeze.
[131] "Мэр Оша Мелис Мырзакматов: «Я свой пост не оставлю!»" ["Osh Mayor Melis Myrzakmatov: 'I will not leave my post'"], Ferghana.ru website, 16 June 2010, www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6614.

demonstrators apparently expressed support for the deposed president during the pogroms.

B. WERE THE UZBEKS ARMED?

Despite frequent government claims throughout the fighting that the Uzbeks were heavily armed – assertions quoted by international media and other groups, including Crisis Group, in the first days of the violence – there is no indication that the Uzbeks had any significant arsenal. No video evidence has been found, and no reliable outside testimonies have surfaced. The Uzbeks put up a furious resistance in many places, with stones, blunt instruments, molotov cocktails and some hunting rifles. As the pogroms continued, Uzbeks in several *mahallas* concluded they should try to seize automatic weapons from attackers, even at the cost of their own lives. Discussions like this were reported in the Uvamskaya street area and in the centre of Osh.[132] In some districts under attack, people were reportedly phoning desperately, and unsuccessfully, to acquire weapons. As this is clearly one of the key elements in the government narrative of events, the Kyrgyz authorities need to provide independently verifiable evidence for their claims.

[132] Crisis Group interview, Uvamskaya street, Osh, 9 July 2010. Two weapons were seized in this way, with several of those trying to seize the weapons reportedly killed in the process.

VII. AFTERMATH

A. THE HUMAN COST

1. Death toll

On 18 June 2010, as the official death toll reached 191, President Roza Otunbayeva warned that the real total was likely to be ten times the official figure.[133] Many victims, she explained, would be buried immediately as local custom demands, and not officially registered. From that point on there were conflicting statistics. President Otunbayeva's formula was neither amended nor rescinded. On 12 July a provisional government deputy chair, Azimbek Beknazarov, told a Russian paper that 893 had died.[134] The official count, meanwhile, reached 393 by 19 August 2010.[135]

2. Destruction

Data assembled from satellite imagery by the UN indicate that 2,677 buildings were totally destroyed: of these 1,977 in Osh city, 401 in Bazar Kurgon, to the north west of Jalalabad, and 261 in Jalalabad city itself.[136] By early August 75,000 people were still displaced, half without homes to return to. The priority should be providing shelter to those who need it before the onset of winter at the end of October. At the moment, however, there is a sharp difference of opinion between the city government and international organisations. The latter stress the need to restore the houses destroyed or damaged, and to provide

[133] Vladimir Solovyov, "Роза Отунбаева: Даст Бог, получим положительный ответ от Росси" ["Roza Otunbayeva, God willing, we will get a positive answer from Russia"], *Kommersant*, 18 June 2010, www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?fromsearch=a2bb7dfe-3fb2-4f1f-b95d-54539e989d0b&docsid=1387772.
[134] Azimbek Beknazarov, "Of course it will be a cock-up", op. cit.
[135] "Official death toll climbs to 393 in Osh and Jalal-Abad", 24.kg news site, 19 August 2010, http://eng.24.kg/community/2010/08/19/13188.html
[136] "Damage analysis summary for the affected cities of Osh, Jalal-abad and Bazar-Kurgan, Kyrgyzstan", damage analysis based on post-crisis satellite imagery recorded on 18 and 21 June 2010, UNOSAT, 9 July 2010, www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullmaps_sa.nsf/luFullMap/A9691155069208E6C12577620032B74E/$File/Map.pdf?OpenElement. For a government estimate, see "Ж.Сатыбалдиев: Ущерб, нанесенный Кыргызстану, всему нашему народу с моральной и политической точки зрения огромен и его невозможно оценить количественно" ["J. Satybaldiyev: The damaged inflicted on Kyrgyzstan, all our people from the moral and political viewpoint is enormous and cannot be measured quantitatively"], Belyi Parus, 27 July 2010, www.paruskg.info/2010/07/27/29243#more-29243.

temporary housing facilities as soon as possible.[137] The Osh authorities, on the other hand, speak of building high rise housing for those who have lost their homes. This represents a profound break with the traditional Uzbek way of life in the *mahallas*. Construction would be slow, and in Kyrgyzstan is likely to be derailed by corruption, as building contracts are determined by political relationships rather than skill or probity.

3. Refugees

About 120,000 refugees, mostly Uzbek women, children and elderly, fled across the border into Uzbekistan during the violence. There they were housed in a well-organised, tightly-controlled series of camps administered by the Uzbek government. International officials noted that their visits to the camps were closely monitored and sometimes impeded by Uzbek officials.[138] The refugees, many of them located in and around Andijan, were not allowed out of the camps, where they stayed for about two weeks.

As the 27 June referendum approached, they were urged to return by both visiting Kyrgyz officials and representatives of the Uzbek government.[139] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expressed concern that they were being compelled to go back,[140] which the government denied. The fact that about 80,000 refugees left the camps spontaneously according to the Kyrgyz government, in the space of a few days did not dispel doubts.[141] They returned to destroyed homes, staying with friends and relatives, or salvaging what they could and taking up residence, usually close to their ruined homes, in tents provided by international organisations. One woman who returned, reluctantly by her own account, recalled being told by a visiting Kyrgyz official that if she did not return, she would be sent to a camp in Batken, far from Osh, and would not see her family again for a long time.[142]

B. Referendum

Despite the bloodshed in Osh and Jalalabad, the provisional government went ahead with a referendum on a new constitution on 27 June, insisting that this would be a much needed validation of their legitimacy. The referendum passed peacefully, with the state of emergency and curfew lifted for one day while voting took place. The government claimed a turnout of 72.2 per cent, of which 90.5 per cent voted yes to the one question on the ballot.[143] The turnout was also reported to be high in the south.

The vote was monitored by a reduced team of OSCE observers – security concerns led the OSCE to withdraw long-term observers from Osh and Jalalabad and not to deploy 300 short-term monitors.[144] The OSCE declared that the government established "the necessary conditions for the conduct of a peaceful constitutional referendum", but expressed mild reservations about the inconsistent legal framework and convoluted wording of the question. It also noted that "an atmosphere of fear and the prevailing security conditions in the Osh and Jalal-Abad oblasts hampered possibilities for campaigning in the last two weeks before the referendum".[145] The turnout in Osh was

[137] "Kyrgyzstan: UNHCR calls for better return conditions, appeals for more funds before winter", UNCHR, 27 July 2010, www.unhcr.org/4c4ea5a89.html; Crisis Group interview, international official, August 2010.

[138] "UNHCR starts aid distribution as number of refugees in Uzbekistan tops 100,000", UNHCR, 22 June 2010, www.unhcr.org/4c20bc759.html; for access being impeded, Crisis Group interview, senior international official, 26 June 2010.

[139] "О возвращении беженцев из Кыргызстана" ["On the Return of Refugees from Kyrgyzstan"], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1 July 2010, http://mfa.uz/rus/pressa_i_media_servis/news/o_vozvrashenii_bejenev_iz_kirgizstana.mgr; "Беженцы из Кыргызстана в Узбекистане: Уход и возврат" ["Refugees from Kyrgyzstan in Uzbekistan: exodus and return"], Ferghana.ru, 30 June 2010, www.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=6638.

[140] "UNHCR cautions that returns in Kyrgyzstan must be sustainable", UNHCR, 23 June 2010, www.unhcr.org/4c230b759.html.

[141] "В Кыргызстан после июньских трагических событий вернулось 78 тысяч 675 беженцев" ["78,675 refugees returned to Kyrgyzstan after the tragic June events"], 24.kg news site, 27 June 2010, www.24.kg/osh/77632-v-kyrgyzstan-posle-iyunskix-tragicheskix-sobytij.html.

[142] Crisis Group interview, Osh, 7 July 2010.

[143] The ballot asked Kyrgyz citizens to vote yes or no "to accept the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On Implementing the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic', the drafts of which are proposed by the Provisional Government for a referendum", www.shailoo.gov.kg/postanovleniya-cik-kr/ob-utverzhdenii-teksta-byulletenya-dlya-golosovaniya-na-referendume-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki-27-iyunya-2010-goda-ob-utverzhdenii-teksta-byulletenya-dlya-golosovaniya-na-referendume-kyrgyzskoj-respub/. See "On Approving the Text of the Voting Ballot at the Referendum of the Kyrgyz Republic on 27 June 2010", Decree of the Central Election and Referendum Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic. The referendum results are available from the Central Election and Referendum Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic, http://cec.shailoo.gov.kg/i-election.asp?ElectionID=132&DistrictID=1470.

[144] Дарья Подольская "ОБСЕ не пришлет в Кыргызстан 300 человек, призванных наблюдать за ходом референдума" [Darya Podolskaya, "OSCE will not send 300 people to Kyrgyzstan who were supposed to observe the referendum"], 24.kg news site, 22 June 2010, www.24.kg/politic/77199-obse-otozvala-300-chelovek-prizvannyx-nablyudat.html.

[145] "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions", OSCE/ODIHR, Limited Referendum Observation Mission, 28

the lowest nationwide, 51.05 per cent.[146] Given the social disruption, and the climate of fear which the OSCE itself noted, this figure has been greeted with scepticism.

Before the vote some opposition figures claimed that the results would be falsified, and threatened radical measures to "defend their vote". Prominent among these was Omurbek Suvanaliyev, who was Osh chief of police for eight days during the unrest, and then resigned, ostensibly in protest at what he claimed were indications the referendum would be fixed.[147] After the vote, opposition members did not protest.[148]

The government viewed the referendum as a crucial confirmation of its legitimacy. Some of those who voted yes in the south, however, say they did so without fully understanding the issues at stake, or because they did not want to the government to assume Uzbeks were in the opposition. A Kyrgyz villager in Kurshab, on the other hand, said categorically that no one in his area wanted anything to do with the vote, while journalists in Jalalabad and Osh reported a mixed turn-out, good in some districts, low in others. "I did not vote for the referendum", commented one of the journalists, "I voted for peace".[149]

Since the referendum, a number of senior provisional government figures, as planned, have resigned in order to concentrate on the parliamentary elections in October. Some senior government members continue to doubt the wisdom of a parliamentary system. "Of course it will be a cock up", deputy premier Azimbek Beknazarov remarked.[150] The provisional government had planned to wind up its operations in the first week of July. Its first attempt to dissolve itself was unsuccessful, as it failed to assemble a quorum.[151] Finally a new government of technocrats took its place. There is no sign this government will be any more effective.

June 2010, www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2010/06/44868_en.pdf.

[146] Ibid.

[147] He was appointed 12 June and resigned 20 June.

[148] In late June Suvanaliyev was named head of Ata-Jurt, a radically inclined political party whose leadership includes former Bakiyev-era senior security officials. On 20 July he resigned to join another of the 57 parties expected to contest the elections. Sources close to the presidential staff say he recently approached Otunbayeva for a government position.

[149] Crisis Group interview, Jalalabad region, 3 July 2010.

[150] "Well, of course it will be a cock-up", *Kommersant*, op. cit.

[151] Ibid.

VIII. THE INTERNATIONAL MOOD: SHADES OF PESSIMISM

When Russian government officials met their counterparts from a major Western country in May to discuss Kyrgyzstan, both sides struggled to find the right word to characterise the situation. They came up with the same one, which translates, euphemistically, as complete mess.[152] This was before the Osh tragedy.

The pogroms further damaged the already sinking credibility of the Kyrgyz government. Since it took power in April, the provisional government has failed to allay doubts harboured by most foreign governments and international organisations regarding its effectiveness and ability to focus on major problems. A sense of fatalism about the country's future seems to be setting in. In private the majority of foreign diplomats, international officials and other observers are dismayed at what most view as the government's failure to stamp its authority on the country, or make even modest headway in addressing the daunting array of problems facing it. They believe the president is largely in denial about the gravity of the situation, and the causes of violence in the south. Although the government is elated that a donors conference came up with over $1 billion in pledges, most foreign officials say the leadership does not understand that the chance of receiving even half this amount is very slender.[153]

A. THE U.S. AND RUSSIA: GRIM AND GRIMMER

Washington and Moscow are if anything more pessimistic than others. U.S. officials view the Otunbayeva government as less than coherent and far from capable, but the only available option. U.S. interests in Kyrgyzstan revolve around the airbase at Manas International Airport outside the capital, a major transit point for troops going to or leaving Afghanistan – about 50,000 pass through each month. While Washington continues to place high priority on the base, significant high-ranking officials in the National Security Council, State Department and even the Pentagon, at least acknowledge that past failures to rein in corruption within the Bakiyev regime were counter-

[152] Crisis Group interview, Western official, May 2010.

[153] Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, international officials, June-July 2010. The donors conference was held in Bishkek on 27 July and produced promised of $1.1 billion, to be allocated over 30 months. International officials cautioned that no more than one-third of the full amount is likely to be disbursed, given normal donor patterns, and the subsequent humanitarian crisis in Pakistan. Crisis Group interviews, Bishkek, 7, 14 August 2010.

productive. In particular they stress their belief that the new fuel contract for Manas will be transparent, and will serve to underline their determination to break with any appearance of corruption. There are indications in Bishkek, however, that the contract will once again be awarded to a number of local counterparts who have strong links with both the current elite and the previous regime.[154]

The U.S. also actively pressed for the OSCE police mission and has agreed both to finance the largest percentage of that cost and to provide some police, which the U.S. hopes will increase its ability to detect and respond to any renewal of ethnic conflict.[155] Many Kyrgyz political activists, however, maintain that any foreign presence, including the police mission, will be biased towards the Uzbek, and view the OSCE deployment with hostility. As a result, it is unlikely the mission will spend any useful length of time in the south. Western officials who are tracking the issue closely believe that most powerful opposition to the police mission comes from prominent organised crime and narcotics figures in the south. They are said to be pressing their political contacts hard to ensure the deployment never happens.[156]

Russia has long viewed Central Asia as a zone of special interest. Kyrgyzstan, however, is now viewed as the weakest link. On 12 June, when Otunbayeva admitted that the situation in the south was out of control and said she was engaged in intensive discussion with Russia,[157] Moscow pulled back. There was little sign of urgency from the Russian side. Instead of troops, Bishkek received a steady stream of discouraging advice. In a phone conversation with Otunbayeva on 13 June, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev "stressed that it is necessary to restore order with the maximum speed and put an end to inter-ethnic conflict".[158] On 14 June, Nikolay Patrushev, a Putin intimate and secretary of the National Security Council, declared that the situation in Kyrgyzstan was "exceedingly complex", adding that measures taken by the government in Bishkek were "inadequate".[159] Russia's special representative for Kyrgyzstan, Vladimir Rushailo, called on Kyrgyzstan's population to "demonstrate civil maturity and realise the threat of the country's disintegration".[160]

Medvedev placed the matter in the hands of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), composed of seven former Soviet states,[161] and intended to be Russia's answer to NATO. While on paper ideally suited for peacekeeping, CSTO's charter only permits intervention in the case of aggression by an external government or non-government entity; and several members, including Uzbekistan and Belarus, would have been reluctant to sanction a deployment that could set a precedent for Russian intervention in their countries.

In an interview a few days after the fighting subsided, Medvedev painted a bleak picture of Kyrgyzstan's plight, but hastened to add that Russian peacekeepers were not needed. The problem was, he said, an internal matter. He voiced concern that continuing chaos could lead to a "radical" takeover and "an Afghan scenario of the type that prevailed during the Taliban years, and this would be, in my view, extremely deplorable and exceedingly dangerous for our country and the other countries of Central Asia".[162]

The Kyrgyz government, meanwhile, views the lack of Russian and U.S. military equipment support during the unrest with wry bewilderment. Kyrgyzstan is home to both Russian and U.S. bases, a high official remarked. "Neither gave us anything".[163] During the crisis, the Kyrgyz leadership asked for armoured vehicles from the U.S. to enable officials to travel into Osh from the city airport.

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[154] Crisis Group interviews, U.S. officials, Washington DC, May-July 2010.

[155] Crisis Group interview, senior State Department official, Washington DC, 3 August 2010.

[156] Crisis Group interview, senior Western official, Kyrgyzstan, August 2010.

[157] "РОЗА ОТУНБАЕВА СДЕЛАЛА ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ ДЛЯ ПРЕССЫ О СИТУАЦИИ НА ЮГЕ СТРАНЫ" ["Roza Otunbayeva has made a press statement on the situation in the south of the country"], Kyrgyz government press service, 12 June 2010, www.kyrgyz-el.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=389&Itemid=1.

[158] "Дмитрий Медведев пообщался с Розой Отунбаевой" ["Dmitry Medvedev spoke to Roza Otunbayeva"], Ural KP website, 13 June 2010, http://ural.kp.ru/online/news/684675/.

[159] "Ситуация в Кыргызстане крайне сложная, принимаемые временным правительством меры оказались недостаточными" ["The situation in Kyrgyzstan is exceedingly complex, and the measures taken by the Provisional Government have proven inadequate"], 24.kg news service, 14 June 2010, www.24.kg/osh/76405-nikolaj-patrushev-situaciya-v-kyrgyzstane-krajne.html.

[160] "Жителям Кыргызстана необходимо проявить гражданскую зрелость и осознать угрозу распада страны" ["The inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan must show civic maturity and realise the threat of the country's disintegration"] 24.kg news site, 18 June 2010, www.24.kg/osh/76939-vladimir-rushajlo-zhitelyam-kyrgyzstana.html.

[161] Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

[162] Interview with Dmitry Medvedev, *Wall Street Journal*, 18 June 2010, available at www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/8082.

[163] Crisis Group interview, high-level official, Bishkek, 22 July 2010. Political support was vocal and reflected in visits to Bishkek by senior National Security Council, Pentagon and State Department officials, including the deputy secretary of state.

These never materialised.[164] On 23 June, CSTO announced plans to provide Kyrgyzstan will a modest number of helicopters, APCs, fuel and other assistance. The aid would really be coming from Moscow, a security official in Bishkek noted, "CSTO is just paper". Nothing had arrived by mid-August. The reason was clear, the security official remarked, "Moscow does not trust this government".[165] Meanwhile, the high official remarked, the Chinese "from then till now have been silent".[166]

In private the Russians seemed embarrassed that they were expected to play a major role. Rushailo asked visiting officials several times why everyone was looking to Russia to take a lead in Kyrgyzstan.[167] Russian officials emphasised their concern that Kyrgyzstan would become a quagmire, saying they feared finding themselves in a situation where they would have to use lethal force, and thus become a warring party.[168] Russia's reluctance to intervene should, however, come as no surprise. Russian specialists have long viewed Kyrgyzstan as one of several Central Asian countries – along with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – that may not survive in the long term. Russia has few strong political or economic interests in Kyrgyzstan, which lacks the oil, gas and other resources of some neighbours. Moreover, Russian officials say, the current government is a debacle, and the Kremlin fears that disorder will increase when the country becomes a parliamentary republic after the October elections.[169]

The Manas airbase is a constant subject of debate among Kyrgyz politicians, leaving some U.S. officials pessimistic that it will remain a hub much longer. If it does, however, it will continue to figure prominently in U.S. policy on Afghanistan. Yet if Washington's interest in Kyrgyzstan is predominantly linked to the existence of its airbase, the disintegration of state power in Kyrgyzstan could force Moscow, albeit reluctantly, to make the country a priority. A fragmented Kyrgyzstan would facilitate the flow of Islamic insurgents from Afghanistan to Russia's borders; most of the narcotics for Russia's growing drug problem already pass through Kyrgyzstan. If state power weakens further, the flow would probably grow. Perhaps most worrying for Moscow would be a semi-autonomous, semi-criminal entity in southern Kyrgyzstan, bordering and perhaps gradually infecting, three other strategically or economically important countries with its brand of chaos.

The UN, meanwhile, remained little more than an "embarrassed bystander", in the words of one senior official.[170] In New York, the UN Security Council appeared to be waiting for Russia to intervene. The UN Secretariat informally briefed the Security Council on 14 and 24 June. On 14 June, Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe called for "urgent action by the international community". On 24 June, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco reported on continuing tensions and concerns of future violence.[171] On neither occasion did the Council take any action, mainly influenced by Russia's position and to the intense frustration of UN officials on the ground. Political pressure from the non-governmental sector also produced no result.[172]

B. UZBEKISTAN: KARIMOV AS A MODERATE

One major surprise of the Osh crisis was the response of Uzbekistan's irascible and mercurial leader, Islam Karimov, whose usual role in the region is to roil relations with his neighbours over energy supplies, water policy or border disputes. His view of the neighbouring presidents is less than flattering. There was therefore considerable concern as the crisis unfolded that Karimov might intervene or take other steps that would exacerbate the situation. Anxiety was further heightened on several occasions during the violence by rumours that Uzbek special forces were marching on Osh to restore order. In fact, senior officials in Bishkek said, at no point was there such a risk. Karimov was the epitome of caution. Refugees were allowed briefly onto Uzbek territory and housed in well prepared and tightly controlled camps.

[164] Diplomatic sources later said that the request was for the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle, an advanced all terrain vehicle much in demand in Afghanistan. A single vehicle costs well over $500,000. Sources said the government seemed to have hit on the idea after an internet search. Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, August 2010.
[165] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 29 July 2010.
[166] Crisis Group interview, high official, 22 July 2010.
[167] Crisis Group interview, Western diplomat, Bishkek, 19 June 2010; senior international official, Bishkek, 20 June 2010.
[168] Crisis Group interview, high Kyrgyz official, 22 July 2010; senior UN official, 12 July 2010, and other similar.
[169] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 30 July 2010.
[170] Crisis Group interview, international agency official, Bishkek, July 2010.
[171] "UN official warns Security Council that ethnic tensions remain high in Kyrgyzstan", UN News Centre, 24 June 2010, www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35136&Cr=Kyrgyz&Cr1=.
[172] Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch called on the Security Council for an international stabilisation mission to help provide security and ensure humanitarian access. Crisis Group also signed a letter by the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect calling for an international response to the situation. Council members declined to take further action on the situation in Kyrgyzstan.

Karimov's behaviour was motivated by self interest: the desire to ensure at all cost that events in the south of Kyrgyzstan did not undermine his tightly controlled but brittle regime. Western officials say he deployed security forces to prevent any attacks on Kyrgyz communities in Uzbekistan.[173] The Uzbek government also reportedly took measures to ensure that no unofficial volunteers from his country could cross the border to assist their fellow Uzbeks.[174] And Karimov, according to senior Kyrgyz officials, discreetly expressed his opposition to the calls advanced by Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan for linguistic or cultural recognition. Uzbekistan has substantial minorities, notably a very large Tajik population. None of them enjoy such privileges, and Karimov is clearly not keen to see a dangerous precedent emerge in Kyrgyzstan.

C. An Opening for Jihad?

Angrier members of the Uzbek community are seeking protectors. In the past, few middle class, urban Uzbeks looked favourably on the Islamic guerrillas of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) or the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). Now, some Uzbeks say, they would be welcome. Southern Kyrgyzstan is an established part of the IMU and IJU trail from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan or further on to Europe. Small but regular movements from northern Afghanistan, up through Tajikistan, to the Kyrgyz border region of Batken and then Osh and Jalalabad take place every summer, when the high mountain passes open. Western and regional security organisations have long believed that both Osh and Jalalabad regions have been used by both groups as safe havens.

The IMU suffered crippling losses during the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Most Western intelligence sources now believe that it has restored its fighting capacity. Their estimates, likely little more than a guess, usually place IMU fighters in the low thousands. The IMU seems to have become a trans-regional force, composed of Tajik, Kyrgyz, Tatar and Kazakh, as well as Chechens and other fighters from the Caucasus. The IMU and the IJU, which broke away from the IMU in the early 2000s, are both reported to be active in combat in northern Afghanistan, predominantly along the border with Tajikistan.

So far, however, Kyrgyzstan has been fortunate. For most of the past decade, insurgents who have passed through the south have usually had another destination – more often than not Uzbekistan. Central Asia as a whole has, moreover, played a subordinate role in the IMU's strategic plans. The movement's principal objective, a late 2009 statement noted, was the defence of the shariat state in Afghanistan. Once that is achieved, "we will enter Central Asia as victors".[175] In response to the pogroms, the IJU stressed the need for greater faith, and offered no sign they were preparing to intervene in support of southern Kyrgyzstan's Uzbeks. It seemed, in fact, somewhat embarrassed by the outbreak of Muslim upon Muslim violence.[176] The IMU promised its Islamic fraternal assistance would be at some point extended to the oppressed Muslims of Central Asia "if that is Allah's will".[177]

Shortly after that, the IMU's new leader, Usmon Odil, described the bloodshed in Osh as the sort of "low, evil intrigues organised against Muslims by heretic governments".[178] He called on Allah to ensure that "Muslims draw the correct conclusions and choose the path of Jihad, the path of glory and honour", he added. Should the IMU decide on a shift of strategy, however, Russia and Uzbekistan might be obliged to abandon their hands-off position, and the U.S. may have to consider its long-term plans for the region. Kyrgyzstan's security forces were badly demoralised during the April 2010 uprising. Morale suffered further blows during the pogroms, later by government prosecution of senior commanders, and finally by the disastrous attempt in August to remove Osh's mayor. Kyrgyzstan's ability to withstand a serious insurgent push has always been questionable. It is even more so now.

[173] Crisis Group communication, Western official, July 2010.

[174] One senior Kyrgyz official said he believes Karimov's real concern was that any spontaneous march towards the border could easily wheel and head instead for Tashkent, to confront Karimov himself. Crisis Group interview, 29 July 2010.

[175] "Интервью «покойного» Тахира Юлдашева. О целях, задачах и планах ИДУ в Афганистане, Пакистане и Центральной Азии. (Часть 1.)" ["Interview with the "late" Takhir Yuldashev. On the IMU's aims, tasks and plans in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia"], Время Востока [East Time] website, 5 November 2009, www.easttime.ru/reganalitic/1/231.htm.l. The statement is believed to reflect the IMU position, even though it is part of what is described as an interview with Yuldashev, the IMU leader who was killed in August 2009 by a drone strike. The IMU only confirmed his death on 17 August 2010. Until then they had continued to put out statements in his name.

[176] The IJU statement, dated 11 July can be found on: http://chavandoz.byethost5.com/index.php?newsid=162.

[177] The IMU statement, dated 15 July, can be found on: www.furqon.com/Maqolalar/ahmadiy06.2010.html. Hizb-ut Tahrir, an Islamic group which avowedly rejects the armed struggle, has an active presence in the south. It has, however, been largely silent during the recent violence.

[178] "Исламское движение Узбекистана: В связи с гибелью Тахира Юлдашева назначен новый «эмир»" ["The Islamic Moverment of Uzbekistan: given the death of Takhir Yuldashev a new 'emir' has been named"], Ferghana.ru. website, 17 August 2010, quoting the IMU website furqon.com.

IX. POLITICAL FALLOUT

A. THE BAKIYEV FAMILY: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

On 21 July 2010, Akhmat Bakiyev, one of former president Bakiyev's brothers and a key member of the clan, was arrested in Jalalabad. The details of how he had avoided arrest until then reinforced doubts about the loyalty of the security forces and undercut the government's claim that the Bakiyevs had created a sophisticated underground movement. Akhmat had in fact been living with relatives in the centre of the city, disguising himself with a false beard and wig. Relatives of a prominent businessman allegedly murdered in 2005 at the Bakiyev family's instigation claim that they turned him in to the authorities.[179]

Several days after the capture of Akhmat Bakiyev, a young nephew of the former president, Sanjar Bakiyev, was arrested and accused of taking part in the June violence in Jalalabad. Judging from the paucity of media references before his arrest in late June, he does not seem to have been part of the Bakiyev inner circle. Since their arrests, both men were reported to have admitted participating in the pogroms and to be cooperating with investigators.

Akhmat's arrest has deprived the Bakiyev clan of an authority figure capable of conducting the delicate negotiations needed to ensure that the family retains part of its fortune and avoids wholesale persecution. During his brother's presidency, Akhmat was widely described as the "shadow governor-general" of the south, and the Bakiyev family's main business manager. The family established a near monopoly on business and financial activities in the south, both legal and illegal.[180] A senior security official said that the family's monthly turnover of non-drug related businesses was probably around $30-$40 million.[181] Narcotics brought in much more, officials and diplomats believe.[182]

"The family knows they have missed the boat", as far as orchestrating a return to power is concerned, the security official remarked in late July. Instead, they will now be working on ways to keep control of as much of their holdings as possible. This will be difficult, he added, as many will be registered in other people's names. In the short term, he and others suggest, they will try to maintain loyal security officials in place, particularly in the south.[183] The Bakiyev family will have to seek a deal with any new strong man who emerges in the south. In the longer term they will try to establish discreet alliances with former officials who are now carving out for themselves an independent political future.

At least two parties with strong Bakiyev links are planning to run in the October elections. One is Butun Kyrgyzstan, headed by Adakhan Madumarov, a former head of the National Security Council under Bakiyev. A southerner, he still seems to retain a following within the Bakiyev heartland, in and around Jalalabad.[184] A senior member of another new party, Azattyk, founded by the provisional government's former defence minister, Ismail Isakov, says his party is considering an alliance with Madumarov.[185] A number of leaders of a high-profile new party, Ata-Jurt, are former Bakiyev *siloviki*, or senior members of the security military and law enforcement agencies. Among its leaders is Kamchibek Tashiyev, who was accused in late June by the chief of the State National Security Service of involvement in the pogroms. Tashiyev denied the allegations, and demanded a retraction and apologies from the head of State Security.[186] There are also indica-

[179] "Кыргызстан: В Джалал-Абаде задержан брат бывшего президента Ахмат Бакиев" ["Akhmat Bakiyev, the brother of the former president, has been detained in Jalalabad"], Ferghana.ru website, 22 July 2010, www.ferghana.ru/news.php?id=15239&mode=snews.

[180] In the north, the former president's younger son, Maxim, played a controversial and aggressive role in the economy. See Crisis Group Report, *Kyrgyzstan: A Hollow Regime Collapses*, op. cit.

[181] Crisis Group interview, senior security official, Bishkek, 29 July 2010. Like all statistics in Kyrgyzstan, these sums are at best approximations.

[182] Crisis Group interview, senior security official, Bishkek, 29 July 2010.

[183] "Кенешбек Душебаев: У нас есть доказательства, что Бакиевы договаривались с представителями международных террористических организаций" ["Keneshbek Dushebayev: we have proof that the Bakiyevs sought an agreement with international terrorist organizations"], 24.kg news service, 24 June 2010, www.24.kg/osh/77418-keneshbek-dushebaev-u-nas-est-dokazatelstva-chto.html.

[184] Madumarov is in fact from Kurshab village, see footnote 87, op. cit.

[185] Crisis Group interview, Bakyt Amanbayev, Azattyk Party, Bishkek, 14 July 2010.

[186] "Камчыбек Ташиев: Я требую, чтобы Кенешбек Душебаев принес извинения лично мне и опроверг свои заявления, иначе я не смогу удержать людей, собравшихся меня защищать" ["Kamchybek Tashiyev: I demand that Keneshbek Dushebayev personally apologises to me and repu-

tions that Maxim Bakiyev is developing business relations with important political leaders – including some of those who were active in his father's downfall.[187]

There is, however, general agreement that the family will not be able to hold on to their narcotics interests. Transit of narcotics through the area requires a level of control beyond even the richest private businessman. State patronage is needed, at the very least from a major regional leader. Kyrgyzstan is a key link in the so-called northern drug route, leading from Afghanistan's poppy fields through Tajikistan and onwards, to Russia and increasingly to China. The UN calls Osh a "regional hub of trafficking activity".[188]

Western officials have long said privately that narcotics shipments in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan were controlled by very senior officials, in the case of Kyrgyzstan, the Bakiyev family. A Kyrgyz security official, a career intelligence specialist, says that under Bakiyev all arms of the security services were involved, on the president's instructions, in ensuring the safe passage of heroin and other opiates through the country. Two members of the Bakiyev family, the president's brother Janysh and his elder son Marat, were senior figures in Kyrgyz state security. Drugs came through in large convoys, the official said. "The word came down: these are not to be touched. Officials would salute the convoys and let them through".[189] The Bakiyev family received between one third and one half of the value of heroin and other opiates passing through their country every month, the official claimed.[190]

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that 95 metric tonnes of narcotics pass through Central Asian states on their way to Russia every year.[191] A significant amount stays in the region, however. This has resulted in a growing incidence of addiction in Kyrgyzstan; and, as most users inject drugs intravenously, a significant increase in HIV/AIDS. With the overthrow of the president, the immensely profitable narcotics operation is looking for a new patron.

B. WINNERS

Well-informed Kyrgyz observers believe that one of the big winners from the pogroms is organised crime, especially narcotics. "The narcotics business", one well-placed official remarked, "loves smuta" (смута – chaos, confusion). Some officials maintain that the drug flow through Kyrgyzstan increased perceptibly during the chaos that began in April and continued through June.[192] This has given rise to considerable speculation that the gunmen who played such a prominent role in the pogroms were supplied in part by organised crime and narcotics figures, and that smugglers used the chaos to increase the flow of narcotics through the country.

The main political winner to emerge from the crisis is without a doubt Melis Myrzakmatov. After the pogroms, senior government officials admitted, he froze the central government out of the southern capital. "He does not allow us to work in the city", said a high official;[193] a senior minister in the security bloc admitted to a foreign visitor in July that he was not able to control his forces in the south. They answer to the mayor.[194] Myrzakmatov ostentatiously underlined his independence and nationalist credentials when President Roza Otunbayeva visited Osh on 29 July. In an interview to a leading Kyrgyz internet news organisation on the day of her visit, he declared that "we have people power in Kyrgyzstan: only the people can decide whether I resign or not".[195] If anyone tried to dismiss him, he added, he would call a kurultay, a traditional assembly and let them decide. In fact, Myrzakmatov was appointed by the Bakiyev government, not by a tradi-

diates his statements, otherwise I will not be able to restrain the people who have assembled to protect me"], 24.kg news site, 24 June 2010, www.24.kg/osh/77456-kamchybek-tashiev-ya-trebuyu-chtoby-keneshbek.html.

[187] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, 18 August 2010.

[188] "World Drug Report 2010", United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/World_Drug_Report_2010_lo-res.pdf.

[189] The president's younger son, Maxim Bakiyev, once recalled that soon after his father took power in 2005, the family was approached by representatives of the drug trade who offered well over $50 million to keep the trade flowing without mishap. He said that the offer had been rejected. Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, February 2008.

[190] Soon after presidential elections in mid 2009, President Bakiyev closed down the Drug Control Agency, to the considerable dismay of Western governments that had supported it. A Western military official remarked at the time that the DCA had started to work well, and had got "too close" to ruling circles in doing so. See Crisis Group Briefing, *Kyrgyzstan: A Hollow Regime Collapses*, op. cit.

[191] "World Drug Report 2010", UNODC, op. cit.

[192] For one example of this line: Crisis Group interview, senior security official, Bishkek, 29 July 2010. It might also be argued that an authoritarian but complicit ruler like Bakiyev served them even better, however.

[193] Crisis Group interview, high-level official, 22 July 2010.

[194] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, July 2010.

[195] "Мелис Мырзакматов: В Кыргызстане действует народовластие, и вопрос о моей отставке будет решать только народ" ["Melis Myrzakmatov: People's power is functioning in Kyrgyzstan, and the question of my resignation will be decided only by the people"], 24.kg news site, 29 July 2010, http://24.kg/osh/79670-melis-myrzakmatov-v-kyrgyzstane-dejstvuet.html.

tional assembly. Myrzakmatov also declared himself a "nationalist" and declared "I love my nation and will work exclusively in its interests".[196] The term nation – нация – and nationalist clearly referred to ethnic Kyrgyz.[197]

C. TWO DAYS IN AUGUST: HUMILIATION FOR THE GOVERNMENT

Exasperated by Myrzakmatov's defiance, and probably influenced by increasingly international concern about the mayor, the president decided to act. It was a disastrous decision. Late on Wednesday 18 August she alerted senior international organisations and officials, both inside and outside the country, that she was about to remove Myrzakmatov; she seemed quite determined, according to one of them.[198] She probably had two aims: remove the major threat to the country's sovereignty, and prove to the sceptical international donor community that she was truly in charge and capable of resolute action. She informed her interlocutors that she would tell Myrzakmatov to resign by the end of 19 August, or be fired.[199] At some point on 18 August Myrzakmatov arrived in Bishkek for meetings. A Russian newspaper reported that an elite police paramilitary unit attempted to detain him, but was foiled by the mayor's bodyguard.[200]

Before entering negotiations with the central government, the mayor gave a newspaper interview, further escalating the confrontation by declaring that "the government's directives have no juridical force in the south".[201] He then disappeared for a day and a half; he claimed he was held against his will by the government. During that time, however, Myrzakmatov accepted neither a forced resignation nor reported offers of important ministerial portfolios in exchange for a voluntary resignation. For its part, the government clearly did not feel strong enough to arrest him when he refused to cooperate.

The timetable for the president's ultimatum came and went. Government officials in Bishkek offered increasingly confused explanations of what was happening, while in Osh demonstrators gathered in front of the mayor's office; by the morning of 20 August the crowd in Osh was calling for Myrzakmatov's return and the president's resignation.[202] Until the last, senior government officials demonstrated their unfailing capability to embarrass themselves. Thus, well after demonstrators in Osh had been told that the mayor would remain in office and was already heading back to Osh, the Secretary of the National Security Council, Alik Orozov, broke a news blackout to tell journalists the mayor had decided to resign.[203] He wanted out of politics, Orozov explained, and planned to go abroad for medical treatment.[204] By then the president had left the country to attend an informal CSTO summit.

Myrzakmatov flew into Osh on Friday afternoon accompanied by one of the most powerful and controversial members of the provisional government, Azim Beknazarov, a deputy prime minister. "They tried to make him give up his position, but Melis stood firm to the end", Beknazarov told the crowd. "I was one of the people who supported him".[205]

The damage to the government in general and the president in particular is incalculable. Myrzakmatov's victory underlined the government's impotence and incompetence, as well as the president's dwindling authority. Beknazarov's presence showed that even the mayor's explicit rejection of the government's directives was not

[196] "Да, я националист. Я люблю свою нацию и буду действовать исключительно в ее интересах" ["I love my nation and will work exclusively in its interests"], 24.kg news site, 29 July 2010; "Мелис Мырзакматов: Я не нравлюсь хозяйствующим субъектам рынка «Жайма» в городе Оше (Кыргызстан), потому что не беру взяток и не иду у них на поводу" ["The entities in charge of the Jayma market do not like me because I do not take bribes and do not follow anyone's lead"], 24.kg news site, 29 July 2010, www.24.kg/community/79669-melis-myrzakmatov-ya-ne-nravlyus.html.

[197] The inter-communal violence of 10-14 June is often described in Russian-language media as "межнациональные столкновения" – clashes between *natsiya* (нация).

[198] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, senior Western official, 20 August 2010.

[199] Crisis Group interview, Bishkek, international officials, Western diplomats, 19 August 2010.

[200] "Директивы правительства не имеют на юге юридической силы" ["Government directives do not have juridical force in the South"], Kommersant Daily newspaper, 19 August 2010, http://kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1489447&NodesID=5.

[201] Ibid.

[202] "Митингующие в Оше требуют отставки Р.Отунбаевой, на площади появились конники" ["Demonstrators in Osh demand the resignation of R. Otunbayeva, horsemen appear on the square"] Fergana.aki news site, 20 August 2010, http://fergana.akipress.org/news:92131/.

[203] "Алик Орозов: Мэр города Оша (Кыргызстан) Мелис Мырзакматов обещал выйти к своим сторонникам и объяснить, что он сам намерен уйти в отставку" ["Alik Orozov: The Mayor of Osh has promised to go to his supporters and explain that he has decided to retire"] 24.kg news site, 20 August 2010, www.24.kg/community/81038-alik-orozov-myer-goroda-osha-kyrgyzstan-melis.html.

[204] Ibid.

[205] "А.Бекназаров: Мырзакматова заставляли отказаться от должности, но он остается мэром" ["A. Beknazarov:they tried to make Myrzakmatov give up his position, but he remains mayor"], Fergana.aki news site, August 2010.

enough to ensure a united government front against him. The incident has intensified many observers' fears that the worst-case scenarios for this country are the most likely ones. Very powerful before 10 June, Myrzakmatov is now the undisputed leader in the city and region of Osh, and has considerable clout in other parts of the south – likely including Batken, on the border with Tajikistan. With the consolidation of political power, businesspeople in Osh say, comes power over the business sector.

After the August disaster, however, the president's ability to influence events is in serious doubt. Myrzakmatov's national influence, on the other hand, is growing daily. At a time of intense Kyrgyz nationalist ferment, Myrzakmatov is, many government officials admit, viewed as a national hero and the standard bearer of hard-line nationalism.[206] His alliance with Beknazarov gives him an influential voice and a ruthless ally in the capital. His remark reported by the government press service during his 20 August victory rally indicated that his ambitions extended well beyond local government. "We will transfer the capital to Osh", he declared.[207]

[206] Crisis Group interview, high-level government official, 22 July 2010.
[207] "Так закончился митинг в Оше... (без комментариев)" ["This is how the meeting in Osh ended … (no comments)"] Kabar news site, 20 August 2010, http://kabar.kg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5592&Itemid=1.

X. CONCLUSION

The violence and pogroms of June 2010 have further deepened the gulf between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks. If this problem remains unaddressed, it will not take twenty years for another explosion to occur. It could happen five years from now – or, if the slide towards extreme nationalism continues unchecked, much sooner than that. Next time the victimised party could look to Islamic radicals for help, or violence could spread to other ethnic groups – Russians, Uighur, Tatar or Dungan.

Yet in the two months since the pogroms, the position of the government and president have weakened further. There is no indication that either can impose its will on the country or the political elite. Given this, and the fact that leading politicians and even some members of the provisional government may well have been directly or indirectly involved in the violence, there is a real risk that official Bishkek will choose denial over a determined effort to investigate, redress and reconcile. In any case, the Kyrgyz government does not have the capacity to carry out a serious investigation. The government itself has doubts about the loyalty of its security forces, and admits that police, courts and prosecutors are crippled by top-to-bottom corruption. The coming parliamentary elections will make the government even more cautious.

The responsibility for trying to turn around the disastrous situation in the south will therefore fall on the shoulders of the international community – almost by default, given the outside world's studied unwillingness to become involved while the pogroms were happening. It is a task that will need coordination, a single strategy and a clear vision, all attributes that have been conspicuously absent so far. The international community will also need to deploy strenuous efforts to persuade a deeply reluctant Kyrgyz government to support such measures. The early deployment of the OSCE police mission to Osh would indicate that the international community understands that a conflict prevention strategy requires a range of forceful international diplomatic and other mechanisms.

It will need to push for a full-fledged, exhaustive investigation, with a leading role given to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights or another body with experience and capacity in this field. The investigation will need to examine thoroughly all violence, and all allegations made by both communities. Without an authoritative and convincing investigation into the violence, its causes and perpetrators, reconciliation will be impossible.

The international community should push for culturally sensitive reconstruction, not ill-considered and inflammatory plans, such as those of the Osh government to build high rise housing. The temperature will start to drop in the south by October, long before even the foundations have been dug for any apartment block. If those who lost their homes do not want to move into apartments, they should not be forced. If Uzbeks want to see their traditional *mahallas* restored, the international community should respect that.

In particular, donors will need to ensure that no money goes to the Osh regional government whose preeminent leader Melis Myrzakmatov has already declared his determination to work exclusively for his Kyrgyz "nation" (нация). Any donor putting money into the reconstruction of the south should have an effective on-the-ground monitoring capacity, work closely with other organisations engaged in similar activities, and have a clear game-plan for its dealings with the Osh government. Reconstruction of the south should not be used for local leaders' personal gain. Even more importantly, reconstruction should not become a means to reinforce the position of an extreme nationalist politician who has already ceased to obey the government in Bishkek.

The international community will also need to work on a blueprint for establishing a long-term modus vivendi between the majority Kyrgyz and ethnic minorities, Uzbeks and others. The current approach – that any recognition of Uzbek identity is a threat to Kyrgyz identity leads only to a dead-end. The forces that were involved in the well planned and executed attacks on Uzbek *mahallas* are a threat to Kyrgyz democracy and development, not just to ethnic minorities.

These are enormous challenges. The Kyrgyz government, profoundly aware of its weakness and the dangers inherent in examining too closely the tragedy of June 2010, can be expected to resist these changes at every turn. Yet the alternatives are very grim. The country is de facto split in two. If this continues, a criminal state could well emerge in the south, backed by narcotics dealers and providing safe haven to Islamic radical guerrillas. A few years ago, Kyrgyzstan was viewed, not completely implausibly, as Central Asia's outpost of democracy and tolerance. If it continues on its present path, it risks at worst disintegration, at best the reputation of being the sick man of Central Asia.

Brussels/Bishkek, 23 August 2010

APPENDIX A

MAP OF KYRGYZSTAN

APPENDIX B

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is co-chaired by the former European Commissioner for External Relations Christopher Patten and former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering. Its President and Chief Executive since July 2009 has been Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

Crisis Group's international headquarters are in Brussels, with major advocacy offices in Washington DC (where it is based as a legal entity) and New York, a smaller one in London and liaison presences in Moscow and Beijing. The organisation currently operates nine regional offices (in Bishkek, Bogotá, Dakar, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Nairobi, Pristina and Tbilisi) and has local field representation in fourteen additional locations (Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Bujumbura, Damascus, Dili, Jerusalem, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria, Sarajevo and Seoul). Crisis Group currently covers some 60 areas of actual or potential conflict across four continents. In Africa, this includes Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan Strait, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in Europe, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Russia (North Caucasus), Serbia and Turkey; in the Middle East and North Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Gulf States, Iran, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti and Venezuela.

Crisis Group receives financial support from a wide range of governments, institutional foundations, and private sources. The following governmental departments and agencies have provided funding in recent years: Australian Agency for International Development, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrian Development Agency, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Canadian International Development Agency, Canadian International Development and Research Centre, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, Irish Aid, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, New Zealand Agency for International Development, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish International Development Agency, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Kingdom Department for International Development, United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council, U.S. Agency for International Development.

The following institutional and private foundations have provided funding in recent years: Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Charitable Foundation, Clifford Chance Foundation, Connect U.S. Fund, The Elders Foundation, William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, Humanity United, Hunt Alternatives Fund, Jewish World Watch, Korea Foundation, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Open Society Institute, Victor Pinchuk Foundation, Ploughshares Fund, Radcliffe Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and VIVA Trust.

August 2010

APPENDIX C

CRISIS GROUP REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON ASIA SINCE 2007

Central Asia

Turkmenistan after Niyazov, Asia Briefing N°60, 12 February 2007.

Central Asia's Energy Risks, Asia Report N°133, 24 May 2007 (also available in Russian).

Uzbekistan: Stagnation and Uncertainty, Asia Briefing N°67, 22 August 2007.

Political Murder in Central Asia: No Time to End Uzbekistan's Isolation, Asia Briefing N°76, 13 February 2008.

Kyrgyzstan: The Challenge of Judicial Reform, Asia Report N°150, 10 April 2008 (also available in Russian).

Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm, Asia Briefing N°79, 14 August 2008 (also available in Russian).

Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure, Asia Report N°162, 12 February 2009.

Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan, Asia Report N°176, 3 September 2009.

Central Asia: Islamists in Prison, Asia Briefing N°97, 15 December 2009.

Central Asia: Migrants and the Economic Crisis, Asia Report N°183, 5 January 2010.

Kyrgyzstan: A Hollow Regime Collapses, Asia Briefing N°102, 27 April 2010.

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