

The Treatment of Minorities in Kyrgyzstan: The Case of Uzbeks

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Abstract: Nearly three decades ago, the Soviet Union collapsed. In its wake, the dissolution of the USSR left numerous countries in a precarious situation, as they were forced to transform themselves from regions dependent on a world power, to individual, independent states. Since that time, there have been hundreds of studies on the political fallout that ensued. Likewise, there have been numerous studies devoted to the economic consequences. Although there has been a fair amount of studies addressing the issues of human rights in these countries, we are currently witnessing new era of discrimination and persecution targeted at ethnic minorities, particularly in Central Asia.

As we approach the 30th anniversary of the breakup of the Soviet Union, we notice that old wounds have not been quick to heal; rather, the lines drawn following the dissolution have torn apart communities, and have led to many of the abuses cited by human rights organizations around the world. As this paper will present, many of the divides are driven largely by ethnic divides, and cannot simply be reduced to political or religious differences. To be certain, these factors are important, and are not mutually exclusive. However, this paper seeks to address the sociological underpinnings that contribute to the ongoing conflicts in the region, particularly as they relate to minority groups. As it is beyond the scope of this paper to address the entire Central Asian region, we have limited our study to Kyrgyzstan and its Uzbek minority.

Keywords: Treatment of Minorities in Kyrgyzstan, USSR.

1. OVERVIEW OF KYRGYZSTAN

In order to understand how ethnic tensions have led to conflict in Kyrgyzstan, it is important to briefly provide some background information. Roughly the size of South Dakota, the Kyrgyz Republic is located in Central Asia. A landlocked country, it shares borders with China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. With an estimated population of nearly 5.5 million, Kyrgyzstan is a country steeped in pride and nomadic tradition. Kyrgyzstan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 when the USSR ceased to exist. While struggling to become a democratic nation, according to CIA reports, major impediments to this include "endemic corruption, poor interethnic relations, and terrorism."¹

Map of Kyrgyzstan



¹ CIA World Factbook: Kyrgyzstan: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html>

Kyrgyz Society and the Importance of Tradition:

It is important to note that the ethnic identity of the Kyrgyz people has been strongly linked to language and ethnic traditions, both of which have been guarded with particular zeal once independence provided an opportunity to make national policy on these matters.² Contemporary Kyrgyzstan still observes the importance of family ties and clan origins, and identity is tied to the clan. According to the Country Studies Program from the Library of Congress:

*“Kyrgyz identity in public and private life is said to be determined primarily by membership in one of three clan groupings known as “wings” (right, or ong ; left, or sol ; and ickilik, which is neither) and secondarily by membership in a particular clan within a wing. Acutely aware of the roles each of the clans traditionally has played, the Kyrgyz are still very conscious of clan membership in competing for social and economic advantage. Support for fellow clan members is especially strong in the Northern provinces.”*³

As is the case for most clan-based societies, the importance of maintaining sacredly held traditions cannot be overlooked. These traditions speak to the order of society at large, and have an impact on expected roles of individuals within that society. Cultural traditions help to enforce values from generation to generation, as well as help to develop, maintain, and solidify social networks. Sporting events such as horseracing in Kyrgyzstan provides an outlet for clan members to express their identities, both on a familial level and on a national level as well.

2. RECENT POLITICAL HISTORY: ETHNIC TENSIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

As noted previously, the population of Kyrgyzstan is nearly 5.5 million, 64.9% of whom are considered ethnic Kyrgyz; Uzbek 13.8%, Russian 12.5%, Dungan 1.1%, Ukrainian 1%, Uygur 1%, and other 5.7%. About 75% of the population is Muslim, nearly all Sunni, with Russian Orthodox comprising 15% and a combination of all other religions make up about 5%. Although Russian is the official language, nearly 65% of the country speaks Kyrgyz, 13.6% speaks Uzbek, and only 12.5% speaks Russian. A highly literate country, virtually everyone (98.7%) over the age of fifteen is able to read and write. The government of Kyrgyzstan is a republic. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, a former prime minister backed by incumbent Almazbek Atambayev, won the election outright.

Ethnic acrimony continues to darkly color everyday relationships between the people of Kyrgyzstan; moreover, incidents of violence directed at minorities demonstrate an atmosphere of impunity amongst authorities, where a culture of “us versus them” not only thrives in Kyrgyzstan, it breeds a perceived justifiability for mistreating ethnic, religious and political rivals. This unfortunately translates into a situation where people are quick to mistrust others, driven in part by fear for their own safety. Additionally, it also translates into a situation where redress for acts of discrimination and violence is almost nonexistent, corruption becomes rampant, and where the repercussions for calling out the “wrong individual” or group can be severe.

Understanding the current ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan requires turning back the clock a bit, to before the republic of Kyrgyzstan as we recognize it today was established—to the era of the Soviet Union. Known to many as a ‘cradle of civilization’ for Central Asia, a mix of Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Russians, and some Turks inhabited the fertile Fergana Valley long before the arrival of Stalin and the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s. The valley is quite large, and is geographically spread over the present-day countries of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.⁴

The Fergana Valley



²“Kyrgyzstan,” Country Studies Program, Library of Congress. Accessed at http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/kyrgyzstan/all.html.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Kyrgyzstan: Delicate Ethnic Balance,” *IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis* (A Service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), June 17, 2010: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/89526/kyrgyzstan-delicate-ethnic-balance>.

Traditionally, the Kyrgyz people were known as nomads, whereas the Uzbeks were known as a sedentary people. In all, the two groups survived amicably, where geographical demarcations were more fluid. However, the situation changed dramatically when the countries of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan came into the fold of the Soviet Union. It was then that borders were officially drawn. However, the borders, like others in the region were more or less arbitrarily drawn, and failed to truly take into account the ethnic makeup of the region, as well as the possible affects it would have on the communities of people that resided on the land. Thus, that is why we see that the southern part of Kyrgyzstan was, and remains the home to a large number of Uzbeks, particularly in the cities of Jalal-Abad and Osh.

Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan



While the arbitrary borders were of little actual meaning to the people, the demarcation was important because there was now a clearer, recognizable difference between those that were considered Kyrgyz, and those who were considered Uzbek. And when it came to the distribution of scarce resources, problems inevitably arose.

Although the USSR was able to maintain order in the region (often using an iron fist), the situation began to change as the Union began to disintegrate, revealing ethnic tensions and rivalries that had been lying just below the surface. In 1990, southern Kyrgyzstan erupted in violence. In June of that year, a group of young Kyrgyz declared that land given to Uzbek farmers was actually theirs, and they meant to take it back by force.⁵ Still under control of the Soviet Union, troops marched into the region to put an end to the conflict. However, it took thousands of troops the period of an entire week to get the situation under control and reestablish some semblance of stability. After independence in 1991, the Soviet Union (and its troops) left, but ethnic divides remained. Further, it was after the fall of the Soviet Union that we began to see migration patterns adjust. For the most part, most ethnic Russians left the region in favor of lands to the West. And what used to be Uzbek strongholds in cities like Osh and Jalal-Abad, we began so see an influx of Kyrgyz seeking educational, economic, and agricultural opportunities that were scarcer in northern parts of the country.⁶

Naturally, the years following 1991 represented a time of great change for the people of the region. Both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were busy adjusting to entirely new systems of governance, which greatly affected day-to-day operations. In Kyrgyzstan, with new president Askar Akayev at the helm, ethnic differences were initially tamed, and there was a small degree of reconciliation between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks. This was in part due to the fact that President Akayev granted more economic autonomy to the Uzbek minority, and also recognized them within the government. However, this arrangement primarily benefited the wealthy and well-connected of Uzbek society, and really only had the affect of marginalizing the Uzbek's core population. For these Uzbeks, it appeared little had changed, and their voices were not heard.

In 2005 mass protests erupted in Kyrgyzstan. In what is known as the Tulip Revolution, Askar Akayev was ousted and Kurmanbek Bakiyev took his place. Originally from the city of Jalal-Abad, Bakiyev took control, and his use of power

⁵ "10 Things you Need to Know About the Ethnic Unrest in Kyrgyzstan," *Radio Free Europe*, June 14, 2010: http://www.rferl.org/content/10_Things_You_Need_To_Know_About_The_Ethnic_Unrest_In_Kyrgyzstan/2071323.html.

⁶ "Kyrgyzstan: Delicate Ethnic Balance," *IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis* (A Service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), June 17, 2010: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/89526/kyrgyzstan-delicate-ethnic-balance>.

would prove to be just as corrupt as his predecessor's.⁷ Almost immediately after taking office, Bakiyev began transferring assets to members of his own clan, all the while sidelining ethnic Uzbeks that benefited from the rule of Akayev. And even though Bakiyev garnered some support from Kyrgyz living in the south, the larger group of low-to-middle class Kyrgyz remained disenfranchised. By 2010, as Bakiyev's corrupt practices became more and more obvious, civil unrest once again took over the country, giving rise to what is often referred to as Kyrgyzstan's Second Revolution. In April 2010, Bakiyev was forced from power, and amidst the general chaos that enveloped the country, ethnic tensions in the south once again exploded.

In June 2010, hostility between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks reached a boiling point, and ensuing riots in the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad would result in the deaths of hundreds, the wounding of thousands, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands. To this day, scholars, politicians, and historians still debate the spark that led to the violence. Some, including interim President Roza Ortunbayeva, blamed freshly-ousted Bakiyev and his cronies.⁸ Proponents of this theory believe that Bakiyev, fully aware of the weak peace that was barely surviving in the south, could easily cause mass chaos by sparking a new feud amongst the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks. Others believe that Bakiyev's son, by bribing locals, also had a hand in the events.⁹ Their motivation, according to these theorists, was political, as both father and son both wanted to see the new government collapse, and the easiest way to enflame widespread violence was to ignite the tinderbox of ethnic animosity in the south.¹⁰ Neither of these theories was ever proven, however.

In the end, international consensus was that the riots began on June 10th following a relatively minor skirmish between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in a casino in Osh.¹¹ The skirmish grew exponentially, however, as individuals from both sides called upon their brethren to come to their aid. The results were catastrophic. Houses and buildings were set ablaze, forcing thousands to flee the city. Those that remained reported indiscriminate shootings, lootings, and acts of torture. The violence would continue for several days, leading interim President Ortunbayeva to declare a State of Emergency. When the violence finally subsided, over 400 were left dead, thousands wounded, and over 300,000 individuals displaced from their homes.¹²

In the aftermath of the June 2010 riots, international agencies including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International began independent investigations into the causes and effects of the clashes. After documenting one harrowing account after another, it was found that both sides were guilty of unspeakable atrocities, although Uzbeks represented the largest number of casualties.¹³ Further, the Kyrgyz military itself was implicated in fueling the violence, whereas some members of security forces arrived at the scene targeting Uzbeks and shouting anti-Uzbek slurs, according to a Human Rights Report entitled "Where is the Justice: Interethnic Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its Aftermath."¹⁴ Moreover, both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International fault the Kyrgyz government for not doing enough to address the core issues and divisions that allowed for such violence to burgeon in the first place, and also for not adequately bringing the instigators and perpetrators of the violence to justice.

Nearly eight years after the violence overwhelmed Southern Kyrgyzstan, ethnic tensions between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz remain high, according to reports published by Amnesty International¹⁵ and Human Rights Watch.¹⁶ Although acts of violence has not reached the level seen during the 2010 riots, animosity and mistrust amongst groups persists. Reconciliation efforts have been slow to develop, all the while the government itself continues to carry out acts of arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture—all issues that will be discussed in further depth momentarily. What is important to note at

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Kyrgyzstan to Seek Extradition of Ex-President's Son Over Riots," *Ria Novosti*, June 15, 2010: <http://en.ria.ru/world/20100615/159430286.html>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "10 Things you Need to Know About the Ethnic Unrest in Kyrgyzstan," *Radio Free Europe*, June 14, 2010: http://www.rferl.org/content/10_Things_You_Need_To_Know_About_The_Ethnic_Unrest_In_Kyrgyzstan/2071323.html.

¹¹ "Kyrgyzstan: Probe Forces Role in June Violence," *Human Rights Watch*, August 16, 2010: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/08/15/kyrgyzstan-probe-forces-role-june-violence>.

¹² "Kyrgyzstan: the Scars of Ethnic Conflict Run Deep," *The Guardian*, June 10, 2011: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/10/kyrgyzstan-ethnic-conflict-osh-uzbekistan>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Where is the Justice," *Human Rights Watch*, August 16, 2010: <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/08/16/where-justice>.

¹⁵ "Kyrgyzstan," *Amnesty International 2015 Report on the State of the World's Human Rights*: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/0001/2015/en/>.

¹⁶ "Kyrgyzstan," *Human Rights Watch 2015 World Report*: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/kyrgyzstan>.

this juncture is that with seemingly nothing having been resolved since the 2010 conflict, the threat of ethnic violence is never far away. Take for example the 2013 clashes along the Kyrgyz and Uzbek border. According to a report by *The International Relations and Security Network*,

*On 6 January, a major border incident took place on the frontier of Sokh, an Uzbek exclave in Kyrgyzstan. People from the Uzbek village of Hushar attacked a newly built Kyrgyz border watchtower and then entered Kyrgyz territory. As a consequence of this incident, 34 Kyrgyz residents from a nearby village were captured and imprisoned in Sokh. Overnight from the 6th to the 7th of January, Kyrgyz troops blocked access to Sokh, thus preventing thousands of Kyrgyz citizens from entering the enclave. On 7th January, following negotiations between representatives from both countries, the hostages were released. However, the situation will remain tense, and both sides are accusing one another of having incited the incident.*¹⁷

Concerning the threat of continued ethnic violence, the *IRSN* report adds,

*Ethnic and social tension (conflicts over water and land) is still present between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks and between Kyrgyz and Tajiks in southern Kyrgyzstan. Incidents leading to clashes between different ethnic communities are common, as are border incidents, most of which concern sections which have not been delimited. The scale of the most recent incident indicates that there is a tendency for these conflicts to escalate, especially in the southern part of the Fergana Valley, where this tension has existed continuously.*¹⁸

3. CORRUPTION, VIOLENCE, AND TORTURE IN KYRGYZSTAN

Given the above, we see that ethnic tensions remain high, and that protection given to the minority population is low. Part of the reason is the high levels of corruption that exist within the government. To begin this section, we must constantly keep in mind that the police and members of the government are also members of the general society. They harbor the same perceptions and social attitudes as the rest of the community. As such, it should not be surprising that the authorities would also mistreat members of the minority community, particularly the Uzbek community.

The issue of corruption and the corresponding violence that it allows is not a new concern facing Kyrgyzstan. Prior to Independence, under the rule of the Soviet Union, corrupt practices were the “orders of the day.” Even in the post-independence era, regime after regime has demonstrated its propensity to engage in corrupt and illegal behavior, despite almost tiring promises to end such practices. As might be expected, corruption is not limited to “high” government, but rather permeates all of society, and trickles down into local ministries, including local police stations.

From the first elected president Akayev, to Bakiyev, and even to former President Almazbek Atambayev, accusations and documentation of corruption amongst the highest levels of Kyrgyz government have been a mainstay of Kyrgyz political discourse. Feeding off a culture of cronyism and nepotism engendered under Soviet rule, contemporary leaders have treated the country—and the government—as their own personal playpens, favoring members of their own families and larger clans in political positions, and feeding into corrupt business practices in the private sector—all for personal economic and political gain. And as can be seen, such practices resulted in angering the larger populace, leading to civil unrest and violence. Succinctly summarized by Transparency International, the Anti-Corruption Resource Center, and the Michelson Institute,

*The first elected President, Akayev, was ousted from office following a public uprising in 2005. President Bakiyev then came to power promising to fight corruption and improve social and economic conditions in the country. But many of the reforms adopted during his term were seen as attempts to “institutionalise his private ambitions to expand his family’s grip on governance resources”, and were used to further the political and economic interests of a narrow group of individuals. Corruption, cronyism and clientelistic practices contributed to the popular dissatisfaction that lead to the overthrow of Bakiyev in 2010.*¹⁹

¹⁷ “Ethnic Border Tension Between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan,” *The International Relations and Security Network*, January 22, 2013: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?id=157256>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ “Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Kyrgyzstan,” A Policy Paper by Transparency International, in conjunction with the Anti-Corruption Resource Center and the Michelson Institute,” January 17, 2013: http://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/363_Overview_of_Corruption_in_Kyrgyzstan.pdf.

Further, in its 2017 report, Transparency International notes that Kyrgyzstan remains one of the most corrupt countries in the world, ranking 136th out of 176 countries studied (176 being the most corrupt).²⁰ Kyrgyzstan also ranked 17th out of 19 Eastern European and Central Asian countries assessed (again, 19 being the most corrupt country). Equally, Kyrgyzstan placed poorly in World Bank indicators and National Opinion polls.²¹ The report adds that while there have been several “efforts” to address the issue of corruption in Kyrgyzstan, including the establishment of numerous Commissions over the years, it appears that such efforts have yielded minimal results. For one, according to Transparency International, willingness amongst officials in charge of implementation is halting, resources to adequately fund the recommended programs are scarce, and training in such areas is either nonexistent or insufficient.

While the promise to correct these issues is one thing—and again, not new—the reality on the ground is that corruption does not merely line the pockets of the political elite, it has a very real affect on Kyrgyz citizens, especially when corruption can (and has) led to the inability to ensure basic rights of individuals. Take for example the systematic corruption that continues to take place amongst police and security forces—institutions supposed to be in charge of safeguarding the citizens of Kyrgyzstan. Dr. Erica Marat, Visiting Scholar at the Wilson Center’s Kennen Institute, argues that serious reforms, both from the top-down and the bottom-up need to take place in Kyrgyzstan’s police system. Echoing many of Transparency International’s findings, Dr. Marat wrote specifically about the police:

*In Kyrgyzstan two national regime changes merely recombined the same actors as they competed against each other or formed strategic alliances...None of the four presidents who have ruled Kyrgyzstan since the early-2000s was trusted by the NGO community to genuinely pursue reform, instead each was suspected of carrying out mere window dressing...Ten years into the effort to reform Kyrgyzstan’s police, corruption is still pervasive at the Interior Ministry, which has become infamous for widespread human rights abuses. Although some minor changes to police operations were introduced over the past decade, such as elements of community policing and using rubber bullets to disperse protestors, these changes are dwarfed by the increase in some of the worst Soviet legacies: forced confessions, petty graft, and police readiness to serve the political regime at the expense of society. At best, the police are considered to be inefficient at maintaining social order, at worst, they are a source of injustice and a threat to public security.*²²

In her study, Dr. Marat also notes that between the years 2008 and 2011, the police force continually utilized torture and physical coercion in order to extract confessions, and was responsible for over 20 cases of torture resulting in death, although such incidents were likely underreported.²³ Concerning corruption and acts of impunity, Dr. Marat notes,

*Corruption and abuse of power begins the day after a cadet graduates from the Police Academy. In summer 2011, to celebrate their graduation, new policemen in uniforms blocked an intersection in central Bishkek and openly drank vodka disregarding traffic jams caused by them. In 2012 they started a massive brawl in one of Bishkek cafes, destroying private property and ignoring warnings from their Interior Ministry superiors to stop.*²⁴

Dr. Marat and Transparency International are not alone in their documentation and condemnation of police practices in Kyrgyzstan. For example, Amnesty International, in its 2016 *World Report on the State of the World’s Human Rights* notes that the use of arbitrary detention, corruption, and torture remains widespread throughout Kyrgyzstan. The report documents cases of individuals, including women and children who have been arrested, detained, and tortured to extract confessions. Furthermore, the courts in Kyrgyzstan have been ineffective in providing recourse or protection to witnesses or others suffering abuses at the hands of police and security agents:

The authorities failed to take effective measures to address allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and bring perpetrators to justice. No impartial and effective investigation took place into human rights violations, including crimes against humanity, committed during the June 2010 violence and its aftermath. MPs initiated draft laws that

²⁰ “Corruption by Country: Kyrgyzstan,” Transparency International 2017 Report: <https://www.transparency.org/country/KGZ>.

²¹ Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Kyrgyzstan,” A Policy Paper by Transparency International, in conjunction with the Anti-Corruption Resource Center and the Michelson Institute,” January 17, 2013: http://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/363_Overview_of_Corruption_in_Kyrgyzstan.pdf.

²² Erica Marat, Ph.D., “Reforming the Police in Post-Soviet States: Georgia and Kyrgyzstan,” *Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press*, November 2013: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/files/1184-summary.pdf>.

²³ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

*if adopted would have a negative impact on civil society. Prisoner of conscience Azimjan Askarov remained in detention.*²⁵

Adding to the picture, Human Rights Watch continues to document police abuses and acts of torture.²⁶ Like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch also documented several instances of torture and maltreatment during 2016-17. In its latest report (2017), Human Rights Watch documented the following:

*Although the government acknowledges the problem of torture, impunity remains the norm. Criminal investigations into ill-treatment and torture allegations are rare, delayed, and ineffective, as are trials. After a five-year trial, a Bishkek appeals court in July upheld the acquittal verdict of four policemen charged in connection with the death in August 2011 of Usmanjon Kholmiraev, an ethnic Uzbek who died of injuries sustained in police custody. At time of writing, no one had been held accountable for the torture leading to his death. In its annual report issued in May, the National Center for the Prevention of Torture (NPM), an independent anti-torture body, concluded that “the Kyrgyz Republic does not fully ensure either in law or practice freedom from torture,” and noted some interference in its work. Authorities in 2015 registered 199 claims of torture, but initiated criminal investigations in only 34 cases, the NPM reported. Parliament in March rejected in its second reading a draft law that would have curbed the NPM’s independence.*²⁷

Altogether, the findings documented by these credible agencies are more than striking—they are disquieting and reprehensible. Minorities are practically unable to seek safe redress with the government and police. Corruption permeates all levels of Kyrgyz society, from the top-down. Further exacerbated by ethnic tensions and rivalries, local officials cater to their own personal needs, and act accordingly.

Unfortunately, the situation does not seem to be improving. Rather, it appears that despite promises to correct the system, abuses continue as a matter of business as usual. It is the very institutions that are meant to protect minorities that may be the mean to most harm.

4. CONCLUSION

This analysis has described several obstacles, hardships that minorities face in Kyrgyzstan. Individuals who are brave enough attempt to confront authority in the country often become targets of violence and threats of violence, leaving most people to live in silence. As documented in this report, corruption is rampant in Kyrgyzstan, fueled by ethnic and religious rivalry, and permeates all levels of government and society. In social ministries, as well as in police stations, officials act with utter impunity.

While attempts have been made to address these issues in Kyrgyzstan, meaningful change has not occurred, nor does it seem that any alleviation of such practices is forthcoming at any time in the foreseeable future. The reality on the ground is that those who are meant to protect minorities are actually the ones carrying out the abuses.



²⁵ “Kyrgyzstan,” *Amnesty International 2017 Report on the State of the World’s Human Rights*: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/kyrgyzstan>.

²⁶ See “Kyrgyzstan: Reports of Torture, Extortion by Police,” Human Rights Watch, November 23, 2013: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/11/22/kyrgyzstan-reports-torture-extortion-police>.

²⁷ “Kyrgyzstan,” Human Rights Watch 2015 World Report <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/kyrgyzstan>