

Central Asia news update

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**MIDDLE
EAST
STUDIES
FORUM**
HOSTED BY THE ALFRED DEAKIN
RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR
CITIZENSHIP & GLOBALISATION

Recent Developments

Economic

Kazakhstan has [rejected](#) Vladimir Putin's proposed creation of a single currency within the newly established Eurasian Economic Union.

Tajiks working at a Russian military base in the southern Tajik town of Kulob staged a protest on April 15. The workers [claimed](#) that they had not been paid for six months.

A World Bank brief released on April 13 [reported](#) that remittances to Central Asia had fallen sharply since the onset of Russia's economic crisis.

Politics

An April United Nations report [found](#) that Afghan women continue to have limited access to the judicial system.

The Afghan President has [urged](#) the interior ministry to investigate allegations of military corruption that were made in a recent United Nations-funded report.

16 of the Afghan President's cabinet nominees were [approved](#) by lawmakers. However, the position of Defence minister remained unfilled, as the nominated candidate had [withdrawn](#).

Tajik authorities have [prohibited](#) Tajik citizens under the age of 35 from undertaking the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

The chairman of Tajikistan's State Committee for National Security [said](#) on April 13 that non-governmental organisations pose a threat to the country's security.

Syrian opposition groups [asked](#) the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbaev, to host Syrian opposition talks.

The Iranian Foreign Minister [emphasised](#) the need for cooperation against ISIL during his visit to Kazakhstan on April 13.

The Kazakh and Turkish Presidents [discussed](#) Kazakh-Turkish ties in a meeting in Astana on April 16.

The Kyrgyz Prime Minister [resigned](#) on April 23 in response to the Kumtor gold mine controversy.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have [moved](#) their annual Victory Day parades forward to May 7 to coincide with Moscow's Victory Day celebrations.

Three opposition activists were [reportedly](#) attacked on April 9 in the southern city of Osh in Kyrgyzstan.

Aman Sagidullaev, an Uzbek activist who lives in self-imposed exile in Kyrgyzstan, [reported](#) on April 13 that his relatives had been arrested by Uzbek authorities.

Turkmenistan's Embassy in Minsk's website was apparently [hacked](#) by individuals linked to ISIS.

The Kazakh order of [four](#) Russian-made state-of-the-art Su-30SM fighter jets arrived on April 17.

The US State Department [criticised](#) its embassy staff in Tajikistan for failing to provide a full account of the 2012 joint Tajik-US military operation in Khorog, in which Tajik special forces units killed 20 civilians.

The Afghan President made his [first](#) trip to Iran on April 19. During his meeting with Iran's President, President Ghani stressed the need for further cooperation in the fight against ISIL.

Security

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation member states [held](#) a four-day joint military maneuvers in Kyrgyzstan in late-April.

A court in Kazakhstan [accused](#) three men of smuggling Uzbek nationals to Russia on April 7.

Iran announced on April 13 that it is [interested](#) in undertaking joint counter-terrorism operations with Afghanistan and Pakistan.



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The Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan [announced](#) that more than 330 Kyrgyz nationals are fighting alongside ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) [reported](#) that Afghan civilian casualties had increased in the first three months of 2015.

The Kazakh President's former son-in-law went on [trial](#) in Austria on April 14 for allegedly killing two bankers.

A man was [sentenced](#) to five years in jail by a Kazakh court on April 7 after threatening to explode a government administration building in Almaty in January.

A member of the Afghan parliament representing the northern Faryab Province [claimed](#) on April 14 that the Taliban now control large parts of the province

Nine Afghan border guards and eight civilians were [killed](#) on the eve of the Taliban's Spring Offensive.

A Russian citizen [suspected](#) of being an extremist was killed by Tajik security forces. The man escaped from police guard at a hospital and stole two pistols, before opening fire on police.

Russian authorities [detained](#) a Tajik man on April 21 following allegations that he had called on Russian Muslims to join Islamist groups in Central Asia and the Middle East.

Members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) [met](#) on April 9 in Tajikistan to discuss the threat that ISIS operations in Afghanistan might pose to Tajikistan's security.

A professor at Dushanbe's Islamic University [encouraged](#) Tajik youth on April 2 to campaign for the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) to be declared a terrorist organisation.

The Taliban [published](#) a biography of Mullah Omar on their website on April 5.

Kazakh & Uzbek election wrap

The Kazakh Presidential election was held on 26 April with the incumbent Nursultan Nazarbaev winning in a landslide victory. Nazarbaev, who has led Kazakhstan since [1990](#), competed with two other pro-government candidates. Human rights activists raised concerns about the repression of opposition members in the lead-up to the election, with many of Nazarbaev's [opponents](#) being forced to leave the country before the poll.

The election hadn't been due until 2016, but was brought forward by the National Assembly, which is [chaired](#) by Nazarbaev. Nazarbaev explained that election date was changed to "ensure the continuity of the current policy."

Islam Karimov was [re-elected](#) as President of Uzbekistan on March 29, and sworn into office for a fourth term. He won the election with more than 90 percent of the vote. His inauguration ceremony was held on 10 April in the Uzbek parliament.

Relatives of an Uzbek man who [died](#) in police custody believe that the man was tortured to death. Uzbek police claim that the man committed suicide.

A Tajik court found 11 men guilty of being [members](#) of the banned Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The men were given prison terms of up to 17 years.

A Kyrgyz border guard was detained on accusations of [calling](#) for jihad against the Kyrgyz government on April 6

Gunmen [stormed](#) a police station in Helmand Province in Afghanistan on April 19.

Three Kazakhs were [jailed](#) on April 16 for attempting to join ISIS.

Ten people were [killed](#) in two separate roadside bombs on April 6 in Afghanistan.