

Central Asia news update

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MIDDLE
EAST
STUDIES
FORUM

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Recent Developments

Economic

Kyrgyzstan is likely to face serious energy [shortages](#) over the coming winter.

The Kazakh currency is under [pressure](#) as a result of the decreased value of the Russian ruble and falling oil prices.

The Kyrgyz government's stake in the Kumtor Gold Mine was [frozen](#) by a Canadian court in October.

Kazakhstan has signed an [agreement](#) with the EU, despite that it will join the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015.

The Kazakh President signed a law [ratifying](#) Kazakhstan's admission to the Eurasian Economic Union (EES).

French investigators are looking into [claims](#) that the Kazakh president used a €2 billion helicopter contract to pressure Belgium into dropping bribery charges against three Kazakh officials.

Turkey and Afghanistan [signed](#) a strategic agreement on security, trade, investment and reconstruction, which is expected to increase Turkish investment in Afghanistan's mining sector.

Business tension is rising in Kyrgyzstan [ahead](#) of the 2015 parliamentary election, with political figures allegedly already initiating a series of corporate raids and expropriations to bankroll their campaigns.

Germany has delayed an Airbus [contract](#) with Uzbekistan for the purchase of military helicopters because of concerns over Uzbekistan's human rights record.

A Kazakh court [sentenced](#) Muslim Omiraev, the former-Deputy Agriculture Minister, to 10 years jail for corruption.

Kurmanbek Bakiev, the [son](#) of the former-Kyrgyz President has been sentenced - in absentia - to life in prison for corruption.

The United States has expressed [concern](#) about the administration of a \$3.17 billion fund that was set up to pay the Afghan National Police.

The Uzbek and Turkmen Presidents [met](#) in Ashgabat to discuss gas pipelines to China and water allotments in the region.

Politics

Kyrgyzstan has [announced](#) that it will open an Embassy in the Azeri capital, Baku.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev [fired](#) Kazakhstan's Defence Minister and replaced him with the current Mayor of Astana, Imangali Tasmagambetov

The Kyrgyz [leader](#) of the Akyikat Party, who is also the Editor-in-Chief of the "Chyiyir" publication, was detained on suspicion of drug trafficking.

Amnesty International [urged](#) the Uzbek president to free Dilorom Abdukadirova, a 49-year-old woman, who was arrested during a protest for better economic conditions in 2010.



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The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, [discussed](#) Russia's new China-centric [foreign policy](#) during a public lecture on 20 October.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [criticised](#) the Kyrgyz government for drafting a law that would violate the human rights of sexual minorities.

Five activists were detained during a protest [against](#) energy price hikes on in Bishkek on October 15.

The Tajik President [submitted](#) a bill to parliament to pardon 10,000 prisoners, most of whom are women, the disabled, minors, war veterans, and foreign citizens.

Kyrgyz authorities in Bishkek [arrested](#) 16 Chinese citizens for assaulting a police officer.

Security

Russia will set up a [new](#) military training facility in southern Tajikistan to conduct joint training activities.

Tajik police [arrested](#) 20 Islamist militants who were allegedly planning to blow up two road tunnels.

A Tajik border official was [reportedly](#) arrested in Tajikistan on drug trafficking charges.

Ashraf Ghani, the Afghan President, made his [first](#) official overseas visit to Saudi Arabia to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Five people were [killed](#) in an attack by insurgents in eastern province of Afghanistan.

It is reported that the [Jundullah](#) militant group's leader has been killed in northern Afghanistan.

Five Afghan men [convicted](#) of raping four women were executed in Kabul on 8 October.

A German aid worker who was [kidnapped](#) in Pakistan two years ago, was released in Afghanistan in good health.

Group 24 protest in Dushanbe

The well-known Tajik opposition group, Group 24, asked supporters to [gather](#) in the one of main squares in Dushanbe on October 10. Umarali Quvato, the leader of the group, [left](#) Tajikistan in 2012. Group 24 posted the event on Facebook, calling for free and fair elections in Tajikistan and an [end](#) to Emomali Rakhmon's two-decade rule as President. Soon after the post, the government blocked a number of websites, including Facebook and YouTube in order to [prevent](#) the protest.

On October 9, the day before the scheduled protest, the Tajik Supreme Court asserted that Group 24 is an "extremist" [group](#). Ramazan Rahimzoda, the Tajik Interior Minister, denounced the group as [criminals](#). The blockage of hundreds of websites, including Russian social networks, raised [concerns](#) amongst of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) about basic human rights in Tajikistan. Dunja Mijatovic, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media has urged Tajikistan authorities to allow unrestricted internet access.

Afghan officials [reported](#) that seven civilians were killed during NATO air strike on 12 October.

A Taliban ambush in [northern](#) Afghanistan on October 13 killed more than 22 Afghan soldiers and policemen.

Concern is [mounting](#) in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan about the threat that ISIS poses to the Central Asia region

An Afghan Mullah who had been [convicted](#) of raping a 10-year-old girl in his mosque was later sentenced to twenty years in prison.

Between 7,000 and 9,000 Afghan [troops](#) have been wounded or killed in 2014, which is a higher number than the previous year, according to the US General, John Campbell.