

## Recent Developments

### Economic

Central Asian officials have expressed their [desire](#) to fill the gap in Russia's agricultural imports, in light of Russia's decision to impose economic sanctions on Western countries.

Kazakhstan has [prepared](#) a draft plan to shield its economy from the impact of Western sanctions on Russia.

Kyrgyzstan has [expressed](#) a desire to increase exports to Russia, although the tiny mountainous state may not have the capacity to do so.

Russia has [promised](#) Kyrgyzstan \$500m in return for Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Customs Union.

A Kyrgyz court has [refused](#) a bail request from the former-head of the state-owned Gold company, Dilger Japarov. Japarov is accused of making an unauthorised transfer of \$200 million to the Canadian firm, Centerra Gold.

Uzbekistan has increased the [rent](#) on an Uzbek military base used by Germany. Germany has used the air base at Termez, close to the Afghan border since 2002.

A British newspaper reported in August that [Cherie](#) Blair, the wife of the former-British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had landed a lucrative consulting contract with the Kazakh government.

### Political

Reports emerged in August that the state-run [media](#) organisation, Rossiya Segodnya (Russia Today), would open a new bureau in Dushanbe.

Tajik and Kyrgyz officials held a [meeting](#) on August 11 following the shooting of a Kyrgyz man on the two countries' shared border.

Kazakhstan opened an Honorary [Consulate](#) in Melbourne in August. The inauguration was attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Singapore and Australia officials, and the leaders of Victorian Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council.

Some Central Asian residents have responded [positively](#) to the prospect of joining the Eurasian Union. According to new poll, Vladimir Putin's popularity over Obama has increased in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan has denied [reports](#) that the US is planning to establish a military base in Uzbekistan. The CENTCOM chief, General Lloyd Austin, recently visited Uzbekistan, prompting speculation that discussions over a new US base might have been held.

A rare public [protest](#) took place in the Turkmen capital after 50 residents blocked cranes from removing air conditioning units from residential apartment buildings.

The New York Times journalist, Matthew Rosenberg, was given [24](#) hours to leave Afghanistan on August 20. The Afghan government claimed that Rosenberg was a risk to National Security.



The Uzbek President, Islam Karimov, [travelled](#) to China to meet the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, on August 19 and 20 to discuss bilateral ties.

Israel has expressed its [offence](#) at the Kyrgyz lawmaker, Bakir-Uulu's desecration of an Israeli flag at a press conference on August 4. Bakir-Uulu tore up the flag to protest Israel's military actions against Hamas in Gaza.

The SCO held a [large](#) military exercise in Inner Mongolia in late August, involving 7,000 troops from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Golnara [Karimova](#), the Uzbek President's disgraced daughter, has released secret recordings complaining about being under house arrest.

[Akhmatbek](#) Keldibekov, the former-Kyrgyz Parliamentary Speaker who is on trial for corruption was granted permission to leave Kyrgyzstan to seek urgent medical attention.

The Kyrgyz government has [sued](#) Shorukh Saipov, a Kyrgyz journalist, for defamation.

Kyrgyzstan's [deposed](#) former-President, Askar Akayev, returned home to Kyrgyzstan for the first time to attend a relative's funeral.

Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Kazakh President, [announced](#) a ministerial shake-up in August, replacing key ministers and merging ministries.

## Security

Afghan security forces [claim](#) to have [detained](#) one Tajik national, one Kyrgyz national and two Afghan police officers on suspicion of terrorism. The four individuals confessed to have been planning a terrorist attack in northern Afghanistan.

Tajikistan [sentenced seven](#) men to prison terms of between 18 and 22 years. The men were found guilty of participating in a terrorist plot on TALCO, the largest aluminium plant in Central Asia.

## Afghan Election Update

The outcome of the 2014 Afghan presidential election [remains](#) undeclared, with both candidates, Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani, levelling accusations of widespread electoral fraud against the other. It had been hoped that the outcome of the recount would be finalised by mid-August. However, by late August, the [recount](#) was still underway, with electoral officials beginning to invalidate fraudulent votes, a process that will be laden with controversy, further increasing domestic tensions. The US Secretary of State, John Kerry, made his second visit to Afghanistan on the issue in early August, but was unable to end the crisis. Both candidates have signalled that they will form a national unity government, regardless of who eventually wins the poll.

An Afghan [policeman](#) killed seven colleagues at a checkpoint in the Uruzgan provincial capital of Tirin Kot, just hours after the US Major General Harold J. Greene was shot dead by a uniformed Afghan soldier on a base west of Kabul.

Kyrgyz border guards reportedly [fired](#) on unarmed Tajik villagers in late August, who were protesting the construction of a highway and bridge.

Georgia, Turkey and Azerbaijan have [strengthened](#) their military ties, [agreeing](#) in mid-August to establish joint military exercises.

The Kazakh Interior Minister, Abdulla Suranchiev, has [announced](#) that local government officials are deeply involved with criminal gangs. Suranchiev named more than 20 officials who he believes have links to organised crime groups.

Azerbaijani and Armenian troops exchanged [fire](#) in the disputed territory of Nagorno Karabakh, in the worst fighting since the 1994 war ended. Eight Azerbaijani and two Armenian soldiers were killed in the battle.