

# Central Asia news update

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MIDDLE  
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## Recent Developments

### Economic

China has [announced](#) that it will increase military aid to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, pledging \$16 million to Kyrgyzstan alone.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's September regional [assessment](#) has warned that the Russian economy will come to a 'standstill' in the next few months.

Tajikistan and China have [agreed](#) to construct the regional Line D gas pipeline through Tajikistan, which will earn Tajikistan millions of dollars in transit fees annually once operational.

Kazakhstan continues to face gasoline [shortages](#) as the devaluation of the Kazakh currency prevents importers from being able to afford to import refined oil from Russia, even though Kazakhstan itself is a major crude oil producer.

Vladimir [Putin](#) met with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on the side-lines of the SCO summit in September to discuss a gas pipeline connecting Siberia to China.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, said that he hoped [Kyrgyzstan](#) will be able to quickly integrate into the Eurasian Economic Union.

Kazakhstan has legalised '[shadow capital](#)' (money, security and shares obtained illegally) in an effort to pump more money into its ailing economy.

Kyrgyzstan is facing high [unemployment](#) amongst truck drivers following the US withdrawal from Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan.

The Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbaev, has [expressed](#) his concern about the impact that the Ukraine crisis is having on Kazakhstan's economy.

### Politics

Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) finally [announced](#) that Ashraf Ghani won the country's presidential runoff election, winning 55.27 percent of the votes.

The Caspian Sea Summit [commenced](#) in Russia in late September, with Vladimir Putin telling attendees that he hoped that the Summit would be able to finally resolve the legal status of the Caspian Sea.

The Canadian-Tajik Ph.D researcher, Alex Sodiqov, who was arrested while [undertaking](#) fieldwork in Tajikistan in June, has finally been allowed to return to Canada.

US Secretary of State, John Kerry, [met](#) with the Kazakh Foreign Minister, Erlan Idrisov, in Washington on September 22. Kerry emphasized the importance of US-Kazakh strategic partnership.

Turkmenistan plans on opening an [embassy](#) in Kyrgyzstan soon to expand its international ties.



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Dozens of relatives of Kazakh [prisoners](#) protested in front of a prison in Pavlodar to demand visitation rights.

The Shanghai Cooperation [Organization](#) held a two-day summit in Tajikistan's capital, Dushanbe on 11-12 September.

Kyrgyz authorities [said](#) that they have detained a Tajik man who was planning on joining militants in the Palestinian Territories on September 11.

Uzbek authorities have finally [confirmed](#) that Gulnara Karimova, the daughter of President Islam Karimov, is under house arrest on suspicion of corruption.

Tajikistan's state-appointed [Mufti](#) issued a fatwa (religious ruling) declaring that criticising the government is a sin and must be condemned.

Iran and Tajikistan signed [agreements](#) on further cooperation on security and education during the Iranian president's visit to Dushanbe for the SCO summit.

Three organizers of the proposed-Kyrgyz [protest](#) against electricity price rises were arrested ahead of the September 16 demonstration.

## Security

Russia's Defence Ministry has [revealed](#) that it will hold large-scale military manoeuvres close to the Kazakh border.

Two Russian soldiers have been [deported](#) from Tajikistan after being accused of murdering a taxi driver. The victim's family have cast doubt on whether the suspects will face justice in Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan's armed [forces](#) are thought to have crossed the border into Afghanistan in September to push back Taliban militants who were stationed near border.

Two ethnic Uzbeks in Tajikistan were [sentenced](#) to nine years in prison for fighting with Taliban in Afghanistan.

The Taliban killed an Australian-Afghan [citizen](#) in late September who had returned home after 14 years.

The Tajik President, Emomali [Rahmon](#), said that 200 Tajik nationals have joined to Islamist militant groups in Iraq and Syria.

A Kyrgyz official reported that [eight](#) Kyrgyz nationals have been killed in Syria. Approximately 100 Kyrgyz citizens are thought to be fighting in Syria and Iraq.

A bomb exploded near the Afghan Presidential [compound](#) the day before the new Afghan President's inauguration.

Josh Earnest, a White House [spokesman](#), said that US expects that the new Afghan President, Ashraf Ghani, will sign a Bilateral Security Agreement soon after he takes office.

31 people were killed and dozens [wounded](#) in an attack by Taliban on a government compound in eastern Afghanistan.

A NATO-led convoy in Kabul was [targeted](#) by a Taliban suicide car bomb in mid-September, killing three members of the NATO-led force.

The black flag of the Middle Eastern 'Islamic State' (IS) group was [hung](#) from a Tashkent bridge on August 28, prompting Uzbek police to investigate.

Three Tajik nationals were [sentenced](#) almost to four years in prison by a Russian court on charges of being members of a terrorist group.