

Alert

Kyrgyzstan – No. 18/2010

ACT mobilizes assistance for Osh conflict-affected persons

Geneva, 14 June 2010

Brief description of the emergency

ACT members Danchurchaid and ICCO report that the ethnically and politically motivated violence which flared up in the city of Osh last Thursday night is spreading in southern Kyrgyzstan. Military police do not have control of the situation at present and the Interim Government has requested assistance to restore the peace from both the Russian Government and the UN.

Many people have fled to the border with Uzbekistan, which is just a few kilometers from the city of Osh. Uzbek troops are trying to help women and children who have fled the violence.

Impact: Official figures from the Kyrgyzstan interim government put the number of dead at 118; however ACT members say the actual number could easily be closer to 1,000. Reuters Alertnet says the number of wounded is 1,500. ACT Central Asia Forum reports that the situation is calmer in Osh but was worsening in the second major southern city, Jalalabad.

Destruction is widespread, food supplies in shops are being looted or destroyed and residents are running to the fields and rural areas to escape violence in urban districts, ACT Central Asia Forum reports. Reuters describes the clashes as the worst ethnic violence in 20 years. It began between Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents in Osh late on Thursday and escalated over the weekend. Witnesses said gangs armed with automatic rifles, iron bars and machetes had set fire to houses and shot fleeing residents.

National and international response

Coordination meetings are being held at United Nations House in Bishkek, where a UN Flash Appeal is also under discussion. The UN does not have its own networks for the distribution of relief in the southern regions. This puts a greater emphasis on the role of local organisations present in the affected areas.

UNOCHA reports that 6,000 people have crossed into Uzbekistan. Urgent humanitarian assistance is required (especially in the health and food sectors). Humanitarian space remains limited because of the security situation.

The interim government has sent two planes, each loaded with food, clothing and medical supplies, to the south. Residents of northern Kyrgyzstan have donated humanitarian supplies and some residents are giving blood in Bishkek. The European Union is sending its special representative for Central Asia, Pierre Morel. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), currently chaired by Kyrgyzstan's northern neighbour, Kazakhstan, is also sending a special envoy.

ACT Alliance response

The joint office of ACT members DanChurchAid and ICCO based in the capital Bishkek, are in regular contact with partner organisations in the southern regions. They are gathering an overview of the fast-changing situation and most urgent needs identified so far, current priorities being basic food, water and hygiene needs.

Members are participating in coordination meetings of the UN in Bishkek as well as with other humanitarian responders including the national Red Cross Society. The ACT Central Asia Forum has indicated that resources immediately available from the members themselves are being mobilised and a possible ACT appeal may be prepared in the near future. The ACT Secretariat in Geneva is maintaining communications with the Bishkek office and further updates will follow.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jessie Kgoroadira, ACT Chief Finance Officer (jkg@actalliance.org).

Thank you for your attention.

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