

# ACT Situation Report

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## Kyrgyzstan – No. 09/2010

### Parliamentary Elections

Bishkek, October 14, 2010

#### Current Overview

##### *Parliamentary elections*

- On October 10, Kyrgyzstan held elections that created the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia. As announced by the Central Election Commission (<http://cec.shailoo.gov.kg/i-election.asp?ElectionID=137&DistrictID>), the turnout was 59.9% for the whole country. Opposition party Ata-Zhurt, headed by former officials of ousted president Kurmanbek Bakiyev's government, won the election with 8.89% of the vote. However, four other parties also cleared the 5% threshold to gain seats in the national parliament.
- Under the new charter, President Otunbayeva will remain acting president until December 31, 2011. Parliamentary elections will take place every five years. No political party will be allowed more than 65 of the 120 parliamentary seats. The president will be limited to a single six-year term, with greatly reduced powers.

##### *Security*

- While rumours continued, the situation remained calm in the last weeks. Violent incidents were expected for the day of Eid, but did not materialise. According to UN, the election period, October 8-12, was a critical period in terms of security but no violence was observed.
- The border to Uzbekistan is closed to Kyrgyz and Uzbek people. The border to Tajikistan remains open.
- On October 6, around 50 relatives of people killed during the April events attacked the office of the Ata-Zhurt party in Bishkek, where they seized campaign materials and documents and burnt them in front of the office, saying their protest was against an Ata-Zhurt leader.

##### *General needs and damage*

- The Kyrgyz health ministry reported on October 6 that officially 408 people were killed in the June events.
- **Education:** Schools resumed from September 1 and children have started attending.
- **Employment:** More than 20,000 work places were destroyed in the south of Kyrgyzstan due to the June ethnic clashes.
- **Food:** The European Food Safety Authority found that 27% of Kyrgyz households nationwide are 'food insecure' - 23% moderately and 4% severely. The prevalence of severe food insecurity is suspected to be underestimated as the assessment was carried out at when food was more readily available. It is expected to worsen during the winter months.

- **Agriculture:** The indirect impacts of the April and June events and in particular the closure of the Kazakh and Uzbek border had significant implications on staple food production at the aggregated level. Agriculture producers are highly dependent on trade with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Supplies of fuel and fertiliser was disrupted. Disruption of labour migration from Uzbekistan to southern Kyrgyzstan resulted in delayed harvests and increased losses.
- During the unrest, minorities did not feel secure enough to attend to their livestock or go to their fields which resulted in loss of livestock and poultry, reduced area cultivated, reduced and untimely crop irrigation, reduced and untimely crop field operations (particularly weeding) and delayed harvesting.
- **Protection:** The strategy of the Transitional Shelter Program, launched by various shelter agencies, is to prioritize the most vulnerable families and most damaged houses. According to the last damage assessments, 1889 compounds were damaged or destroyed in June (1445 in and around Osh, and 444 in Jalal-Abad and surroundings). Nearly all compounds surveyed were so severely damaged they will need to be fully reconstructed.
- In total 1889 shelters are under construction. All will be complete before winter reaches to its peak. The families are being provided with the materials and cash to hire labourers. Additionally the families are also getting technical support to make the constructions earthquake-resistant. Most families use this opportunity to earn wages by deputing labourers from within the family.
- There is one cultural aspect which was not foreseen before. In Kyrgyzstan, the families have the culture of providing food to labourers in addition to the wages. This practice is an added burden to families that do not have enough food or cash to buy food. Moreover, this is an added burden on the women of the household. One woman, interviewed during the monitoring visit, is not able to work as she must feed the labourers.
- Nevertheless, the families are happy to have a transitional shelter before winter, and hope the shelters will be extended later by the government and/or other agencies.
- The improvement on this front is mixed. While families interviewed on the monitoring visit said there was significant improvement on protection issues, there are still reports of serious human rights abuses in southern Kyrgyzstan, including abuse of power, arbitrary detentions, ill-treatment, torture and extortion by law enforcement officials, as well as some unidentified groups. UNHCR and OHCHR have created protection incident monitoring forms and engaged local and international organisations to follow-up and take action on cases of abuse. It was reported in the Protection Cluster meeting that extortion was still taking place and the victims preferred to pay than report, out of fear. SNB officers, who possess search warrants, carry out searches in Uzbek neighbourhoods.
- At the same time, a few Uzbek families, interviewed during monitoring visits, have revived their businesses and they are getting customers from all ethnic communities. The ACT Alliance team interviewed an Uzbek woman in Mehr Shavkat's office in July. She lived in Osh prior to the conflict, then left for Arawan after the conflict where she was living with a relative. During the interview, she vouched that she would never go back to Osh, and would stay in either Arawan or go to Uzbekistan. A few days ago, she was seen walking comfortably on a busy street in Osh.
- All the Uzbek families that fled to Arawan have returned to Osh. Those whose houses were burnt are staying with relatives in Osh while reconstructing their transitional support with support from various agencies. Some families, however, are still living in open shelter or tents, being exposed to the cold in the night.
- The 56 Kyrgyz displaced families still living in Jashtyk camp in Osh do not feel comfortable going back to their Uzbek neighbourhood. Their livelihood is seriously challenged, and they still rely on external aid. The men are getting employment under cash for work schemes, which are a big support to them.
- This mixed situation indicates that while there is still ethnic division and underlying

Minhogidin Malben – an Uzbek resident in Osh said, “We do hate each other, but we should not forget that we are one nation. We must not pass on the hatred to the next generation.

tension, there is also improvement and therefore one can optimistically expect for further improvements, unless some other incident escalates the tension again.

- **WASH:** Water and sanitation have improved. Families whose houses are intact are getting water around the clock. The remaining families continue to get water from stand posts. The families have received water storage containers from different relief agencies and therefore, water storage is not an acute problem now. However, the cleanliness of the water for drinking is questionable at a few places. The water treatment plant often fails to treat the water in desired quantity and in such cases, contaminated water is supplied.
- Sanitation, a problem before the conflict, continues to be an issue. The carnage during the conflict simply added to the crisis. Families whose houses were burnt are still visiting neighbours or relatives to use toilets or go to open areas. The construction of transitional shelters has started, but toilets and bathrooms have not been incorporated in the transitional shelter plans. However, some agencies have successfully mobilized funding to construct or repair the toilets of the beneficiaries of the shelter component.
- **Other issues – Climate change:** Climate change is having clear implications in this country. Farmers said that over the years the number of cloudy days has increased. Fewer sunny days particularly impacts cotton cultivation. Five years ago, they used to harvest 5 tonnes of cotton per acre. Now the yield has gone down to two tonnes per acre. Unpredictable and excessive rainfall is impacting other crops too.

## Government and International Response

### *General*

- Kyrgyzstan secured pledges worth \$1.1 billion on July 27 from several international donors, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Commission.
- With the threat of violence high, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) plans to send a 52-member, unarmed police force after the election. Workshops are organised to address inter-ethnic conflict, eg on international standards and the principles of balance and ethics in journalism, with a special focus on coverage of the post inter-ethnic conflict period and the forthcoming elections.

### *Investigation*

- The Kyrgyz government commission to investigate the events in June has postponed the delivery of its report to President Otunbaeva by two months to mid-November. According to the Interfax-Kazakhstan news agency, the Finnish parliamentarian, Kimmo Kiljunen, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's special representative for Central Asia, had declared on August 27 in Astana, that an international investigation commission under his lead would start its work in autumn and deliver a report by the end of 2010.
- Speaking at the United Nations, Uzbek President Islam Karimov called for an independent international probe into the June violence, saying it could pave the way to reconciliation.

## ACT Alliance Response

### *General Overview*

- ACT Alliance is continuing with its relief support while moving to recovery and rehabilitation phases. The implementation is continuing through four local partners, who are also constantly assessing the changing needs of the target families, to make the best use of the available resources. ACT Alliance team, along with the local organizations carried out an assessment during October 4-7, 2010. The findings are presented below. The report also highlights the achievements made by ACT Alliance.

### *Sector wise response*

- **WASH:** ACT Alliance, in partnership with Central Asian Alliance for Water (CAAW) is supporting 50 families to construct toilets. Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is constructing shelters

for these families. This is a joint project of ACT Alliance, CAAW and UNICEF, and UNICEF is providing funding to construct 140 more toilets. In addition to that UNICEF is also supporting CAAW to carry out detailed WASH assessment in Schools, Health Facilities and Bazaars. The findings of this assessment would be used to develop national WASH plan. ACT Alliance is an indirect party in the assessment and would support CAAW to carry out the assessment. Disaster vulnerability and preparedness level of the schools will also be assessed in this study.

- It was reported in the earlier report that overall sanitation system is bad in southern Kyrgyzstan. Only limited number of families had access to sewer system due to limited capacity of the sewer pipe. Rest of the families dig a pit, install seat over it and use it as latrines. Such toilets are too smelly and unhygienic. Therefore, ACT Alliance and CAAW have come up with a new hygienic design which will keep the toilets stench free. It is expected that partnership with UNICEF would help in wider replication of this design.
- **Food and Nutrition:** There is substantial progress on food security situation too. Three of the ACT Alliance partners, namely DCCA, Mehr Shavkat and CAAW, carried out fresh round of food distribution in the last week of September. These partners distributed 4632 food packets to the same number of families in Osh and Jalalabad Oblasts. Each food packet consisted of three kilos of sugar, five kilos of noodles, three meat tins, three dry milk packets, one package of tea and three litres of oil.
- ACT Alliance partners DCCA and Mehr Shavkat also distributed fresh food (Rice, potatoes, onions, etc.) to 3,291 families. DCCA covered 1,291 families, purchased 30 tons of rice, 15 tons of onions and 34.57 tons of potatoes. Each family got 27.1 kilos of potatoes, 23.25 kilos of rice and 11.63 kilos of onions. Mehr Shavkat covered 2,000 families and provided 10 kilos of potatoes, 10 kilos of onions and 10 kilos of rice to each family. All this procurement was done locally and therefore greatly helped the farmers who were desperately looking for buyers.
- During the monitoring visit in August 2010, it was feared that many farmers would not harvest potatoes in absence of buyers and the fields would rot in consequence. However, during this monitoring visit, it was found that ultimately all the potatoes were harvested. This happened due to local procurements by ACT Alliance partners and also gradual revival of the markets. The procurement rates were decided on the basis of prevailing market rates. Therefore, DCCA which procured the items in Jalal-Abad, paid Soms 11 per kilo for potatoes and Soms 60 per kilo for rice. During the procurement period the potatoes rate increased to Soms 15 per kilo, but the farmers honoured their commitment to DCCA and sold for Soms 11 only. Mehr Shavkat paid Soms 5-6 per kilo to its farmers in Arawan according to the prevailing market rates. This amount was barely profitable to the farmers, but at least it saved them from complete loss also.
- The farmers are content now and they are engaged in next round of cultivation. The price of agriculture inputs has gone down as the border to Uzbekistan has been closed. The inputs are being imported from Kazakhstan, which has made the inputs costly by 15-20%. At the same time, the prices of outputs have not gone up in the same proportion. The farmers expect that the prices would go up during the winter and that time they would be able to make profit.
- While distributing food, partners also carried out assessment to determine future food needs of the families. Most of the families denied any further need of food distribution. The same was confirmed during the recent monitoring visit. The families are reviving their livelihood activities and started earning to meet their food and other needs. There is provision of one more round of food distribution in the ACT Appeal, but given the changing scenario, some changes would be made to address other pressing needs of the communities.
- **Non-food items:** ACT Alliance also distributed NFI kit to 632 families through CAAW. Each NFI kit consisted of one cooking pot, one teapot, one electric cooker, 10 plates, one knife, 10 glasses 10 table spoons and one frying spoon.
- For initial couple of months families survived on the cloths provided by their neighbours and relatives. Afterwards, they started receiving necessary support from humanitarian agencies. UNHCR is catering to NFI needs of the families and also supporting the winterization plan for them. ACT Alliance is targeting 1,000 vulnerable families to provide NFI and winter items. These families will receive the items by the end of this month.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Psychosocial support still remains a high priority for the affected population. While some activities are being carried out for the children, nothing is being done for

the adult population. ACT Alliance is getting an expert on secondment from Church of Sweden, who will stay for about a month in Southern Kyrgyzstan to build capacity of the partners to mainstream psychosocial care components in the ongoing activities.

- **Economic development and livelihoods:** The local procurement from the farmers has helped them greatly to reduce the loss, and go for next round of cultivation. The farmers, by and large, have survived, although there would be challenges for quite some time. The markets and business activities are reviving. Shelters construction has also created employment opportunity for many. UNDP is continuing with its Cash-for-work programme, which is giving employment to many people. However, at the same time, everybody is not getting employment opportunity. The youth is particularly not finding employment opportunities of their liking and that is why there is still high migration, particularly to Russia. Security situation and uncertain future are the other reasons of out-migration. Somehow, this scenario has to be controlled as the most competent people always find opportunity to go out.
- ACT Alliance, in partnership with Interbilim is starting two activities. Interbilim will help the most vulnerable women to set-up mobile kitchens at the construction sites. This will help the women to generate income. Interbilim will also organize skill training programme for youths on various construction activities, so that they could avail employment opportunities available in shelters construction activity.
- Finally, the ACT Alliance is one of the largest contributors to “Humanitarian Accounting Partnership” (HAP) trainings in Kyrgyzstan.

### *Coordination*

- Finally, the ACT Alliance is one of the largest contributors to “Humanitarian Accounting Coordination is another area, where ACT Alliance has been playing a significant role. During initial months all the clusters were dominated by the expatriates and discussions were held in English. Because of this, local organizations gradually started dropping out from cluster meetings. Interbilim was already having a Coordination Council, comprising 11 local organizations. Act Alliance worked closely with Interbilim to promote the Coordination Council as Regional Humanitarian Forum (RHF). The RHF has now expanded its membership and revised the ToR to play a lead role to coordinate post conflict relief and rehabilitation activities. The RHF is getting increasing recognition from the UN agencies, INGOs and the government departments and Ministries.
- In the month of August ACT Alliance and Interbilim, in partnership with UN-OCHA, organized training for the local organizations and the government officials on the UN cluster system. This workshop was greatly appreciated by the NGO functionaries and the government officials alike, and consequently the participation of local NGOs in cluster meetings got increased.
- So far, RHF has made following achievements:
  - It has been engaged in monitoring the humanitarian aid provided by the government.
  - RHF organized a meeting of NGOs with the President R. Otunbaeva. The participants discussed the role of NGOs in rehabilitation. On July 6, RHF organized a meeting with the representative of Interim Government O. Abdullaeva. The cluster system was introduced in this meeting.
  - RHF together with Insan Diamond has been included in the commission to assess the impact of the conflict.
  - Directorate on Reconstruction took into an account the recommendation of the RHF and provided answers of frequently asked questions along with financial resources on its website.
  - The RHF has been included in the Commission on tender procedures of Reconstruction companies. They found certain discrepancies in the tender process and therefore successfully advocated to come up with transparent criteria.
  - RHF has been given the responsibility to coordinate between NGOs and Government.

- On September 13, RHF organized a meeting of NGOs and INGOs with the President to discuss the issues concerning the HR, Humanitarian Aid, rehabilitation and others.
  - The RHF successfully negotiated with the Presidents office to open a public office to work closely with the affected population and NGOs.
- RHF was invited in a UN meeting on October 7 to prioritize the needs for 2011 and develop the strategy for the rehabilitation and development.

#### ***ACT Appeal***

- On August 24, the Preliminary Appeal issued on 25 June 2010 was replaced. The new Appeal target amounts to USD 1,897,455. So far, the total income (pledged or received) minus coordination fee (2%) amounts to USD 902,655.86.
- To download the ACT Appeal:  
[http://www.actalliance.org/resources/appeals/KGZ101%20Appeal approved 24August2010.pdf/view](http://www.actalliance.org/resources/appeals/KGZ101%20Appeal%20approved%2024August2010.pdf/view)

#### ***ACT Emergency Personnel Deployment***

International humanitarian staff members deployed to support the ACT Central Asia Forum team in Bishkek/Osh are:

- Sudhanshu S. Singh, arrived on July 1, and will stay until end of November.
- Martin Schuster (seconded by APRODEV), came back on October 4 and stays until October 25.

#### ***ACT Advocacy Statement and News Releases***

See the ACT website homepage, [www.actalliance.org](http://www.actalliance.org); and  
<http://www.actalliance.org/stories/kyrgyzstan-half-million-people-needing-assistance>.

### **For further information**

ACT members and other international supporters are encouraged to contact the ACT Secretariat for information in the first instance to minimize overloading of staff in-region focused on emergency response:

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Otherwise, key contacts for the ACT Central Asia Forum based in the joint DCA/ICCO and Kerk in Actie office in Bishkek and in Osh are:

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**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer ([jbi@actalliance.org](mailto:jbi@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**