

**Summary of Major Observations and Conclusions from  
the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society's  
Interim Report on Long-Term Observation  
of Kyrgyzstan's June 27, 2010 National Referendum**

**Observation Period of June 1 to June 18, 2010**

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*The Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society (Coalition) is an independent, non-partisan and neutral organization, working to strengthen democracy and build civil society in the Kyrgyzstan.*

In advance of Kyrgyzstan's June 27 national referendum, the Coalition conducted a long-term observation of the pre-referendum environment and election commission preparation. The observation effort involved Coalition leaders, two lawyers, and a team of 35 independent long-term observers (LTOs) who were deployed across all regions of the country beginning on June 1. The violence in the south in mid-June limited the Coalition's ability to fully observe all processes. In addition to the long-term observation, the Coalition will deploy approximately 1000 short-term observers to 500 polling stations on the day of the referendum. The long-term and short-term observation has been supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) under grants from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Additional support has been provided by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Soros Foundation in Kyrgyzstan.

The following are the Coalition's major findings and conclusions from its observation of the pre-referendum period:

*Legal Framework*

- The interim government established the legal basis for the referendum through decrees. Several changes regarding the referendum and voting procedures have been introduced. The 50 percent voter turnout requirement for validating referendums was abolished. Also, marking of fingers with indelible ink was re-introduced as a measure to prevent multiple voting.
- Information on the introduced amendments to the legal acts on the referendum has not been published with enough advance notice and widely enough to sufficiently inform citizens, which has caused confusion about the main points of the changes introduced.

*Electoral Commissions and Administration*

- The preparation to Referendum of 2010 is being held during a very difficult, transitional period in Kyrgyzstan. All activities on preparation and conduct of Referendum are being held within a very short time frame.

- The Interim Government formed the new composition of Central Election Commission on for Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic consisting of political parties and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- Subordinate election commissions were formed by political parties and gatherings of voters. Such political parties as Ak Shumkar, Ata-Meken, Zamandash and the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan were active in nominating candidates for commissions. The precinct referendum commissions were generally formed on time in most oblasts.
- During the formation of precinct election commissions, higher commissions, representatives of political parties, and NGOs were guided by the principle that people who previously worked in electoral commissions and committed electoral violations should not be included as commission members for the referendum.
- The Coalition observed some violations among electoral commissions, but they were not systematic or widespread. These violations included:
  - nepotism in selecting election commission members in some commissions of Jalal-Abad oblast; and
  - failure by commission members to inform the public of election commission meetings.
- The election commissions' activity and composition was seriously affected by the violence in some locations in the south. There were approved members of commissions among the wounded and displaced and some precinct locations were damaged. Some human rights activists and CEC members have emphasized the need to ensure the safety of precinct election commissions in Osh and Jalal-Abad, which may affect the quality of the voting process.

#### *Voter Education and Campaign*

- Voter education efforts on the draft constitution considered in the referendum were conducted actively across the country, including in Osh and Jalalabad.
- A number of planned meetings between the public and members of the Interim Government and the Constitutional Council to explain the draft constitution were held. Beginning on June 8, local government leaders (akims) across the country conducted meetings with local citizens and provided each participant with a copy of the new constitution.

#### *Public Opinion*

- Due to the current social and political situation in the country, there are many contradicting opinions among the public regarding to upcoming referendum and their participation. According to the Coalition's own informal assessment of citizens' opinions, the majority of citizens in many regions of the country are united regarding

their opinions that the holding the referendum remains urgent, that the referendum is necessary, and that people will participate in it.

- Some citizens – particularly those in Osh – believe that the best alternative is to delay referendum, since there are number of problems that could affect participation in and the results of voting. Due to the psychological condition of citizens after the events in Osh and Jalal-Abad and the hundreds of thousands of displaced people, measures to provide maximum enfranchisement seem extremely difficult in these regions in such a short amount of time.

#### *Special Considerations Due to Violence in the South*

- Certainly, the most difficult challenge in conducting the referendum relates to the mass disorders in the south of the country involving the displacement of a great number of Kyrgyzstan citizens to other regions, including potential referendum voters. There are anticipated challenges of verifying voters on the referendum voters' lists and enfranchising voters, since many citizens who left the conflict areas do not have any identification documents.
- The Interim Government has taken some measures to enfranchise as many potential voters as possible in areas affected by conflict. These measures include: allowing eligible voters to vote at any polling station on polling day if he/she cannot vote at his/her assigned polling station; and providing the right to vote for citizens who do not have proper identification but who are recognized by at least two members of the precinct electoral commission.
- The situation with refugees in Uzbekistan is the matter of serious concern of the Coalition, and the ability to ensure their constitutional voting right.
- In Osh, the situation remains critical. There are risks for the election commissions' work. Many members of precinct referendum commissions have refused to work and decided to resign, in spite of guarantees of interim government and Ministry of Internal Affairs. Some members still have not show up. Meanwhile, Coalition observers have observed preparation work continues at many polling stations. It has been difficult to gather information on how well preparations are proceeding in Uzbek-populated areas.
- There are rumors around the country about possible provocations during the day of referendum, which in turn could affect the participation of election commission members as well as the participation of voters on the day of the referendum. The challenge of providing sufficient security on referendum day is still in question.