

URGENT ACTION

UZBEKISTAN RETURNING REFUGEES TO KYRGYZSTAN

The Uzbekistani authorities are reported to be forcibly returning refugees who fled to Uzbekistan from Kyrgyzstan following the violence that engulfed southern Kyrgyzstan from 10 June. Refugees must not be returned to Kyrgyzstan until they can do so in safety and dignity.

Since violence erupted on 10 June, hundreds of people have been killed and thousands injured during clashes of armed rival gangs of mostly Kyrgyz and Uzbek youths in southern Kyrgyzstan, carrying out arson attacks, beatings, and shooting unarmed people. There are reports that security forces partly colluded in these attacks. As many as 400,000 people fled their homes as a result.

About 100,000 people, mainly women and children of Uzbek origin, fled from Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan. On 22 June, the Uzbekistani authorities reportedly started to forcibly return refugees to Kyrgyzstan. In one reported incident women and children in the Pakhtaabad district of Uzbekistan were forced onto buses to Kyrgyzstan against their will.

At the same time, the Kyrgyzstani interim government appears to be urging refugees to return in order to proceed with its planned referendum on the constitution and on the interim President on Sunday. Amnesty International has received reports that Kyrgyzstani officials are entering refugee camps in Uzbekistan to encourage refugees to return.

Amnesty International is concerned that it is too early for refugees and internally displaced persons to return because Kyrgyzstani security forces are not able to ensure their safety and security. The European Union's Special Representative to Central Asia warned on 23 June that violence could flare up again. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has withdrawn 300 election monitors because of security concerns. Refugees have said that they are concerned that the Kyrgyzstani security forces will not protect them and that they will have no shelter after their homes were destroyed.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Russian or your own language:

- Urging the government of Uzbekistan to refrain from forcible returns of refugees;
- Expressing concern that the Kyrgyzstani interim government encourages refugees and internally displaced to return before they can ensure the safety and security of these persons;
- Calling on Uzbekistan to provide UN agencies and humanitarian organizations with unhindered and unconditional access to refugees and internally displaced persons;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 AUGUST 2010 TO:

President of Uzbekistan

President Islam Karimov
 Presidential Residence
 Ul. Uzbekistanskaya 43
 Tashkent
 UZBEKISTAN

Email: presidents_office@pressservice.uz

uz

Fax: +998 71 139 55 25

Salutation: Dear President

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan

Prime Minister Shavkat Miromonovich
 Mirziyoev
 Kabinet Ministrov
 5 Mustaqillik Maydoni,
 House of Government
 Tashkent 700078
 UZBEKISTAN

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

And copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Vladimir Imamovich NOROV
 ul. Uzbekistan 9
 g. Tashkent,
 Respublika Uzbekistan
 700029
 UZBEKISTAN

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
 INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

UZBEKISTAN RETURNING REFUGEES TO KYRGYZSTAN

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The deadly violence which has devastated large parts of the south of Kyrgyzstan is said to have started on 10 June with clashes between rival gangs of mostly Kyrgyz and Uzbek youths, which rapidly escalated into large-scale arson, looting and violent attacks, including killings, on mainly Uzbek-populated districts in Osh. Subsequently, the violence spread to the city of Jalal-Abad and surrounding towns and villages. The south of Kyrgyzstan is home to a large ethnic Uzbek community and was the power base of former president Kurmanbek Bakiev, who was overthrown in April after a violent confrontation between government and opposition supporters.

While the cause of the clashes is unclear, the interim government has blamed the violence on supporters of former President Kurmanbek Bakiev and on organized criminal groups intent on destabilizing the situation in the country ahead of a referendum on a new constitution on 27 June, including a vote to confirm Roza Otunbaeva as the acting President. Parliamentary elections are also planned for October. On 15 June, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that the violence appeared to be "orchestrated, targeted and well-planned" and that it was set off by five simultaneous attacks by armed masked men in the city of Osh.

Unconfirmed figures suggest that over 2,000 have been killed in the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad since 10 June. The interim President Roza Otunbaeva said on 18 June that the death toll was likely to be 10 times higher than the official figures which gave it as 190 dead. Many homes, public buildings and other property, in particular Uzbek neighbourhoods, have been destroyed in the cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad and towns and villages in the region with large Uzbek populations. According to satellite images assessed by the UN Institute for Training and Research, 1,807 buildings in Osh have been "totally destroyed" and others have been severely damaged.

UA: 141/10 Index: EUR 62/005/2010 Issue Date: 24 June 2010

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

