

---

**INTERNATIONAL  
HELSINKI  
FEDERATION FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS**

---

**HONORARY CHAIRMAN**  
Yuri Orlov

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Aaron Rhodes

**DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Brigitte Dufour

**ADVISORY BOARD (CHAIR)**  
Karl von Schwarzenberg

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
Holly Cartner  
Bjørn Engesland  
Krassimir Kanev  
Vasilika Hysi  
Ferenc Köszeg

**PRESIDENT**  
Ulrich Fischer

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Srdjan Dizdarevic

**TREASURER**  
Stein-Ivar Aarsæther

Wickenburggasse 14/7, A-1080 Vienna, Austria; Tel +43-1-408 88 22; Fax 408 88 22-50  
e-mail: office@ihf-hr.org – internet: <http://www.ihf-hr.org>  
Bank account: Bank Austria Creditanstalt 0221-00283/00, BLZ 12 000

**Extract from the IHF report**

***Human Rights in the OSCE Region: Europe, Central Asia and North America,  
Report 2005 (Events of 2004)***

**Kyrgyzstan<sup>1</sup>**

**IHF FOCUS: good governance; national human rights protection (human rights defenders); elections; freedom of expression and the media; peaceful assembly; judicial system and independence of the judiciary; torture, ill-treatment and police misconduct; conditions in prisons and detention facilities; right to life; national and ethnic minorities.**

Serious human rights violations continued in Kyrgyzstan in 2004. Human rights activists faced constant intimidation and harassment and grave irregularities took place in the elections to local councils in October as well as in the parliamentary elections in early 2005, which led to an uprising that forced President Askar Akayev to flee the country.

Independence of the judiciary was not guaranteed; the judiciary was dependent both on the Akayev administration and local governments. Judges were vulnerable to bribes and lawyers were hindered from working freely.

Prisons in Kyrgyzstan remained seriously substandard in terms of overcrowding as well as poor sanitary conditions.

Of particular concern was the situation of journalists and independent media outlets. Almost all influential media in Kyrgyzstan were linked to the family or supporters of President Akayev. Harassment of journalists and independent media outlets was clearly aimed at silencing critics of the government and the president and eliminating independent sources of information.

Concerning national and ethnic minorities, the harassment of the Uigur people, many of whom had fled from China, remained alarming. The close cooperation of Kyrgyzstan and the People's Republic of China in the field of anti-terrorism measures resulted in deportations of Uigurs to China, where they faced serious persecution and even death.

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, based on a report by the Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights (KCHR) to the IHF, January 2005.

## Good Governance

The economic situation in Kyrgyzstan was alarming. Corruption was widespread in all sectors of public life. Due to the lack of transparency and public control, aid from Western governments and international organizations seldom reached the real addressees but rather ended up in the pockets of government officials. In a similar vein, assistance given by international financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) did not lead to any visible results that the population could profit from. These deficiencies further aggravated the social conditions of the population, the majority of which lived below the poverty level. Pensioners could not afford to pay for public services or the basic necessities such as electricity and water.<sup>2</sup>

## National Human Rights Protection

### *Human Rights Defenders*

The general situation of the independent human rights community in Kyrgyzstan gave cause for profound concern. Numerous activists routinely faced intimidation, harassment and denunciations in state-controlled media that amounted to incitement to violence. Officials often persuaded inhabitants not to cooperate with human rights defenders, for example, by threatening to stop the provision of necessary supplies such as tractors or gasoline to their villages.<sup>3</sup>

- In January, bugs were found in the offices of parliamentary opposition deputy officers. A parliamentary commission was set up to investigate the case. On 21 May, it presented its report, stating that the listening devices found in parliament had been in place since at least May 2001, and that they had been used by the National Security Service (SNB). The report revealed SNB operations against opposition deputies, local organizations (including human rights organizations such as the Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights, KCHR, IHF member) as well as the political opposition party Ar-Namyz, international organizations (e.g. the OSCE center in Bishkek) and Kyrgyz universities and media.<sup>4</sup>
- The situation of the KCHR remained difficult throughout the year. At the beginning of 2004, the IHF during a meeting in Bishkek called on the Kyrgyz government to remedy the mistake made by the Ministry of Justice when it registered another KCHR with a new leadership under the Kyrgyz Committee's name. As a result of this mistake – which authorities admitted making – the newly elected chair resigned after only six months in office and the “new KCHR” suspended the few activities it had undertaken. In practice, most of its activities had involved discrediting the former KCHR chair Ramazan Dyrlydaev. Dyrlydaev had to leave the country in May 2003 due to constant harassment. He lived in exile through 2004.
- In July, Ainura Aitbaeva, the daughter of Ramazan Dyrlydaev, was beaten by unidentified men in front of her house in the presence of her two small children, until she lost consciousness. It was

---

<sup>2</sup> IHF, “Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to the Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan,” 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

<sup>3</sup> International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), “EU-Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation: Human Rights violation must not be under-evaluated,” 16 July 2004, [http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2065](http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2065).

<sup>4</sup> IHF, “Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to the Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan,” 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

believed that she was beaten because of the activities of her father.<sup>5</sup> Later in the year, in November, a car tried to run over Ainura Aitbaeva.<sup>6</sup>

- On 16 November, Tursunbek Akunov, a Kyrgyz human rights activist, disappeared in Bishkek while heading for what he said was a meeting with representatives of the SNB. In the period preceding his disappearance, Akunov had been active in collecting signatures as part of a campaign urging President Akaev to resign.<sup>7</sup> However, two weeks later, Akunov reappeared at a Bishkek hospital. He claimed that he had been taken by representatives of the Ministry of Interior and held in a basement for that period. Akunov further alleged that members of the SNB had also been involved in his disappearance. Both the MVD and SNB denied any involvement in Akunov's disappearance. At the time of writing, an investigation continued into the incident.<sup>8</sup>

## Elections

In Kyrgyzstan most of the elections since its independence have been characterized by serious irregularities, including a lack of transparency, failure to provide equal conditions for all candidates to promote different political views, and abuse of public resources. Moreover, it appears that the elections were conducted with the simple aim of increasing presidential powers to the detriment of the legislative branch and to fulfill the intentions of the president to remain in office for life.<sup>9</sup>

### *Local Elections*

The elections to local councils (*keneshes*) on 10 October 2004 followed the old model of flawed elections, despite the fact that the Election Code had been improved. International observers, accredited by the Central Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan (CEC) to monitor and observe the elections, local NGOs and even all political party representatives stated that irregularities had taken place in the municipal elections but their allegations varied in terms of the nature and extent of these violations.<sup>10</sup>

The main concern of most interlocutors, including the CEC, was the quality of the voter register. Due to a significant amount of internal and external migration, the voter lists in many parts of the country included individuals who did not reside there in practice, while in other areas – particularly Bishkek – significant numbers of voters were not on the voter lists because they had not officially registered their change of residence. In addition to potentially disenfranchising a large number of voters, the problem created an opportunity for electoral fraud and undermined the equality of the voters across constituencies.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> IHF, “Attack on the Daughter of Prominent Human Rights Defender,” 7 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5856](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5856).

<sup>6</sup> IHF, “Prominent Human Rights Activist Missing in Kyrgyzstan,” 19 November 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc\\_summary.php?sec\\_id=3&d\\_id=3984](http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=3984).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Open letter to President Askar Akaev: Investigate Kidnapping of Tursunbek Akunov,” 2 December 2004, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/12/03/kyrgyz9763.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Report by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) to the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Electoral Standards and Commitments, 14 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc\\_summary.php?sec\\_id=3&d\\_id=3902](http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=3902).

<sup>10</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Kyrgyz Republic, Parliamentary Elections, 27 February 2005, OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*, 9-11 December 2004, [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018_en.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Report by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) to the OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Electoral Standards and Commitments, 14 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc\\_summary.php?sec\\_id=3&d\\_id=3902](http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=3902).

- In Leninskyi village in the Alamedin *rayon*, observers were not allowed to enter the building where the election process took place and observe the voting process until 1 P.M. There were also reports of illegal actions of members of law enforcement bodies, intervening in the election process and putting pressure on electors. By law, law enforcement bodies had the right to be present at the polling stations when the local chairman of the election commission asked for them, and after they had provided for order, they had to leave.

There were also reports of abuse of students' rights to vote, including illegal registration, forced voting, and temporary confiscation of identity documents. Some students had two temporary registration tabs issued to the same person or voted with their Russian passports as well. In response to persistent reports of multiple voting, President Akayev signed into law an amendment providing for the inking of voters' fingers.<sup>12</sup>

The local elections were won by candidates of pro-presidential parties – all in some way connected with President Akayev. This gave rise to suspicion that the results of the elections were falsified in favor of pro-presidential parties. The outcome could also be attributed to the fact that during the election campaign, pro-government and opposition parties were not given equal opportunities in terms of funding and presentation in the media.

### *Parliamentary Elections*

While the election law was improved for the February 2005 parliamentary elections, the elections were rated by foreign monitors as deeply flawed. During the election campaign, state broadcasters openly supported the government, independent media were harassed, and opposition candidates were disqualified from standing for trivial reasons. In one case, a candidate was prevented from competing against a relative of President Akaev. In addition, pressure was exerted on the few remaining independent media in Kyrgyzstan and there were credible reports of massive bribery of voters by candidates backed by the government. Opposition meetings and other campaign activities were disrupted.<sup>13</sup>

The irregularities in the February election caused an uprising, forcing President Akaev to flee the country.

### **Freedom of Expression and Free Media**

During 2004, independent media outlets faced increasing pressure and journalists harassment. Open criticism of government policies and of widespread corruption remained a risky topic for journalists and outspoken individuals and easily led to harassment. In April to May 2004 alone, forty cases of detention, interrogation and other intimidation of journalists usually based on bogus accusations were reported by the Journalists Association in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Kyrgyz Republic, Parliamentary Elections, 27 February 2005, OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*, 9-11 December 2004, [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018_en.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> IHF, "Kyrgyz Authorities Violating OSCE Commitments by Interfering with Democratic Process," 23 February 2005, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=6229](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=6229).

<sup>14</sup> IHF, "Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to the Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

## Defamation

Kyrgyz law provides for defamation both under the Civil and the Criminal Code. A criminal defamation conviction can lead to a sentence of three years imprisonment, loss of journalists' privileges for an extended period of time, and hefty fines.<sup>15</sup>

Defamation charges were used to stifle criticism, aiming particularly at the closure of independent media outlets under the heavy burden of compensation awards ordered by courts, and under obvious political pressure.<sup>16</sup>

The access of citizens to the mass media appeared to be relatively limited. It was estimated that outside the capital, only 60% of the population had access to television news, with state-run television having the greatest coverage. There were no genuinely independent television stations after the purchase of Piramida in the summer of 2004 by individuals close to the presidential family. Newspaper coverage was limited or non-existent outside urban areas. Most newspapers had a small, localized circulation, and some opposition or independent papers reported pressure by local authorities due to their reporting.<sup>17</sup>

- In March, the independent television station Piramida had to stop broadcasting due to technical problems. However, after the problems had been solved within a few days, representatives of the telecommunication authorities did not allow Piramida to resume broadcasting on its usual frequency for six weeks, but forced it to broadcast at low power on an UHF frequency.<sup>18</sup> Employees of the station alleged that the government attempted to keep the station off the air. In August, the telecommunications company Areopag Trade, which reportedly had close ties to President Akaev's family, announced the purchase of Piramida. Soon after that, most of the management and senior news staff left Piramida in protest.
- On 30 March, the state commission on radio frequencies rejected the request of Osh TV to extend the license to broadcast from meter diapason without any well-founded reasons. The measure was widely seen as another attempt to silence an independent source of information.<sup>19</sup>
- In October, the department for antimonopoly policies obliged the independent newspaper *Moya Stolitsa Novosti* (MSN) to raise the price for its issues. Editors of a number of pro-governmental publications had issued a complaint that MSN was using unfair price dumping on the mass media market. The antimonopoly department also decided that those who suffered from this price dumping had the right to ask for indemnification. MSN regarded the decision as illegal. In its opinion, MSN, a Russian-language newspaper, could not influence the circulation of Kyrgyz-language publications. It was also suspected that the department's decision had been an attempt to eliminate another independent newspaper in the wake of the upcoming presidential elections in February 2005.

Outspoken journalists and their families were routinely intimidated and harassed.

- In April, four unidentified men attacked Chingiz Sydykov, the 21-year-old son of Zamira Sydykova, chief-editor of the independent newspaper *Respublica*. He was hospitalized with

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Kyrgyz Republic, Parliamentary Elections, 27 February 2005, OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*, 9-11 December 2004, [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018_en.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> FIDH, "EU-Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation: Human Rights Violations Must Not be Under-Evaluated," 16 July 2004; [http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2065](http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2065).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

serious injuries. It was believed that this assault was in retaliation for a series of four articles written by his mother and published in *Respublica*. The articles had criticized the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, blaming it for extensive corruption, a high rate of unresolved cases, the use of torture as a means of extracting confessions from suspects and cooperation between law-enforcement structures and criminals.<sup>20</sup>

## Peaceful Assembly

Article 16 of the Kyrgyz Constitution guarantees the right to peaceful assembly and demonstrations. However, following the 2003 referendum, a new mechanism of receiving authorization was adopted, which resulted in a virtual ban on opposition assemblies.<sup>21</sup>

Public meetings were only legal if their organizers had received a permit from local authorities, who usually denied the permits if the assemblies were organized by opposition parties or independent public unions. However, on 14 October 2004 the Constitutional Court held that some provisions of the law on assembly were not in compliance with the Kyrgyz Constitution. Particularly, it struck down provisions that required permission from authorities in order for citizens to hold public meetings.<sup>22</sup>

- In March, the administration of the Aksy region refused to issue permission to organize meetings to commemorate the Aksy events three years ago, in which six civilians were shot and killed by bullets from militiamen, 28 others were wounded and more than 100 were subjected to torture. By the end of 2004 none of those who had ordered the use of firearms faced criminal responsibility for the tragedy.<sup>23</sup>
- On 16 April, 18 people, among them many well-known human rights activists, were arrested while taking part in a march in support of Feliks Kulov, the imprisoned leader of the opposition party Ar-Namys and former vice president. At least one of them was reportedly ill-treated by militiamen during detention. All 18 people were released on the same day. Some were fined for organizing an unsanctioned public action.<sup>24</sup>

## Judicial System and Independence of the Judiciary

No serious reforms were taken in Kyrgyzstan to provide for a more independent judicial system. The presidential administration and local authorities greatly influenced and pressurized courts and judges. Authorities constantly held attestations of judges in order to keep them under their control. Courts remained underfinanced and judges underpaid, which made the judicial personnel vulnerable to bribes. For all these reasons, the independent administration of justice in the country could not be guaranteed.

The Criminal and Civil Codes were not in line with international standards. Lawyers were often hindered from working freely, which was especially true if their client was a well-known opposition activist.

---

<sup>20</sup> IHF, "Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to the Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

<sup>21</sup> OSCE/ODIHR, *Kyrgyz Republic, Parliamentary Elections, 27 February 2005, OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*, 9-11 December 2004, [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2005/01/4018_en.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> FIDH/KCHR statement on Kyrgyzstan, 2004, <http://www.kchr.org/documents/iol/fidh/20040630.html>.

<sup>24</sup> IHF, "Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to the Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

- In August, Feliks Kulov was denied parole by an administrative commission at the prison where he was being held. Kulov had been sentenced to 7 and to 10 years imprisonment for abuse of power and embezzlement in 2000 and 2002 respectively. The charges and proceedings gave every appearance of being politically motivated. In November, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court decision that Kulov would not be eligible for parole until November 2005. However, in the wake of the uprising after the February 2005 parliamentary elections, Feliks Kulov was freed from prison by protesters.

### **Torture, Ill-treatment and Police Misconduct**

Torture and ill-treatment remained common practice. In spite of the fact that under the initiative of the KCHR the parliament had adopted a new article to the Criminal Code regarding “torture and the responsibility for its application” as a criminal offense, abuse by law enforcement officers did not become less frequent.

In investigation isolators, police officers ill-treated detainees (including minors) in order to coerce them to confess to having committed crimes that they had nothing to do with.

- On 22 February, Ulukbek Chadron died as a result of torture before his trial. An autopsy showed that his whole body was covered with bruises, both ears had been damaged, metal needles had been applied to his toes and his backbone had been broken.
- On 30 March, law enforcement officers violently evicted 64 families – 327 people, including 201 children – from a building attached to a slaughterhouse in Bishkek. One of the evicted people ended up in hospital after being beaten by militiamen. These evictions, during which excessive force was used, were carried out without prior notice and without any proper judicial process. Moreover, the inhabitants were not provided with any adequate alternative housing and therefore left to live in inhuman conditions. On 6 April, Mambetalieva Ayim, one of the evictees and a 25-year-old invalid, died from the cold.<sup>25</sup>

Law enforcement officers also resorted to ill-treatment while undertaking actions against Kyrgyz citizens, including minors.

- On 5 June, a group of unknown masked and armed men attacked the house of Mirlan Murataliev, an entrepreneur, in the village of Novopokrovka, Issyk Ata district. They identified themselves as criminal investigators, forced everyone (including the children) to lie down on the ground, and searched and ransacked the house. One family member was taken hostage by the attackers who demanded EUR 770 for his liberation. The attackers were later discovered to be officers of the SNB. It was reported that none were charged with abuse but merely demoted.<sup>26</sup>
- In June, Darman Jorobekov, an official of the opposition party Ar-Namys, was detained for violating the public order and reportedly beaten by police in the city of Jalalabad. Jorobekov was

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> FIDH, “EU-Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation: Human Rights Violations Must Not Be Under-Evaluated,” 16 July 2004, [http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2065](http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2065).

released from detention the same day with apologies from the police for mistreatment. Jorobekov filed a lawsuit against the police, which was pending at year's end.<sup>27</sup>

### Conditions in Prisons and Detention Facilities

Conditions in Kyrgyz prisons and detention facilities were seriously substandard. Prisoners did not undergo a medical check upon their arrival, and healthy prisoners were kept in overcrowded cells together with prisoners suffering from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis.<sup>28</sup> Each prisoner usually had less than one square meter of space, far less than that required by international standards. There were no special facilities for mentally ill prisoners. Accordingly, they did not receive necessary treatment, which often led to conflicts – even violent attacks – between them and other inmates.

Nutrition for prisoners was of poor quality and scarce. Prison administrations largely relied on relatives bringing food to prisoners. The facilities for personal hygiene were totally inadequate.<sup>29</sup>

Human rights activists believed that hundreds of inmates died annually in Kyrgyz prisons of tuberculosis, dysentery, cholera and other diseases, which could be largely attributed to the poor sanitary conditions. According to official data, at least 600 people died in Kyrgyz prisons in 2004. However, only in rare cases were relatives informed about the deaths and very few of the deceased underwent a post mortem examination. As a result, deaths that could have been attributed to torture ran the risk of never being discovered and the perpetrators never brought to justice.<sup>30</sup>

Conditions in the women's correctional colony CC-2, located in Stepnoye village, were of particular concern. Members of the IHF, who visited the prison in January 2004, concluded that the prison conditions were far below international minimum standards in a number of areas. There were not enough beds for all the inmates and the IHF was told that necessary medical care (including gynecological care) was not available. Tuberculosis was a serious problem and there had been no fluorography checks in two years. The food allowance per day was reportedly only EUR 0.25.<sup>31</sup>

More than 650 women were held in five wings of the prison. Since not every inmate had a bed, a significant number of the women had to either sleep on the floor or share beds with another. Many of the women were serving very long sentences for minor offenses, for example, six to eight years incarceration for theft.<sup>32</sup>

- On 18 March, 62 prisoners in the Naryn town's jail took control of the prison building. The prisoners complained about extremely bad conditions of maintenance, poor quality food and sanitary conditions and the brutality of the guards. The riot began after three guards beat up one of the prisoners, Ilich Asanbekov. Several ringleaders seized keys from a guard and released all the prisoners from their cells. As a sign of solidarity with Asanbekov, eight men slit their wrists. More than two hours later the prison staff alarmed the police, whose main task was to prevent a mass

---

<sup>27</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Kyrgyz Opposition Party charges State Persecution," 25 June 2004, [http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:qKOJLsfYXhwJ:www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl/2004/04-06-25.rferl.html+%22Darman+Jorobekov%22&hl=de&lr=lang\\_en%20target=nw](http://216.239.59.104/search?q=cache:qKOJLsfYXhwJ:www.hri.org/news/balkans/rferl/2004/04-06-25.rferl.html+%22Darman+Jorobekov%22&hl=de&lr=lang_en%20target=nw).

<sup>28</sup> IHF, "Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to the Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> IHF, "Conditions in a Kyrgyzstan Women Prison," 5 March 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5362](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5362).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

escape by the prisoners. On 19 March, one of the prisoners who had slit his wrists died in hospital due to a loss of blood.<sup>33</sup>

## **Right to Life**

At the beginning of 2004, the parliament adopted a new law, which amended provisions of the Kyrgyz Criminal Code on crimes carrying the death penalty. On 25 March, President Akaev signed a law approving those amendments. There are now only three crimes (instead of six) carrying the death penalty: aggravated murder, rape of underage children and genocide. For the others, the death penalty was commuted into life sentence.<sup>34</sup> The death penalty continued to be pronounced by courts. For instance, on 19 March, the Aksy District court sentenced Dayyrbek Bartyrbekov to death for the murder of a policeman.<sup>35</sup>

## **National and Ethnic Minorities**

Kyrgyzstan was home to some 50,000 ethnic Uigurs (although unofficial estimates put the number at least twice as high), who are ethnically related to Turks and practice the Sunni orientation of Islam. Due to their culture and language, they are closely linked with other ethnic groups in Central Asia, including Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Turkmen. Many of them have fled China due to persecution. The Uigurs constitute a Muslim minority in the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang Uygur in China.<sup>36</sup> Following the events of 11 September 2001, the Chinese authorities started to portray Uigurs as separatists and terrorists and claimed that they were connected to Islamic extremist groups operations across the territory of Central Asia.

Over the past few years, persecution of Uigurs in Kyrgyzstan has intensified. Since 2002, the Uigur markets in Bishkek have been burned down three times, the last time in mid April 2004, causing heavy loss for more than 500 traders.<sup>37</sup> Leaders of the Uigur community in Kyrgyzstan stated that this was a result of the growing influence of China in the Central Asian region.

Since 2000, Kyrgyzstan has worked to strengthen its ties with China. In March 2000 the government of Kyrgyzstan signed an extradition agreement with the Chinese government. The agreement grants no exemptions for suspects who may face politically motivated torture or execution upon their return to China.

- Two Uigurs, living in the Xuar region, were extradited to China after being arrested in Kyrgyzstan on 3 July 2002 and convicted of the murder of the first secretary of the Chinese embassy in Kyrgyzstan, Van Xiampin, in June 2002. They were both executed in China in April 2004.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> FIDH, "EU-Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation: Human Rights Violations Must Not Be Under-Evaluated, 16 July 2004, [http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2065](http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2065).

<sup>34</sup> IHF, "Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

<sup>35</sup> FIDH, "EU-Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation: Human Rights Violations Must Not Be Under-Evaluated, 16 July 2004, [http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2065](http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2065).

<sup>36</sup> FIDH, "EU-Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation: Human Rights Violations Must not be Under-evaluated," 16 July 2004, [http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2065](http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2065).

<sup>37</sup> IHF, "Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

<sup>38</sup> IHF, "Open Letter to the EU General Affairs Council with Respect to Human Rights Situation in Kyrgyzstan," 12 July 2004, [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc\\_id=5860](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewhtml.php?doc_id=5860).

- In March, Uigur trader Ilshat Gabazov was shot dead on a street in Bishkek. At the end of 2004, investigations into the case by the Ministry of Interior officers had not led to any outcome.<sup>39</sup>
- In January, the chairman of the human rights organization Demokratiya received, according to his own statement, a warning from members of the ninth department of the SNB. He claimed that he was demanded to stop spreading information about illegal deportations of Uigurs to China. Some weeks before that, Demokratiya had sent appeals to the UN Secretary General as well as several Western governments to help “stop genocide against Uigurs in the People’s Republic of China.” In its appeal Demokratiya also pointed out that the Kyrgyz government regularly deported Uigurs – fleeing from China – back to the country.
- In December, Ittipak, a public association of the Uigur in Kyrgyzstan, was unable to hold its meeting due to interference by the Kyrgyz authorities. Ittipak was supposed to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in a state-owned drama theater, but one day before the meeting the administration of the theater cancelled the agreement due to an order given by State Secretary Osmonakun Ibraimov. According to the chairman of Ittipak, Rozmuhambet Abdulkakiev, the secretary of state said during a telephone conversation that Ittipak would not be allowed to meet in publicly owned premises unless Abdulkakiev retreated from a statement given to the newspaper *Agym* shortly before the incident, in which Abdulkakiev had said that every Uigur dreamt of having an independent Uigurstan. For the state secretary, such a comment had a negative impact on friendly relations between Kyrgyzstan and China. Abdulkakiev refused to withdraw his statement.

---

<sup>39</sup> FIDH, “EU-Kyrgyz Republic Cooperation: Human Rights Violations Must Not Be Under-Evaluated,” 16 July 2004, [http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id\\_article=2065](http://www.fidh.org/article.php3?id_article=2065).