KYRGYZ REPUBLIC:
FOCUS ON SOUTHERN KYRGYZSTAN
ICAF Report

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Coordinator for Reconstruction & Stabilization

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between March and April 2011, a USAID-contracted, local, non-governmental organization (NGO) and research institute conducted an in-country application of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) for the three southern oblasts of the Kyrgyz Republic at the request of US Embassy Bishkek. The ICAF analysis examines Core Grievances, Social and Institutional Resiliencies, Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors, as they describe the forces dominating the social system in southern Kyrgyzstan. Using this analysis, the ICAF team made **four** diagnostic findings:

- Finding 1**:** Sources of local and oblast-level conflict in Southern Kyrgyzstan are rooted in national-level instability. While ethnic and national identity issues are relevant considerations, respondents cited political instability (revolutions, Parliamentary structure reform, security and judicial sector corruption, etc.) as key conflict drivers throughout the entire country.
- Finding 2**:** Nationalism did not appear as a dominant theme in the data; however, concerns over youth and radicalized women's groups in Osh City were mentioned by respondents. Youth sportsmen and OBON or Osh Shetteri[1] groups were mentioned as instigators of continued inter-ethnic tensions. Also, national-level politicians with the local and regional representatives were mentioned as people who exploit past and current tensions in the community.
- Finding 3**:** Local, formal government officials and informal, local leaders, like aksakals ("white beards" in Kyrgyz language) also known as senior community elders, leaders of women's councils, youth leaders and, in some cases, religious officials were cited as trusted leaders. Both were cited as those who tried to solve local problems, but lack the power and resources for sustainable change.
- Finding 4: Resiliencies such as a shared religious belief in Islam, history of cross-cultural and multi-ethnic economic cooperation, and "ashar" or community-based cooperation enable post-conflict communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan to believe in reconciliation and post-conflict rehabilitation of all former conflict parties.

[1] *Osh Shetteri, translated as "Osh Martyrs in Kyrgyz," is a group of women which organized after the June 2010 conflict around concerns of access to justice for lost loved ones. OBON, translated as "отряд баб особого назначения" or "women's squad of Special Forces," is another group of women which organized after the June 2010 conflict. The name of the group originally comes from the security sector term, OMON, which is translated as "отряд милиции особого назначения" or "military squad of Special Forces," which was given to the groups which act as pay-for-hire special force squads.*

The potential points of entry detailed in this report in the form of both conflict drivers and conflict mitigators includes the on-going instability in the country that continues to negatively influence the social fabric but also the identification of positive changes already present in the social system of the southern oblasts that increases the potential for the system to become healthier. Some of the components of the system where change is already occurring include local and informal leaders who are working for sustainable change for the benefit of the larger community. For example, in some southern locations, local and informal leaders act in conjunction with formal state authorities in order to facilitate greater trust in their communities around issues of border security and local, community-based, security sector needs. However, these cooperative relationships are limited and cited as being personality-specific in some southern Kyrgyz communities.

It is important to note that this report on the data collection through the ICAF process relies on perceptions, impressions, observations and emotions shared by interviewees. Conducted six months after violent conflict occurred in two of the three southern oblasts and after a series of international and national post-conflict assessments conducted in the same southern locations, the ICAF process relied on both a local NGO and a local research institute to collect the data from interviewees.

INTRODUCTION

The Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) is a tool for understanding factors that contribute to the social environment in a particular location. Grounded in theory and practice, the ICAF process is designed to help decision makers take a systemic view of the areas in which they operate (see Appendix 1 for a longer description of the ICAF tool). Because the ICAF assessment teams are composed of members from the US Government (USG), from headquarters and field offices, it helps break out of agency-and location-specific perspectives. There have been 20 ICAF applications since its inception in July 2008.

The Kyrgyzstan ICAF DC Workshop was held on February 24, 2011, with participants from DoE, DoJ, DoJ/ICITAP, DoD, DoC, DoS, DoS/INR, USAID, USAID/DCHA OTI, HHS and DHS. The agenda of the ICAF DC Workshop included a plenary brainstorming session where several issues were identified followed by small group discussion divided by level of analysis (southern-focused, national and international) focused on the five topic issues identified in the plenary session: corruption/lack of rule of law, lack of economic opportunities/unequal distribution of economic opportunity, ethnic conflicts/issues, international influence and narcotics/trafficking/organized crime.

For the field-based portion of the ICAF, a 35-person team was assembled to conduct focus groups and interviews between 25 March and 7 April 2011, in Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad Cities

and Oblasts. This team included three USG Conflict Prevention Officers, 29 research monitors and three local research experts as team leads. Due to the post-conflict nature of the research collection, local research monitors were hired to conduct group interviews (focus groups) as well as individual interviews. The research monitors interviewed a total of 863 respondents (613 respondents through focus groups and 250 respondents through individual interviews). Respondents included but were not limited to: religious figures, students in madrassas[2], local and oblast authorities, sportsmen, civil society activists, journalists, border securities, police, elderly, informal societal leaders, artists, market workers/bazaar workers, women leaders, criminal bosses, village elders, ex-civil servants, youth organization leaders, un-involved conflict parties (ethnic Russians, Tajiks, Uiygurs and Kurds), directly-affected populations (Ethnic Kyrgyz and Ethnic Uzbeks), businessmen, labor migrants, OBON, taxi drivers, unemployed persons (including youth), university-aged students, dormitory-based students, health professionals, school teachers and farmers. Focus groups were conducted in the three southern oblasts including Osh Oblast (Osh City, Nookat, Kara-suu, Uzgen, Kara-kuldz and Alay districts); Jalal-Abad Oblast (Jalal-Abad, Suzak, Nooken, Bazar-Korgon and Ala-Buka districts); and Batken Oblast (Batken, Leilek and Kadamjay districts).

There was a data collector ICAF workshop on 9 April in Osh. In this day-long workshop, the 29 research monitors and the three research leads gathered along with two USG representatives to work through the entire analytical framework of the ICAF including making statements and evidence then grouping them around overarching themes or concepts, identifying key actors' means and motivation and listing identity group, societal patterns and institutional performances. The group formulated core grievances and social and institutional resiliencies as well as drivers of conflict and mitigating factors. Lastly, they listed the windows of uncertainty. This ICAF analysis provides the basis for the majority of this report.

An ICAF presentation was conducted with the US Embassy team in Bishkek 21 and 22 April in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the raw data collected in the three southern oblasts. This one-and-a-half-day workshop was intended to influence 1207 program design and overall strategic goals and objectives of the US Government. From this process, the US Embassy Bishkek staff identified seven key findings from the data collected and preliminary key implications for USG programming and policies, including unstable borders, resource scarcity and perceptions of inequitable distribution, lack of access to reliable information, vulnerability resulting from lack of access to justice, safety and security, tension between weak state structures and local institutions, insufficient economic opportunities and ethnicization of economic transactions and nationalism (inter-ethnic and religious tensions). An internal report was

[2] Madrassas, *a term with Arabic roots, are any type of educations institution (secular or religious); however, in Central Asia, they are often only associated with religious education to differentiate them from secular educational institutions.*

published for Embassy Bishkek's internal programmatic use in mid-July 2011, prior to the inception of the 1207 program activities.

FINDINGS

*As cited above, there are **four** key findings from the ICAF application:*

Finding 1: *Sources of local and oblast-level conflict in Southern Kyrgyzstan are rooted in national-level instability*. While ethnic and national identity issues are relevant considerations, respondents cited political instability (revolutions, Parliamentary structure reform and security and judicial sector corruption) as key conflict drivers throughout the entire country. The ICAF team consistently heard from respondents that local and oblast-level issues are based on national level instability and insecurity. Respondents, regardless of geographic location, ethnicity, age, profession and/or gender, mentioned that due to constant changes in the Bishkek-based national government, including two political revolutions in five years and the formation of a Parliamentary structure which left political parties and political actors fighting to divide-up key power positions in national institutions, have left local and oblast-level officials restrained (both financially and through constant change over in human resources) in their ability to effectively manage and run their community-based issues. This is especially true for those issues relating to security and judicial sector corruption and harassment of local ethnic and national minorities. Focus groups and interviews in rural and urban areas of Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad Oblasts revealed findings regarding the existing tension between weak state institutions and local structures and its affect on potential conflict and stability in Southern Kyrgyzstan. As already indicated in the responses to security and judicial sectors in the south, there was a similar breakdown in attitudes towards state institutions and the reliance on local and informal structures as a result.

Finding 2: *Nationalism did not appear as a dominant theme in the data; however, concerns over youth and radicalized women's groups in Osh City were mentioned by respondents.* Youth sportsmen and OBON or Osh Shetteri[3] groups were mentioned as instigators of continued inter-ethnic tensions. Also, national-level politicians with the local and regional representatives were mentioned as people who exploit past and current tensions in the community. Focus groups and interviews in rural and urban areas of Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad Oblasts revealed findings regarding respondents' concerns over the country's shift towards mono-ethnic Kyrgyz

[3] *See Footnote 1 for definition of Osh Shetteri and OBON*

nationalism, which exacerbates inter-ethnic discord and puts additional stress on the relationship between local authorities and religious leaders in the south. It was clear from the responses that there was a distinct difference based on ethnicity and geography, with ethnic Kyrgyz respondents in Osh City having the most positive opinions on promoting "Kyrgyz nationalism" through television, language, culture and education. Ethnic Uzbeks in Uzgen rayon vocalized the most significant opposition to attempts to eliminate the space for ethnic and national minorities to speak their own mother tongue, live in their own communities and practice religion as they chose. This conflict issue had the clearest distinction in responses by ethnicity, with the most polarized responses being between ethnic Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks, but not those from the most heavily affected June conflict areas. Multi-ethnic communities tended to stress the historical reality of ethnicities inter-marrying and coexisting while mono-ethnic communities stressed the fear of coming into contact with the other ethnicity. Young, ethnic Uzbeks in Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts tended to be more negative about their future in southern Kyrgyzstan while older generations with children tended to be more positive about the conflict environment "normalizing" in order to allow all to live together peacefully. Regardless of ethnicity, several respondents in all three oblasts mentioned their fear of radical Islamists. Although, only in Uzgen and Jalal-Abad, were these external actors "blamed" for instigating the June violence. Of interest, respondents to questions about external actors such as China and Kazakhstan revealed nationalistic responses from ethnic Kyrgyz in all three oblasts, but pertaining only to economic disparities (as mentioned above). Responses about the Republic of Uzbekistan as an external actor revealed nationalistic responses for political, social and economic issues.

Responses to the vision of Kyrgyzstan after 5, 10 and 20 years illustrated ethnic and national minorities' desire for a more multi-ethnic and inclusive society devoid of ethnic identification markers on official documents. Responses to the inquiry about hope for the future revealed a sense of cautious optimism about the upcoming Presidential election and the strength of Parliament. Few respondents mentioned the connection between ethnic identity formation and national formation, but ethnic minorities tended to take issue with the name of the country being intimately connected to only one ethnic identity (Kyrgyz Republic). Suggestions were made to both delete ethnicity from national identification documents and consider forming a national identity (as Kyrgyzstanis). Respondents differed in their answers to the question regarding Kyrgyz language and its connection to nationalism. Ethnic minorities, predominantly ethnic Uzbeks, who cited the connection between the language and its alienation of ethnic and national minorities, did so in relation to accessing political institutions for employment where knowledge of Kyrgyz language is a requirement. There is little support for national, regional and local formal authorities and institutions. However, most respondents mentioned that the national Presidential election was important to the stability of the country. Specifically, respondents in Jalal-Abad Oblasts linked nationalism to the political process at the national level discussing exploitation of nationalistic rhetoric by national leaders.

Young, ethnic Uzbeks differentiated their answers from older, ethnic minorities in terms of hope for the future given the current political environment of nationalist rhetoric. In Jalal-Abad and Osh Oblasts, young, ethnic Uzbek men (citizens and non-citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic) mentioned the lack of hope in a future where they will not be targeted and harassed based on ethnicity due to the mono-ethnicity of the political institutions and lack of political will for inclusive politics. Older generations of ethnic and national minorities tended to be more optimistic that this phase of nationalist rhetoric will decrease after the central government solidifies and domestic, economic development increases.

Finding 3: *Local, formal, government officials and informal, local leaders, like aksakals ("white beards" in Kyrgyz language) also known as senior community elders, leaders of women's councils, youth leaders and, in some cases, religious officials were cited as trusted leaders.* Both were cited as those who tried to solve local problems, but lack the power and resources for sustainable change. Lack of oversight, transparency and accountability of state institutions at the local level has led to a lack of trust in formal state institutions by the general population. The majority of respondents know that formal state institutions need to exist but have little to no trust in them. Humanitarian Aid distribution in Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts significantly exacerbated the tensions between formal and informal structures through the implementation of their assistance to affected communities. Respondents also recognize that the incompetence at the local level is linked to two issues: corruption and nepotism which "qualifies" individuals for positions in formal institutions and national-level instability within formal state institutions. In turn, people's reliance on informal structures (civil society organizations, teachers, village councils, women's councils, youth sports programs, etc.) for protection, service provision and advocacy has lead to a rise in tension between Kyrgyzstan's formal and informal institutions. In all three oblasts, respondents mentioned that local structures produce tangible results. The projects that are conducted in communities by civil society organizations (educational programs, water and sanitation reform) produce short-term, positive outcomes according to respondents. The connection that informal institutions have to the citizens in the communities allows them to know and address community concerns quicker and with more accuracy than formal institution-based officials, who are plagued by corruption and bureaucracy, where payments are made and red tape prevents quick turn-around or action.

There was ethnic-based disparity in respondents' opinions in Osh Oblast and Jalal-Abad Oblast, as well as Osh City and Jalal-Abad City, on the question of Humanitarian Aid. Ethnic Kyrgyz respondents found the presence of organizations and distribution of humanitarian assistance by international organizations as a negative post-conflict environment reality. They believed that distribution was based on ethnicity (favoring only ethnic Uzbeks) and therefore contributed to further ethnic divisions in society. Ethnic Uzbeks had the exact opposite reaction to humanitarian assistance, and expressed gratitude to international organizations that provided immediate, post-conflict assistance in the absence of state institutions that would provide housing, food and clothing. International Humanitarian Aid was highlighted as an illustration of the weakness of

formal state institutions to provide basic services (housing, sanitation, education, protection, etc.) to its citizens. Several organizations were mentioned by name (ACTED, ICRC, WFP, UNICEF[4]) as providing these services, which are the responsibility of the government, to the people in the absence of the state's ability to do so. Dependence on self-help and self-reliance are in a way a source of resilience within Kyrgyzstan, but also indicate a lack of reliance on formal state institutions, which is at the foundation of any viable democracy. Low levels of ethnic minority representation at all levels of government also prevent minorities from feeling included in formal structures and, therefore, increase a reliance on informal structures.

Finding 4: *Resiliencies, such as a shared religious belief in Islam, history of cross-cultural and multi-ethnic economic cooperation and "ashar" or community-based cooperation, enable post-conflict communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan to believe in reconciliation and post-conflict rehabilitation of all former conflict parties.* Uzgen rayon respondents mentioned the growing tendency to have separate mosques, neighborhoods and schools which continue to divide the community into mono-ethnic vs. multi-ethnic areas. Perceptions of "Davachi,[5]" who propagate more extreme views on Islam and the state are negative in all three southern Oblasts. People said that the government continues to conflate followers of Islam (including imams) with radical Islamists, Wahabbists and members of Hizb ut Tahrir. In contrast, a majority of respondents mentioned that religious leaders and unofficial religious institutions are able to bring people together in society to resolve problems. In Uzbek communities, particularly in conflict affected areas such as mahallahs, there is a reliance on indigenous leaders and processes for solving disputes. Islamic leaders and traditions (not Shari'a law but based on traditional values) serve as a unifying basis for common values and expectations.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

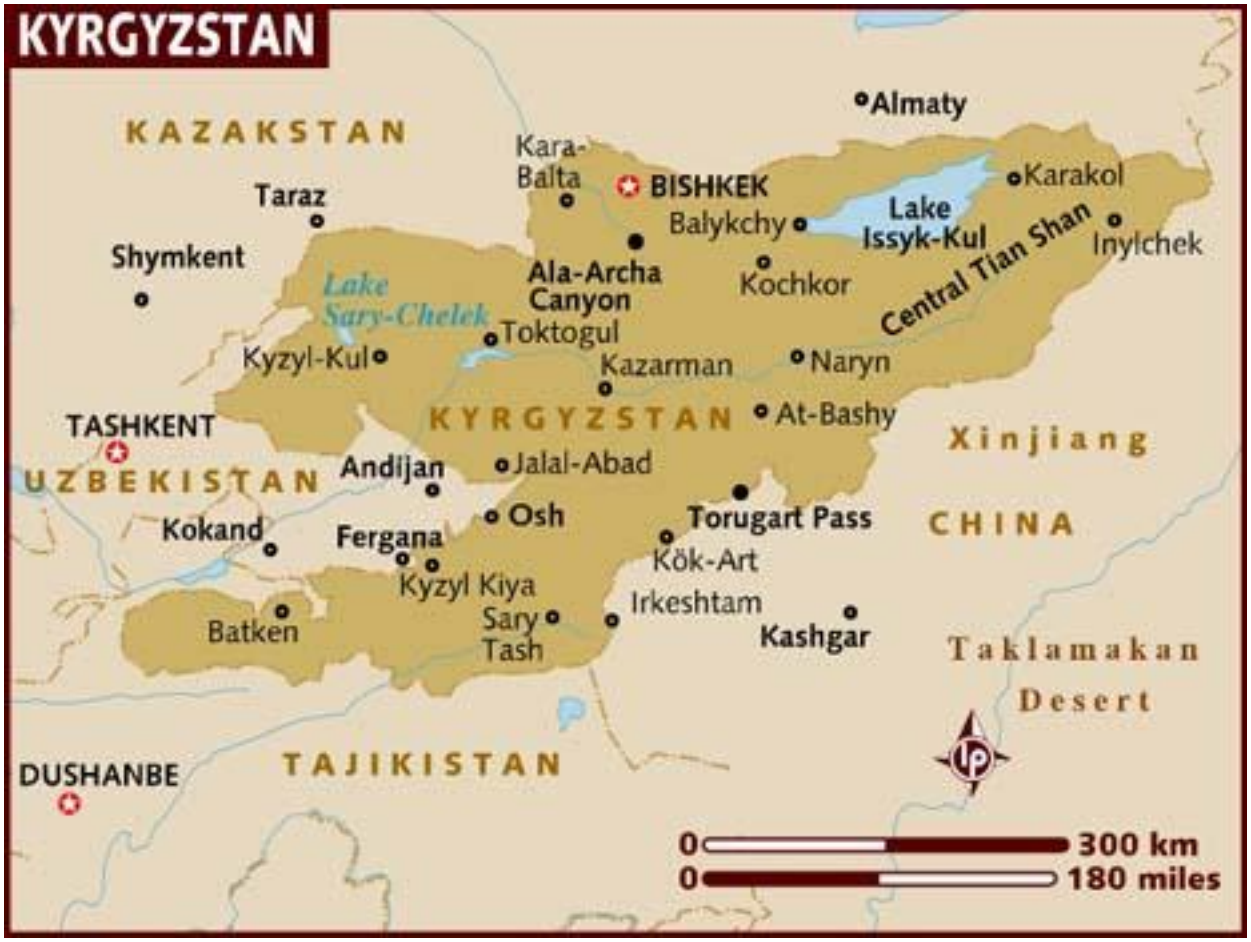
The ICAF analysis recognizes that certain features of the three southern oblasts in the Kyrgyz Republic are well-entrenched and not subject to change in the near or medium term. A more detailed discussion of these contextual factors is contained in Appendix 2. However, there are two main historical and cultural contextual factors cited by respondents that are discussed in this section.

The Kyrgyz Republic has struggled with internal, low-intensity conflict before, during and after their history with the Soviet Union. However, it is noted that local, informal, community-based conflict resolution mechanisms were able to sustain the low intensity of the conflict and mitigate

[4] *ACTED, an abbreviation for* Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement or *the Technical Cooperation and Development Aid Agency, is a humanitarian organization headquartered in Paris. ICRC, an abbreviation for the International Committee of the Red Cross, is headquartered in Geneva. WFP is an abbreviation for World Food Programme headquartered in Rome UNICEF, is an abbreviation for the United Nations Children's Fund, and headquartered in New York.*

[5] *Davachi, is a term used for Orthodox Islamic* proselytizers.

the root causes to the satisfaction of parties involved. In Batken, Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts, older generation respondents tended to cite this historical explanation when asked if they



Source: Lonely Planet, www.lonelyplanet.com

were hopeful about future stability and non-violence in the country. The younger generation, by trend, only cited the post-Soviet Union times, and noted that they were less optimistic about the ability of the informal, community-based structures to mitigate the "snowball" of conflict generation throughout the south. Particularly, ethnic Uzbek youth respondents cited the use of force as a first recourse by security sector officials for low-intensity conflict as one explanation for why the local, informal community-based mechanisms failed in June 2010.

The second contextual variable for the southern three oblasts of the Kyrgyz Republic is based on a geographic reality: they are inter-linked with the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan. This geographic puzzle known as the Ferghana Valley connects these three former Soviet Republics without delineated borders and with personality-driven, cross-border, cooperative initiatives that don't foster confidence in its sustainability. However, as most respondents cited, they have lived among multi-ethnic identities and nationalities for over 100 years. They believe that the iterative contact with their neighboring countries (something that is

less in the northern half of the country), allows them to remain hopeful that peaceful coexistence can be rebuilt in their post-conflict environment.

CONFLICT DRIVERS AND MITIGATING FACTORS

Using the contextual factors as a foundation, the ICAF analysis identified a series of key features that affect the conflict situation in southern Kyrgyzstan. These include Core Grievances (ways that identity groups feel that their ability to satisfy their basic needs are not being met), Social and Institutional Resiliencies (ways in which identity groups persist and meet their basic needs), Drivers of Conflict (key actors' mobilization of identity groups around their core grievances in ways that increase conflict), and Mitigating Factors (key actors' mobilization of groups around resiliencies in ways that prevent or lesson conflict and the potential for it). The ICAF team's findings of each of these components, including diagrams detailing the nested drivers of conflict and mitigating factors, are listed in Appendix 3. More importantly, a critical contribution of the ICAF analytical process is moving beyond the identification of these important variables in isolation and, instead, illustrating the dynamic interaction (or "nestedness") among these elements. This is necessary for stakeholders and decision makers to better understand the potential consequences of various strategies and interventions and improve their effectiveness.

Nested Models of Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors

Results of an ICAF application illustrate the dynamic interplay between different drivers of conflict and different mitigating factors. The ICAF team describes how the analytical conclusions of conflict drivers and mitigating factors exist in a "nested" fashion. This description of local conflict drivers and mitigating factors resting within larger national-and international-level drivers and mitigating factors facilitates assessing the sustainability of low-impact or short-lived resolution of local conflict conditions when national and international-level patterns of behavior continue to exist.

Nested Drivers of Conflict

More important than understanding a discrete driver of conflict is to understand the interrelationships between the entire structural system of drivers. An important way to understand these interrelationships is to distinguish drivers of conflict that are thematically related but emanate from different levels including **local, regional and national (and in one case, international)**. For this report, "Local" includes village-level, ayil okruk or a collection of villages and rayons or districts. "Regional" is synonymous with the oblast or the collection of various rayons within a particular geographic area. "National" is defined as the entire country, composed of seven oblasts. This is important because even if one were to address a particular

driver of conflict at the local level, pressures from the other levels may enable this dynamic driver to continue to thrive.

ICAF methodology assesses a "driver of conflict" using a formula which is detailed in the appendix. However, it is important to know that at each of the nested levels of analysis, there is a "key actor" mobilizing an "identity group" around a particular "core grievance," or a key issue that is not currently working productively in society. This formula is illustrated in the following nested drivers of conflict.

Nested Driver 1: Lack of strong state structures (at all levels) such as judicial and security sector (including border guards) enables corruption and harassment of all ethnic and national groups

- *National:* Formal state institutions such as the Education and Health sectors, as well as the Security and Judicial sectors, were weak prior to the April 2010, political overturn of President *Bakiyev.* People lacked trust in state officials due to levels of corruption and nepotism.
- *Oblast:* Oblast officials are restricted by national-level weak institutions and unqualified personnel for conflict prevention and resolution, yet remain empowered by local level state officials for presenting strategic solutions to conflict issues.
- *Local:* Perceptions about a lack of access to judicial processes for all in the Kyrgyz Republic, particularly ethnic and national minorities in the south of the country.

Nested Driver 2: National language politics as well as the general lack of access to reliable, unbiased media alienates ethnic and national minorities

- *National:* Nationalization of television stations transmitting, including limiting those transmitting in Uzbek from the Republic of Uzbekistan, limits access to information for those who don't speak the national Kyrgyz language.
- *Oblast:* Oblast-level employment opportunities are linked to the ability to speak Kyrgyz.
- *Local:* Use of derogatory terminology such as "SART" for ethnic Uzbeks by ethnic Kyrgyz in local media sources as well as in daily interaction and dialogue, which is manifested in cases in Osh City and Jalal-Abad City segregated shops and stores or neighborhoods with "non-SART" labels, continues "us" vs. "them" dynamics at the community-level.

Nested Driver 3: Discrimination against pluralistic practice of Islam is politicized which breeds mistrust among citizens

- *National:* Bridging the gap between national religious leaders and politicians is difficult due to the anti-radicalization discourse at the national-level.

- *Oblast:* There is conflict between Oblast-level religious leaders and police over profiling of religious youth.
- *Local:* Village/Ayil okmutu level, mono-ethnic mosques foster discrimination in southern cities and rayons.

Nested Driver 4: Low level of public administration management of natural resources and other economic opportunities leads to perceptions of inequitable distribution of all resources throughout the country

- *National:* Mismanagement at the national-level furthers corruption by organized crime, which is perceived as receiving kickbacks from the lack of clear policy on appropriate resource management.
- *Oblast:* Regional land and water councils, lacking national-level policy reform initiatives, are limited in their capacity to address regional-based resource management issues.
- *Local:* Local water council directors are unable to accurately manage natural resource sharing in enclaves in Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh villages independent of initiatives at the regional and national-levels. They can identify and warn officials when conflicts will occur, but have no conflict prevention or mitigation capability.

Nested Mitigating Factors

Another novel feature of an ICAF application is that the ICAF team collects and uses information on social and institutional strengths and resilience, as well as factors that mitigate conflict. As the drivers of conflict are nested to demonstrate relationships between drivers at the local, regional, national and international levels, the mitigating factors are also nested to highlight the contexts that apparently nurture and reinforce local, regional, national and international forces mitigating conflict and strengthening the social fabric.

Nested Mitigators 1: Use of historical and cultural community-bonding activities to unite divided communities ("Ashar")

- *National:* National events are held to collect non-food items.
- *Oblast:* Resources are lobbied and mobilized by regionally mandated officials such as judges for conflict prevention and conflict negotiation.
- *Local:* Community clean-ups in multi-ethnic communities occur.

Nested Mitigators 2: Shared Muslim identity is used as a super-ordinate goal for peace-building

- *National:* The Committee on Religious Affairs and national muftis attempt to regulate the national discourse on religious affairs.

- *Oblast:* During the past conflict, religious officials called for peace and tolerance.
- *Local:* Local imams unite youths of conflicting ethnicities.

Nested Mitigators 3: Actors and identity groups maintain and mobilize trusted community figures to mitigate conflict

- *National:* Popular political and social figures cited by respondents as trusted resolve conflicts by using their popular and trusted status.
- *Oblast:* Civil society members, Public Advisory Boards and Oblast Advisory Councils work to unite multi-sector leaders for early warning detection in communities.
- *Local:* Teachers, aksakals and sportsmen are able to mobilize youth towards tolerance and peaceful coexistence in conflict communities.

Nested Mitigators 4: History of multi-ethnic and multi-national economic cooperation facilitates reconciliation and peace-building

- *International:* Many remember cross-border, economic sharing between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China and Kazakhstan, as well as among the enclaves in the south, as a positive in history.
- *National:* Post-conflict, business recovery commissions attempt to build on tradecraft traditions.
- *Oblast:* NGOs work on multi-national and multi-ethnic economic, peace-building projects in communities.
- *Local:* Local businessmen united ethnicities one week after the violence in June 2010, in order to reconcile communities.

WINDOWS OF UNCERTAINTY

The factors that drive or mitigate conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan take on additional dimensions when certain expected events create uncertainty about the future. As part of the ICAF analysis, the team identifies and considers the potential impact of these events, or "Windows of Uncertainty," because they can either trigger escalation of conflict or enable significant progress toward stable peace. A complete list of the Windows of Uncertainty described during the analysis is in Appendix 4. There **are three key windows** that deserve special attention and are discussed below:

Presidential elections in October 2011. The Kyrgyz Republic successfully launched their post-conflict Parliamentary elections in October 2010 and local elections in Talas, Batken and Osh Oblasts in April 2011. Most acknowledge that the Presidential election process, which officially

began on 16 August, will truly tell the strength of the Kyrgyz Republic to maintain safety and security through a stable electoral period and should culminate with a late 2011 announcement of the new President. Political leadership, vying for Presidential nominations from their parties, began campaigning throughout the country in mid-summer with the official registration period for their candidacy finalized with the Central Election Commission (CEC) on 16 August. The 86 registered candidates need to collect 30,000 signatures and 100,000 som ($2,239.00 USD). They also have to pass a televised national Kyrgyz language test in order to make the CEC short list compiled and announced on 15 September. The election campaign started on 25 September. As of 3 October of the 86 nominated candidates, the CEC had registered 19. A total of 14 candidates withdrew and 53 were rejected. The number of registered candidates may increase as the appeals of nine candidates were satisfied by the District Court and upheld by the Supreme Court. The election is scheduled for 30 October 2011.

However, there are on-going concerns that the electoral process has **four** potential conflict flashpoints; weak knowledge of electoral law which may lead to violations of the electoral legal framework; weak security sector to mitigate any violent protest related to these or other violations of the electoral process; increased nationalist rhetoric which may exacerbate the post-conflict environment in Southern Kyrgyzstan; and a lack of objective media outlets portraying the electoral process throughout the country.

The Kyrgyz Republic reformed their electoral policies in early 2011 in anticipation of the Presidential elections, but experts are concerned that these reforms were not successfully communicated to all the voters. For example, voters are no longer able to register at the voting location on the day of the election. Their identification documents need to be reviewed by the local CEC representative office at least 48 hours prior to the election scheduled for 30 October. However, if voters assume that the electoral law is the same as the last election, they may become frustrated when they are turned away from the voter location on the day of the election, which could manifest into violent or non-violent collective action. The weakness of the security sector, which includes police, border guards, traffic police and national security officials, leaves many experts concerned with their ability to mitigate any form of collective action which may manifest during the electoral process. Northern police forces have received basic riot control training which has been utilized during low-intensity conflicts over the last few months. However, they have yet to be tested with larger-scale conflict. There are also general concerns of candidates using nationalist rhetoric during their electoral campaigning, particularly in the south, which may continue to divide communities by ethnicity and nationality. The last potential conflict flashpoint relates to the lack of objective media outlets and the way in which they may use television, which is the Kyrgyz Republic's most utilized media outlet, to misrepresent candidates in electoral events leading to contestation and protest.

Approval and Implementation of the Osh City Master Plan, Post-conflict Reconstruction Efforts in the South, and Redistribution of Land Resources in Osh Oblast. The Master Plan for city

development in Osh is an enigmatic and complex document which has caused consternation among local communities, national government officials and international humanitarian aid workers. The document, which was developed during the Soviet era and unpublished in its entirety, is referred to by almost all Osh City representatives. It has arguably been implemented in many areas of Osh City following the June 2010 violence, but it has yet to be approved by the Kyrgyz Parliament.

Part of the Master Plan was presented by the State Directorate for Reconstruction and Development of Osh and Jalal-Abad Cities (SDRD), a national government entity established to address post-conflict needs in Osh and Jalal-Abad Cities and Oblasts, together with the office of the Mayor of Osh on two forums of NGOs, international organizations and other interested groups on 3 December 2010 in Osh and on 17 December 2010 in Bishkek. According to the Master Plan as it was presented at the aforementioned forums, Osh and Jalal-Abad city administration intends to construct two- to three-story buildings (and some high-rise buildings) in the areas affected by the June 2010 violence. There is speculation that these vertical multi-story buildings will be the replacement for the traditional horizontal mahallas (one-story building compactly inhabited by ethnic Uzbeks). However, the authors of the Master Plan suggest that the affected communities will be content to live in such constructions since it addresses their immediate housing needs. It also stipulates the creation of green zones such as parks and playgrounds in central areas of the city. Finally, it stipulates the expansion of the Osh City borders to encompass between 16 and 38 hectares of the Osh province, mainly from the Kara-Suu district (on the way to the Osh airport), which is intended to accommodate the reported 80,000 individuals currently requesting and waiting for land.

Other issues related to the multi-story apartment complexes are related to complications with their completion due to ill-relations between national government officials and the city administration in Osh City, as well as controversial criteria, application processes and allocation of completed apartments in the multi-story buildings. SDRD has been a point of contention for city administration officials, international organizations and conflict-affected populations. Their mandate includes the construction of 16 multi-story housing complexes (10 in Osh City and six in Jalal-Abad City), restoration of water/sanitation and roads, as well as the repair of administrative and social buildings such as the Uzbek Cultural Center and Philharmonia in Osh City.

While SDRD had the mandate and the financial support, they did not have the necessary cooperative relationship with city officials in Osh, who perceived the provision of these post-conflict social services to be their responsibility, not that of national government. SDRD established a commission to communicate criterion for eligibility to receive apartments in the slated 16 apartment complexes in November 2010 after consultation with international organizations representing conflict-affected communities to assure that the most conflict

vulnerable beneficiaries were recipients according to the criteria. Resolution 295 was decreed by the national government regarding this process which consists of two commissions: city administration officials (since the apartments are under city authority once they are completed) and SDRD officials with Jantoro Satybaldiev (Former Vice Prime Minister) in charge of the reviewing process. While this was deemed a successful effort at transparency and accountability, the result was less than ideal. As the first two apartment buildings were released to applicants in January 2011, one in Osh City and one in Jalal-Abad City, it was apparent that 95% of the apartments were given to ethnic Kyrgyz.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has entered into a financial deal with Osh City administration and SDRD officials to begin new construction of transitional shelters. It has also been alleged that the Russian Government is also contributing financially to the construction of these shelters. However, conflict remains between city administration, which fundamentally disagrees with the construction of such horizontal housing structures and mentioned this to key financial donors during a visit in February 2011, that they were intending to allow them to continue financing the construction of such shelters, but will demolish over 90% of them (623 of 700) in Osh City by 2025 in adherence with the Master Plan. It remains unclear if this has been communicated to beneficiaries receiving the homes from international organizations.

The Government recognized the urgency of developing new land areas to resolve conflict over land resources and enacted a number of resolutions and orders to identify land plots for Osh City and Osh Oblast. On January 10, 2011, a resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic was issued to establish an inter-agency committee to review the situation with agricultural land squatting in Kara-Suu rayon of Osh Oblast headed by SDRD Director General Jantoro Satybaldiev. The committee started to verify the list of applicants for land plot allocation. As of January 2011, Osh City had a total of 13,707 persons and Osh Oblast had a total of 50,000 persons totaling 63,707 people. There are additional applications being reviewed with a total of 5,000 applicants.

Government Resolution 82 in March 2011 addressed the need to transform parts of public land in Osh City, Kara-Suu and Aravan rayons in Osh Oblast, which are not currently owned by individuals, into land of inhabited localities in order to absorb those land plots (Katta-Say which has 1,624 ha and Achinsky which has 2,043 ha or 3,667 ha in total). The Government also initiated Resolution 158, an inter-agency committee under the leadership of the SDRD to approve the list of citizens eligible for receiving land plots for individual housing construction. The idea is to carry out land reclamation in three stages with three separate committees established to inspect, verify and develop lists of eligible individuals and define the queue for land allocation, allotting 0.006 ha to each applicant until they reach 21,000 people. Then they will initiate the next phase until the entire 3,667 ha has been divided among 31.2 thousand

households or 100,000 people. However, of significance, the current number of plots identified is insufficient for the number of applicants to receive land.

Cessation of Humanitarian Aid without Subsequent State Institutional Resumption. Following the peaceful process of the one-year anniversary of the June violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, many international humanitarian organizations have changed the scope of their portfolios, decreased their staff or completely closed their offices. This is due to the need to move from early recovery (period of time directly following the secession of violence until approximately six months after) to long-term development (six months and onwards) as essential for many international organizations such as UNHCR, DRC and ICRC. Their immediate relief efforts had stabilized the post-conflict environment in both Osh and Jalal-Abad by winter; however, their mandates through June forced them to adapt their strategies for assistance to the affected communities. ICRC continues to provide assistance to prisoners and political detainees and expanded its portfolio to include water rehabilitation projects and non-food item deliveries to hospitals and shelters in Osh and Jalal-Abad. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Program (WFP) have entered a new phase of humanitarian assistance for food distribution, shifting from General Food Distribution (GFD), which covered 280,000 beneficiaries, to Vulnerable Group Feeding (VFG), an on-going project since 2009 which covers only a portion of the GFD beneficiaries.

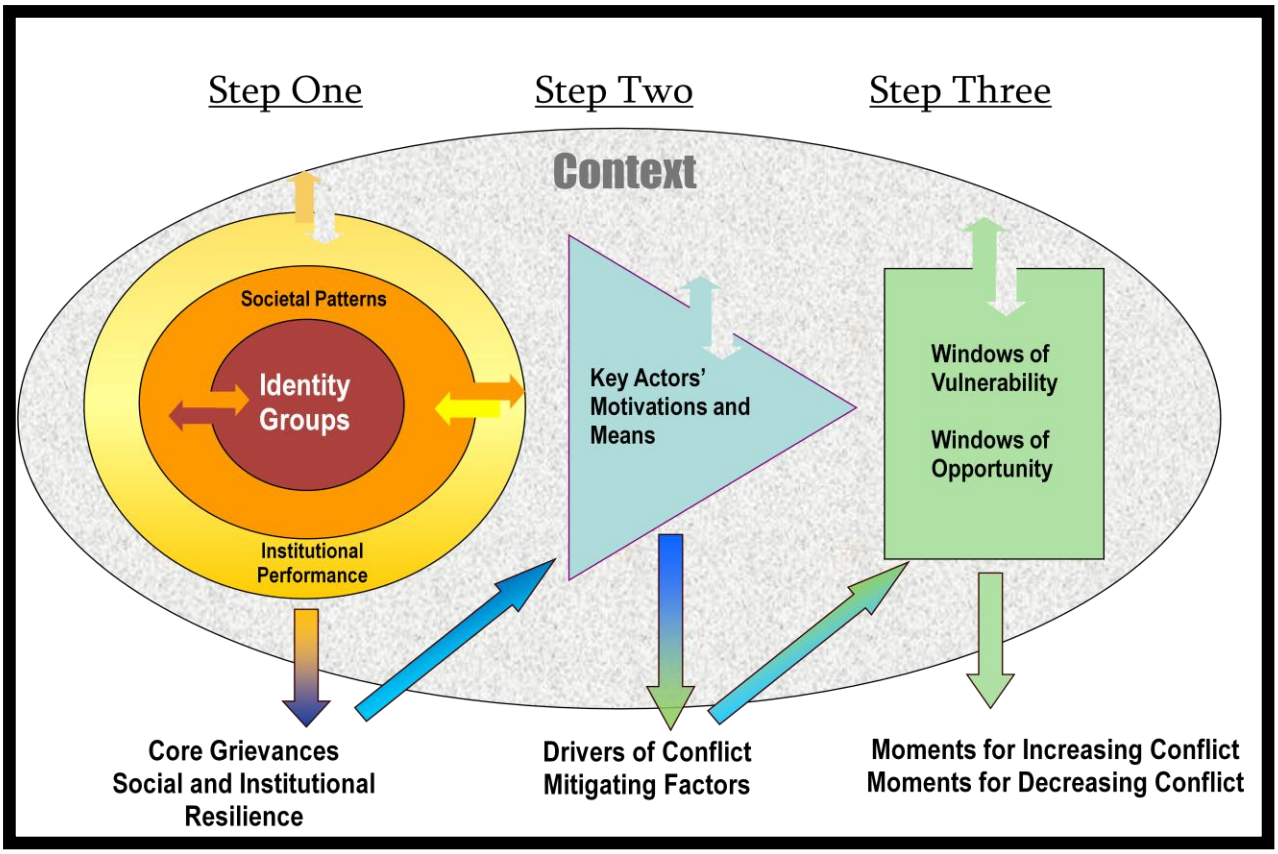
Several organizations have completed their water and sanitation, shelter, protection, health and infrastructure projects since their arrival in southern Kyrgyzstan such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Handicap International, HelpAge, Action Against Hunger (AAH) and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). It remains to be seen if the city and oblast administrations in Osh and Jalal-Abad will be able to absorb and handle the number and geographic scope of beneficiaries that the international organizations covered in their year in southern Kyrgyzstan. Local NGOs have the political and social will to carry on the mandates and projects of international organizations, but lack the financial support and logistically training to implement such a large portfolio without assistance. This has the potential to lead to frustration by the population once organizations close their projects by the end of 2011.

CONCLUSION

The application of the ICAF provided a structured learning opportunity for Embassy Bishkek and other USG agencies to listen and engage with local community members and develop a shared understanding of the root causes of conflict as well as the indigenous resilience that may mitigate or prevent conflict. While Embassy Bishkek was not the primary data collector for this ICAF, as is the standard format, their participation in an ICAF application in April, including a half day debrief by the three local research leads, afforded Embassy Bishkek staff the opportunity to obtain in-depth knowledge of conflict drivers and mitigating factors as said by

respondents (thereby creating a safe space for local people to share their opinions with the USG). The ICAF also gave team members a unique opportunity to listen to people's opinions and ideas without discussing a specific project, agenda or topic. Lastly, the ICAF application developed local capacity for both data collection for the 29 monitors and also conflict analysis through their obtained knowledge of the ICAF methodology. The training obtained by all local participants was expressed in gratitude at the conclusion of the data collection process as they stated their desire to use the methodology again in their future work in the region.

Appendix A: Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)



The Reconstruction and Stabilization Policy Coordinating Committee (R&S PCC) adopted the ICAF in July 2008. ICAF workshop participants collaboratively and systematically examine a country's or region's social structures bearing on conflict and resilience, both latent, violent, and vibrant. When used as part of Situation Analysis in the whole-of-government planning process, the ICAF provides the core of the assessment of the environment.

Elements:

- Participants – Bring a wide variety of perspectives, knowledge, and experience on country or region in question; USG and others.
- Data – Secondary source data from existing documents and expert knowledge; when time and resources are available it includes collection of primary source data.
- Outputs – Prioritized lists and "nests" of Drivers and Mitigating Factors, a systems map depicting "potential points of entry," gap analysis (when applicable) comparing existing efforts and Drivers and Mitigating Factors, and written reports.

Participants share, discuss, and organize data in:

- Plenary brainstorming of issues and Small Group discussion of data by ICAF components (secondary source data)
- Individual and Small Group "Headlines and Evidence" debriefing (primary source data)
- Plenary discussion of processed data and identification of missing, over- or under-emphasized information
  (all data sources)

Formulas used to capture analytical conclusions:

- Core Grievances*:*
  Identity group (describe it) perceives its ability to satisfy its need for security, identity, recognition, or vitality (specify) is hampered, hindered or prevented by someone or something (specify).
- Social and Institutional Resilience*:*
  Identity Group (describe it) uses relationships, networks, other ways of connecting with and supporting a larger community (specify) to satisfy its needs for identity, recognition, security, or vitality (specify).
- Key Actors:
  Transform potential energy of Core Grievances and Social & Institutional Resilience into active energy of Drivers and Mitigating Factors.
- Drivers of Conflict:
  Which Key Actor is mobilizing or influencing what Identity Group around a particular Grievance to drive conflict/instability or increase tensions? What are the Key Actor's Motivations and Means?
- Mitigating Factor:
  What Key Actor is mobilizing or influencing what Identity Group around a particular resilience to mitigate conflict or promote peace and stability? What are the Key Actor's Motivations and Means?
- Windows of Uncertainty:
  Anticipated events which have the potential to generate uncertainty in the short, medium, and long term.

Outputs:

- Report out:
  A ten-page document summarizing findings and conclusions, including Core Grievances, Resilience, Drivers, Mitigating Factors, and Windows, as well as the list of "What we don't know." (secondary source data)
- Final Written Report:
  A 20- to 40-page document with appendices, that includes an in-depth description of the ICAF process, findings and conclusions, Nested Drivers and Mitigating Factors, a

systems map, “Potential Points of Entry,” Windows of Uncertainty, a summary of techniques, and a PowerPoint presentation. (primary source data).

- Whole-of-government Plan:
  When a whole-of-government planning process includes the ICAF analysis, ICAF findings are described in the description of the Situation Analysis and a short, summary report listing ICAF findings and conclusion should also be produced.

Appendix B: Kyrgyz Republic ICAF Findings and Conclusions

Contextual Factors

There are a number of background factors that shape the current situation in southern Kyrgyzstan. These factors may be subject to change in the long-term, but their importance in the short-term is that they set the pre-conditions for conflict escalation or de-escalation. The contextual issues identified fall into three categories: Political/Social, Economic and Cultural/Historical.

Political/Social

In 2010, a number of significant developments occurred in the peace and conflict context in Kyrgyzstan. On 7 April, amidst violent clashes in the north of the country, the government of former President Bakiyev was overthrown and a new interim government installed. Between 11-14 June an explosion of violence, destruction and looting in southern Kyrgyzstan killed hundreds of people and displaced many thousands, in particular in and around the city of Osh. The events in 2010 led to an increase in instability, both at the political level and amongst the population; this has been expressed in significant inter-ethnic tension. Since the fall of independence from the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz Republic has struggled to find a strong government to lead the country through political transitions in a non-violent manner. Corruption is endemic, and people have lost faith in its governing structures. State institutions have been unable to provide justice and security for all or to adopt a comprehensive strategy to resolve conflict drivers associated with interethnic discord, including the fact that security forces were unable to prevent the violence in June 2010.

Crime is pervasive in Kyrgyzstan and is often linked to people in power. In some circles, and to some extent, violence can be bought, as evidenced in its sometimes highly organized nature in Osh and other parts of the country. The quest for power through criminal, commercial and political means - with a grey area in between - is in turn based on a clan structure which continues to play an important part in social relationships. The proliferation of political parties (29 stood in the parliamentary elections and 156 were eligible to nominate candidates for the presidential elections) can be seen to reflect these various divisions in Kyrgyzstan society. A major divide runs along the north-south axis. The two regions have historically been distinct and tensions between them are an important underlying factor in political power struggles.

Economic

Large-scale unemployment, inflation and the gap between a wealthy elite and a large, poor population are well established root causes of tensions and overt conflict. A chronic deficit in the state budget could lead to cuts in economic and social programs. In combination with rising

inflation, this situation continues to provide fertile ground for unrest. Tensions over land (especially between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the South) continue to run high and have often led to organized land-grabs, often with ethnic overtones and manipulated by political interests. Processes of property redistribution seemingly on ethnic grounds have also been observed in the towns and cities most affected by the June 2010 violence. Kyrgyzstan borders Kazakhstan in the north, Uzbekistan in the west, Tajikistan in the south and China in the east. Particularly in the Fergana Valley, these borders cut across ethnic populations. In addition, there are enclaves in the south belonging to neighboring states. The result has been conflict over water resources and pastures. A significant proportion of irrigated land in Uzbekistan depends on water from the Syr Darya river in Kyrgyzstan. The borders are porous, and the area is an important link in major drug trafficking routes. Demographic changes in some disputed border areas in Batken Oblast have led to an increase in property ownership by ethnic Tajiks from Tajikistan in areas vacated by migrating ethnic Kyrgyz, which has led to some resentment.

Cultural and Historical

According to the 2009 Census, ethnic Kyrgyz make up 68% of the population, while Uzbeks form the largest minority at 26%. In addition, there are smaller Russian, Turkish, Dungan and other minorities. In the south, in some provinces and towns, Uzbeks constitute the majority of the population. However, state institutions are dominated by ethnic Kyrgyz. In particular, the number of ethnic and national minorities working in state agencies is not representative of their numbers in the population. Uzbek minorities have found an important economic niche in the retail and service industries. Meanwhile, many ethnic Kyrgyz in the south face dire poverty in the often remote rural areas where they live. The economic gap between poor rural areas and urban centers underpins resentment of the urban elite, easily deflected to target those of different ethnicity. Many of the perpetrators of the violence in June 2010, who came down from mountain villages to the city, may have been partially motivated by this resentment.

Tensions around the master plan in Osh have served to further strengthen divisions between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities. Among the Uzbek community, there are fears that State and local officials are deliberately building multi-story houses to exclude them (many Uzbek people traditionally live in houses with plots of land) and that they face imminent forced eviction from their residence. Many ethnic Kyrgyz people also express profound reservations about the fact that the international community is unfairly, in their eyes, focusing its support on the Uzbek population. At the same time, human rights violations in the south are a matter of grave concern. Unlawful detention, extortion in return for release from detention, torture allegations and arbitrary dismissals show clear indications of being ethnically biased against Uzbeks.

In summary, the context in Kyrgyzstan has shifted from general instability with occasional conflict, in which broader conflict prevention approaches were appropriate, to a situation of

continuing instability and high inter-ethnic and regional tension. In this situation, conflict prevention must shift its focus to the strengthening of early response capacity and peace-building initiatives. Although the humanitarian response to the June 2010 crisis ended in mid-2011, a peace-building focus, both through direct programming and through conflict-sensitive approaches, will remain paramount in order to address the societal divisions which have now become acute. Furthermore, given the continuing instability at the political and grassroots levels, the strengthening of conflict prevention and management structures and capacities at various levels of the country is a key priority. This includes not only the security forces, but also facilitating the work of local level peace councils and actors that can engage in preventive action and work closely with State institutions and law enforcement agencies.

Appendix C: List of Southern Kyrgyzstan's Core Grievances, Social and Institutional Resiliencies, Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors

Core Grievances

Shared Core Grievances

Several core grievances are shared by all three oblasts. They include low levels of trust in authorities (local, oblast and national), significant media biases that perpetuate reliance on rumors for information and Humanitarian Aid unfairly distributed that further perpetuates inter-ethnic resentments.

Additional Oblast-specific core grievances include but are not limited to:

Osh Oblast

- Local, Regional and National Authorities are unable to provide safety and security (due to a lack of professionalism and generally low morale among security forces)
- Mono-ethnic zones are a problem for peace-building
- Local and national government divide is a problem for sustainable peace-building
- Lack of access to natural resources (Kara-Suu rayon) due to inadequate management by local authorities

Jalal-Abad Oblast

- Border and Customs officials do not manage border issues well (land and water disputes, goods and produce, issues of cattle theft and cross-border familial ties)
- Legal representatives are unjust in their treatment of person in the court system (not all ethnicities receive fair treatment)
- Closed borders with Uzbekistan preclude development of market outlets and lead to lawlessness (increased price of fertilizers, cattle theft, abduction of Kyrgyz citizens, victimization of children and influx of migrants (ethnic Kyrgyz) from Uzbekistan)

Batken Oblast

- Unemployment leads to feelings of uncertainty
- Lack of demarcation of border with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan leads to border insecurity
- Inappropriate oversight of the Kadamjai oil pump, lack of regulation of the quarry in Koltzo village and no clear policy on the return of rented land facilitates animosity among groups
- Unjustified usage of Kozubaglan River between Tajikistan/Kyrgyzstan (71-29%) creates increased tensions

Social and Institutional Resiliencies

Shared Social and Institutional Resiliencies

There are very few shared social and institutional resiliencies among the three southern oblasts. The strength of Islam to unity communities was shared, as was the knowledge that communities have always been and always will be economically inter-dependent, which assists with cooperative relationship development.

Additional Oblast-specific social and institutional resiliencies include but are not limited to:

Osh Oblast

- Traditional Neighbor-to-Neighbor communication in mixed ethnicity areas (tradition of cultural co-existence)
- Economic interdependence among the community creates opportunities for cooperation

Jalal-Abad Oblast

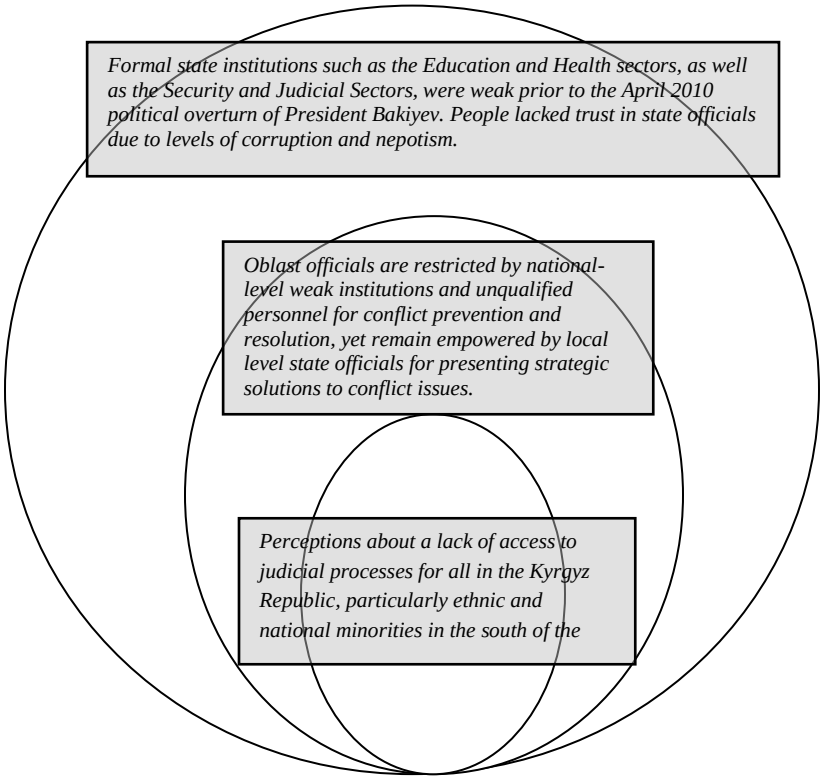
- The Bii (Common Law Judge), Aiyl Bashchy (Village Head), and District Wardens help resolve local problems in Jamoats by lobbying interests, mobilizing resources, assisting and supporting in resources identification and conducting negotiations
- Ashar (community assistance effort) provides help to poor and conflict affected families and communities (schools, houses and hospitals)

Batken Oblast

- Multi-ethnic communities help moderate tensions through continued communication and communal living
- Hard-working attitudes and a strong work ethic is the pride of communities

Drivers of Conflict

Nested Driver 1:



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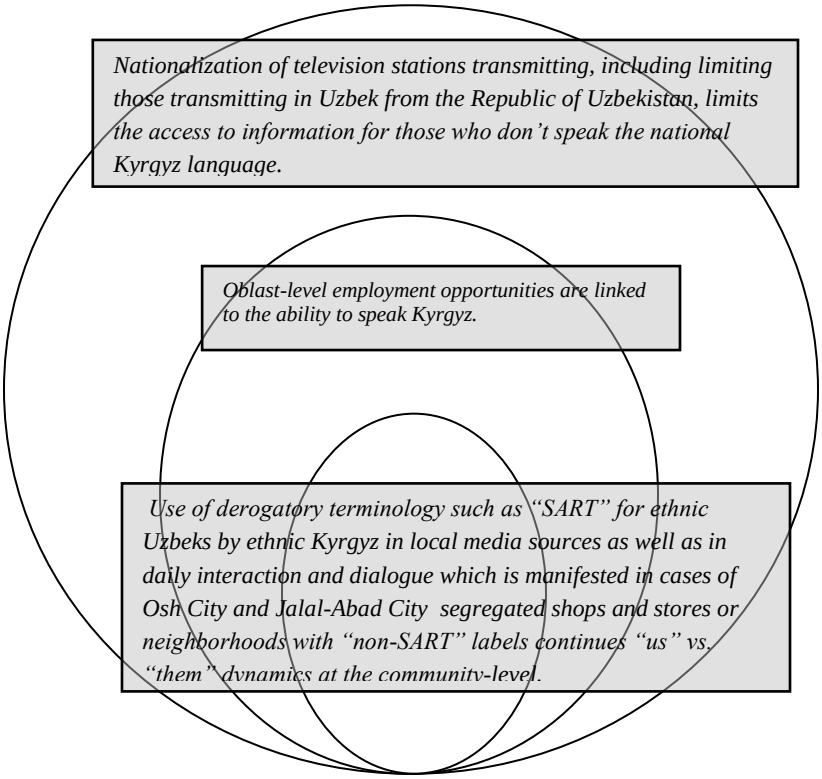

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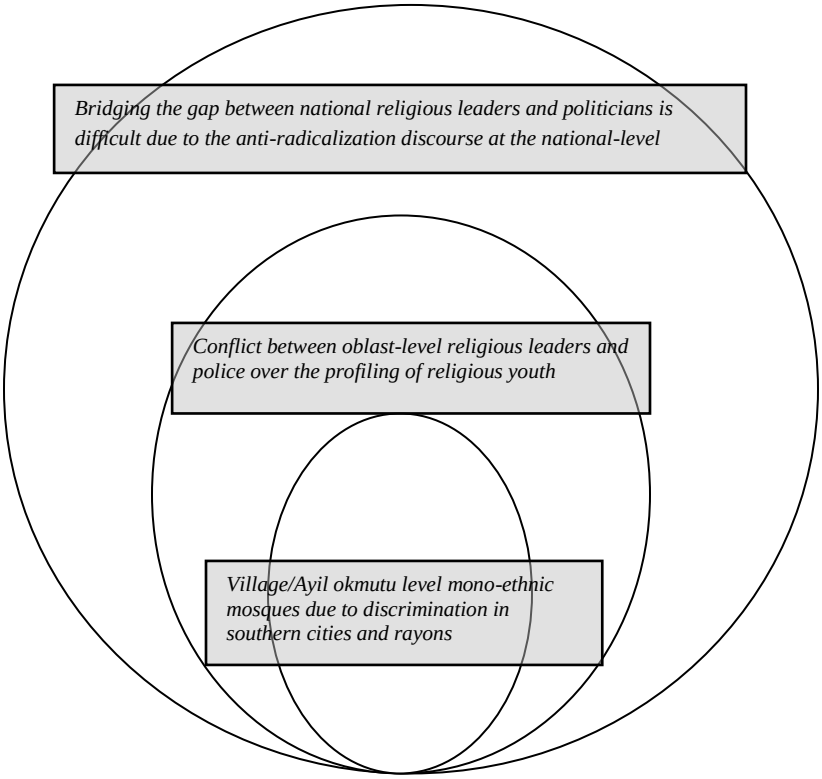
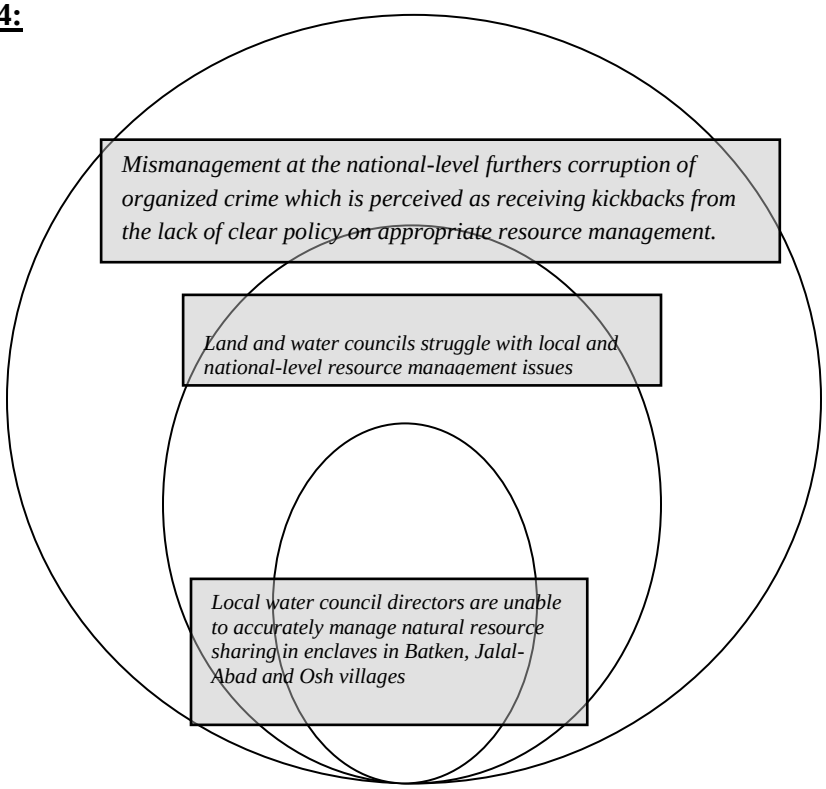
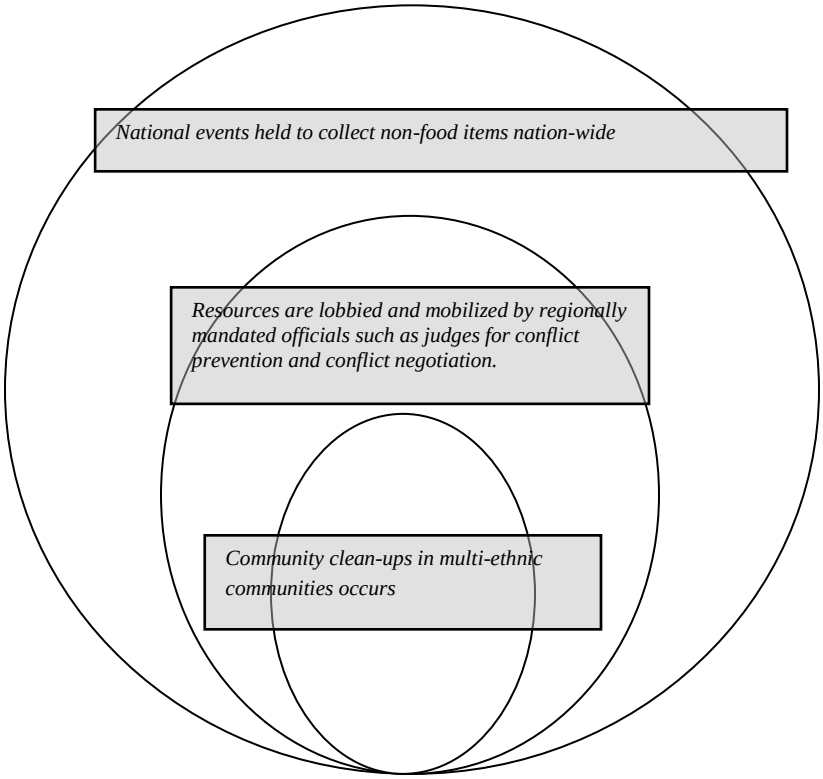


Nested Driver 4:



Mitigating Factors

Nested Mitigating Factor 1:



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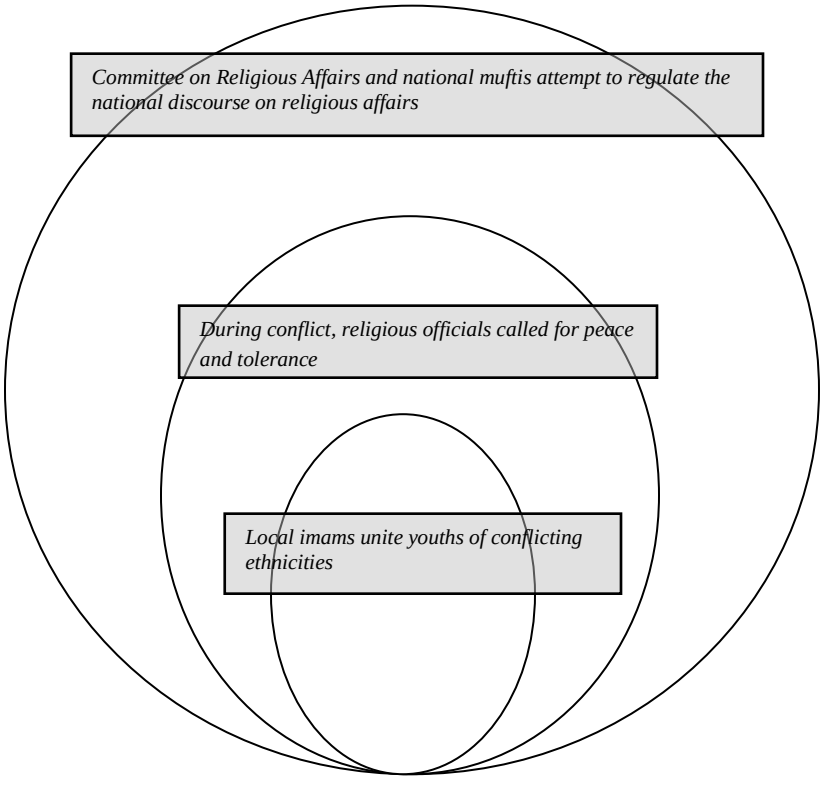

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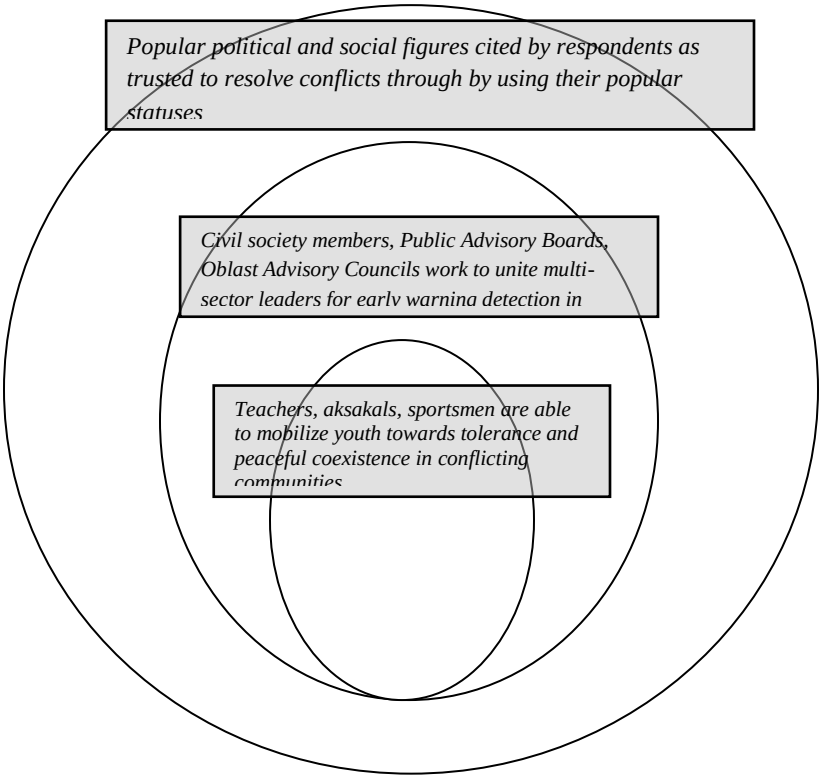
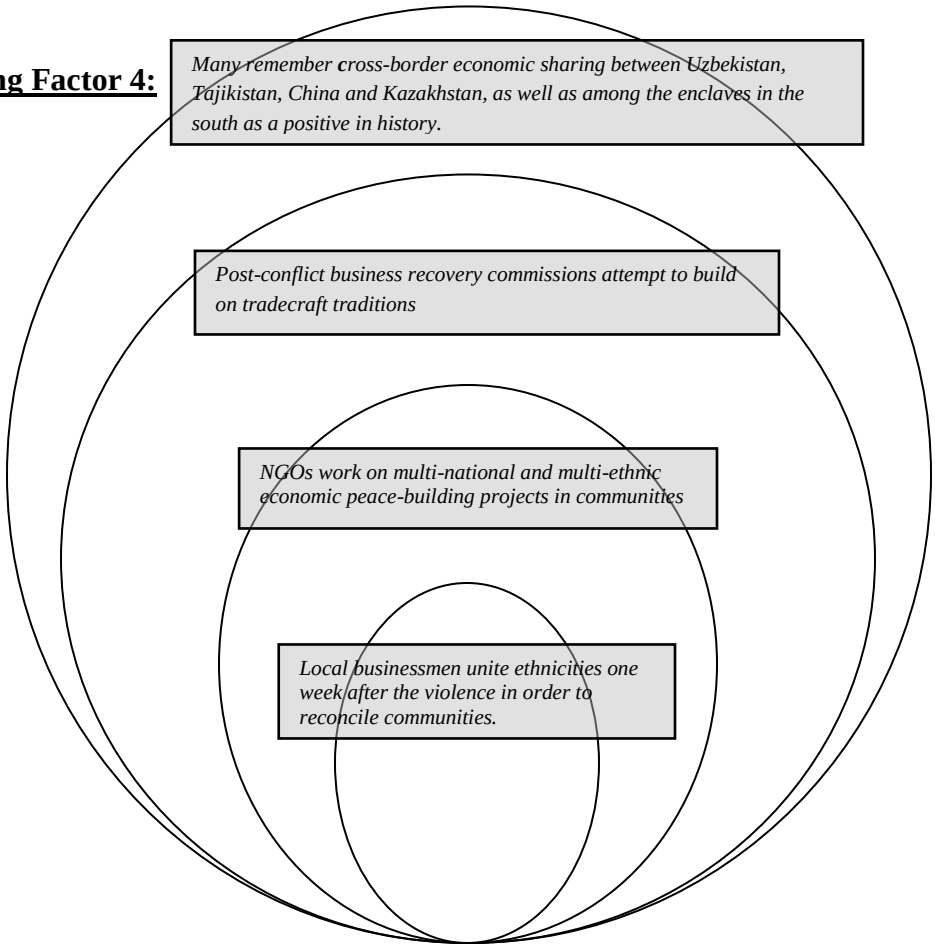


Nested Mitigating Factor 4:



Appendix D: Windows of Uncertainty

*****Those in bold have been discussed in detail in the body of the report.

April–December 2011	**Windows of Uncertainty**
April 17	Elections to local government bodies, local keneshes
Spring - Summer	Conflicts over irrigation water and pasturelands distribution
	People's response to the opening of the training facilities in Batken
	Land seizures (Osh)
	Dissolution of Coalition
	Failure to fulfill promises of increasing teachers' salaries
	Results of the Intergovernmental Commission on Borders Delimitation and Demarcation (Batken, Osh, Jalal-Abad)
	A report by the international commission
	Report of the MP commission on the June events
	Possible price increase on food items and fuel
Summer	The June events anniversary
	Commencement of the Presidential election campaign
	Adoption and publication of the Master Plan for the city of Osh
August	Orozo
August 31	Independence Day
	Completion of housing construction by the SDRD
	Opening of the Russian base in Osh
	Possible intrusion of armed gangs (opening of the mountain passes)
	Seasonal increase of drug trafficking (opening of the mountain passes)
	Unresolved issues over land distribution
	Massing of youth in connection with school vacations and students' returning to their homes
	Protests in connection with the sale of strategic production facilities
Autumn	Bad harvest
	Presidential election, the process and the results
	Poor winterization
	Planned construction of capital housing to replace the burned houses, in substitution of transitional housing
	Growing dissatisfaction over closed borders, tension in border point areas
	Escalation of the situation in Tajikistan
	Increased activities of and recruitment by radical factions
October	End of fiscal year for international organizations, possible pressure over the issue of the external debt, a threat of a default
	Cessation or increase of humanitarian aid provision
2012	Elections in Russia