

# U4 Expert Answer



## Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Kyrgyzstan

### Query

*Please provide an overview of the nature and impact of corruption in Kyrgyzstan. What legal and institutional framework is available to address corruption?*

### Purpose

The report is to be used as background documentation to inform our Central Asia anti-corruption strategy.

### Content

- 1 Overview of corruption in Kyrgyzstan
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### Summary

Kyrgyzstan faces major challenges of widespread corruption in all sectors of the economy and at all levels of the state apparatus, including entrenched corruption, political instability, infiltration of state institutions by criminal groups, and economic problems. Corruption and years of cronyism and clientelistic practices have fuelled citizen discontent and political instability, leading to a popular uprising in 2010, and to the election of a new government in 2011. Since then, the country has intensified its efforts to fight corruption. Several measures have been taken to reduce bureaucratic corruption and the negative impact of corruption on the business environment. Measures to strengthen the

independence of the judiciary and to reform other law enforcement institutions are also underway. It remains to be seen whether the new government's apparent political resolve to fight corruption will translate into real changes in the country.

## 1. Overview of corruption in Kyrgyzstan

### Background

Kyrgyzstan (or the Kyrgyz Republic) became independent from the former USSR in 1991. Since then the country has been facing significant governance challenges including entrenched corruption, political instability, and economic problems.

The first elected President, Akayev, was ousted from office following a public uprising in 2005. President Bakiyev then came to power promising to fight corruption and improve social and economic conditions in the country. But many of the reforms adopted during his term were seen as attempts to "institutionalise his private ambitions to expand his family's grip on governance resources", and were used to further the political and economic interests of a narrow group of

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individuals (Balmyrzaeva: 2011). Corruption, cronyism and clientelistic practices contributed to the popular dissatisfaction that led to the overthrow of Bakiyev in 2010 (Shukubalieva: 2012).

The opposition leader Otunbayeva headed the interim government in 2010 for a period of six months. In the meantime, disputes between different ethnic groups in the South of Kyrgyzstan led to a violent conflict with hundreds of deaths and serious human rights violations.

During the period of the interim government, significant steps were taken to address the governance challenges the country had been facing, such as the approval of a new constitution establishing a parliamentary regime and creating a system of checks and balances in a national referendum in June 2010. Relatively free parliamentary and presidential elections were held in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

Former Prime Minister Atambayev won the 2011 Presidential elections. But the newly elected government is constrained by very limited resources and governance challenges due to extensive corruption, infiltration of criminal groups, and political instability in the south. In a speech to the legislature in December 2011, President Atambayev called for combating corruption, and cited figures that corruption had caused over USD 500 million in damage to the economy (amounting to over 10% of GDP) in 2010 (Nichol: 2012).

## Extent of corruption

Transparency International's 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Kyrgyzstan 154<sup>th</sup> out of the 176 countries and territories assessed. The country ranks 17 out of 19 countries assessed in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region.

Kyrgyzstan has consistently scored poorly on the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). In 2011, the country scored 10.4 on control of corruption, on a scale from 0 to 100, and it has shown no improvement over the years. The scores on rule of law have also remained low, with the country scoring 9.4 in 2011.

Consistent with these findings, 72% of citizens interviewed within the framework of the Kyrgyzstan National Opinion Poll in 2012 reported that corruption is a big issue for the country. For 36%, corruption is seen as the second most important issue faced by the

country, topped only by unemployment (IRI; Gallup: Baltic Surveys: 2012).

In addition, according to numerous international surveys, corruption is reported to be among the most severe problems for doing business in Kyrgyzstan. Close to 59% of the companies surveyed in the IFC and World Bank Enterprise Survey in 2009 also identified corruption as a major constraint. More recently, executives have ranked corruption as the second most problematic factor for doing business in the country, behind political instability (World Economic Forum: 2012).

## Nature of corruption challenges

Corruption is widespread in all sectors of the economy and at all levels of the state apparatus. It manifests itself in various forms, including political corruption, nepotism and misuse of power, and both petty and grand forms of corruption are prevalent.

### *Bureaucratic corruption*

The public administration has suffered for many years from the effects of extensive patronage networks (Balmyrzaeva: 2011). As a result, individuals and companies operating in the country have to cope with a highly inefficient public administration, which increases both the incentives and opportunities for bureaucratic corruption.

When it comes to doing business in the country, the large number of documents, payments and procedures required for business operations encourages public officials to solicit bribes and facilitation payments to bend the rules or speed up bureaucratic processes. Kyrgyzstan ranks 70 out of the 183 countries assessed by the [Ease of Doing Business Index 2013](#). Businesspeople surveyed in the World Economic Forum Executive Surveys consider irregular payments to public officials to win public contracts or access public institutions to be quite common. (World Economic Forum: 2012).

Moreover, bureaucratic corruption has been argued to be a "daily factor in the lives of the majority of the population, although there is little quantitative data on the exact dimensions" (AETS: 2011). Citizens are often asked to pay bribes in their interactions with public servants in different sectors (AETS: 2011).

### *Nepotism and cronyism*

Nepotism and cronyism have been a common feature of past administrations. Government and business elites are closely interlinked to the extent that government decisions have been influenced by vested interests and public positions filled on the basis of personal rather than merit-related criteria (Shukuralieva: 2012).

During Bakiyev's regime several of his family members allegedly held prominent positions in the government (Balmyrzaeva: 2011). For example, one of his brothers was reported to be the head of the state protection service, exercising control over the security forces of the country, including the police and intelligence service (AETS: 2011). This individual allegedly played a key role in protecting criminals, allowing them to use state institutions for illegal activities and personal gain (Balmyrzaeva: 2011). More generally, the influence of organised crime in politics has been commented upon by country-observers and researchers (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012).

The son of former President Bakiyev is also being investigated on suspicion of having embezzled hundreds of millions of dollars and heading a rent-seeking scheme to divert money from a wide range of sectors (AETS: 2011).

Against this backdrop, business elites have been able to influence policy decisions both from within and from outside the government. In 2010, for instance, the media reported on the attempts by various political and business groups to influence decisions about the ownership structures of telecommunications and mineral extraction companies (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012).

### *Political corruption*

The interim and new governments have taken important steps in recent years to improve the country's governance framework. Two important elections – Parliamentary and Presidential – took place without major incident and, according to the OSCE observation mission, “constituted a further consolidation of the democratic process and brought the country closer to meeting its international commitments on democratic elections” (OSCE: 2010). However, some observers criticised specific aspects of the electoral process, including opaque campaign financing and imperfect electoral lists. There were also incidents of partial application of election law. For instance, the Butun Kyrgyzstan political party, an important opposition party

in the country, was prevented from participating in the elections after a controversial interpretation of the electoral law on thresholds (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012).

There have also been allegations of voter intimidation, bribing and illicit campaign financing from external sources for parties critical of the new government (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012). A number of cases of ballot box stuffing, multiple and family voting, and vote buying were also reported. Observation missions have also pointed to serious irregularities in almost one-third of the polling stations observed, including interference by outsiders in the vote count, alteration of completed tallies, and pre-signed voting tallies (Congressional Research Service: 2012).

### *Grand corruption*

There is anecdotal evidence of embezzlement of public money in the country. One of the most commented-upon incidents involves the largest mobile communications company in the country. According to accusations made by a former manager, the head of the company allegedly paid USD 400,000 to the Prosecutor General to avoid investigations into corruption involving the company during the Bakiyev regime (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012). There are also allegations that approximately USD 300 million, part of a Russian aid package to the country, disappeared during Bakiyev's presidency. The former President allegedly transferred at least USD 35 million to accounts at banks under his control. In 2011, the interim government has recovered part of the lost money but, according to the Prosecutor's office, a significant amount could still be hidden outside the country (AETS: 2011).

## Overview of sectors and institutions most affected by corruption in Kyrgyzstan

### *Public administration and service delivery*

Kyrgyzstan's public administration lacks adequate resources and is underperforming due to widespread corruption, very low salaries, dominant patronage networks, and the replacement of experienced civil servants, a process that is rarely based on professional performance and merit (Balmyrzaeva: 2011). Moreover, laws and regulations governing public administration are controversial, ambiguous, and frequently changed without notice. There is also a lack of predictability in the enforcement of the law, with high

levels of discretionary power given to public officials. This offers further incentives for companies to make illegal payments and for officials to apply the law according to their interests. For instance, with regard to administrative offences, officials have discretion to decide upon the amount of the fine to be imposed, allowing for selective and preferential treatment (Omokeyev: 2006).

Companies have also reported being expected to make informal payments to public officials in order to 'get things done'. According to the Enterprise Survey (World Bank/IFC: 2009), more than 25% of companies surveyed expect to give gifts to obtain an operating license, and more than 55% expect to give gifts to obtain construction permits. Corruption is also affecting service delivery as more than 37% of companies surveyed expect to give gifts to obtain an electrical connection and 45% to obtain a water connection.

There have been, however, several initiatives undertaken by the government aimed at reducing opportunities for corruption. These include the establishment of a 'one stop shop' to streamline and simplify business registration processes, and the abolishment of licenses and other regulatory measures (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: 2012; US Department of State: 2012).

While there is little evidence of the impact of corruption in public administration and service delivery on citizens, a survey conducted by the Institute of the Ombudsman shows that corruption is highly problematic in the education sector. More than 50% of students interviewed in 2011 stated that their universities are highly corrupt. 50% of the students surveyed declared that students themselves are willing to give bribes (Nurmanbetova: 2012).

### ***Public financial management***

The country scores 8 out of 100 in the 2010 Open Budget Index, one of the lowest scores in the ranking. This indicates that the government provides very limited information to the public on budget processes, making it almost impossible for citizens to hold government accountable for its management of public resources (International Budget Partnership: 2010).

According to the Budget Survey 2010, budget oversight provided by the Supreme Audit Institution is fairly weak, as the independence of the institution is rather limited. Moreover, the role of the Supreme Audit Institution in overseeing the budget is hampered by the

organisation's lack of resources to exercise its mandate, and lack of discretion to select what will be audited (International Budget Partnership: 2010).

Accountability in the budget process could be enhanced in the country if the government would provide access to key budget documents as well as provide opportunities for citizens to participate in public hearings and other budget debates (International Budget Partnership: 2011).

In spite of these major weaknesses, there have been efforts to strengthen the fiscal framework in Kyrgyzstan in the past few years, particularly with the establishment of the Public Financial Management Committee. A series of other reforms are still necessary to improve the country's fiscal framework, including a better organisation of the Ministry of Finance and an upgrade of the public procurement standards.

### ***Mining***

Kyrgyzstan is endowed with several natural resources and the exploration of gold accounts for a significant share of the country's GDP, constituting 11% of budget revenues (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative: 2012). The most important gold mine, Kumtor, was privatised during Akayev's government following a rather opaque process (Anti-Corruption Business Portal: 2012). According to the Office of the Public Prosecutor, mismanagement during the privatisation process has led to a loss of more than USD 90 million. Moreover, there is evidence that the privatisation was linked to companies owned or controlled by former President Akayev (Anti-Corruption Business Portal: 2012).

Nevertheless, there has been substantial progress in the mining sector in the past three years. A new law on natural resources and new regulations on licensing in the natural resources sector were drafted. In March 2011, Kyrgyzstan became compliant with the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative, 2011).

### ***Judiciary***

The judiciary and law enforcement institutions are not independent and are plagued by corruption (Freedom House: 2012). According to the US Department of State (2011), the judiciary is the weakest and most corrupt state institution in Kyrgyzstan. In one survey, more than 70 per cent of business people reported having no trust in the judicial system due to rampant corruption (US Department of State: 2008).

Although the 2011 Constitution guarantees the independence of the judiciary and establishes a system of checks and balances, the executive, political leaders and wealthy business people are often able to influence court decisions either through bribes or personal connections. Low salaries and a lack of autonomy, since judges may still be appointed by presidential decree (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012), are seen as the main problems affecting corruption of judges (Freedom House: 2012). Court staff are often also underpaid and unqualified, offering further opportunities for corruption.

In addition, the US Department of State highlights the frequent use of illegal payments to prosecutors and the police to avoid investigations or indictments, hampering law enforcement in the country (US Department of State: 2011). Reports have also highlighted the engagement of law enforcement forces in human rights abuses, particularly in the south of Kyrgyzstan (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012).

In 2011, the government enacted a series of reforms aimed at reducing corruption and enhancing the independence of the judiciary, including a law *“on the status of judge in the Kyrgyz Republic”* and on *“the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz republic”*. According to these new laws, all vacancies within the judiciary need to be filled by competitive selection (although competitive selection consists only of an interview with no formal criteria), the establishment and reorganisation of local courts can also only be determined by law, and judges are required to disclose their income and assets (OECD: 2012).

A Council of Judges responsible for deciding on early dismissals, disciplinary measures, lifting of judicial immunities among other important issues has been established. The Council consists of 15 members (judges and retired judges) who are elected by the Congress.

A Council for Selection of Judges was also created in 2011 formed by judges and representatives from civil society. The council attempts to select judges for positions ranging from the lowest village courts to the Supreme Court, but concerns about the legitimacy of the council, as well as its lack of impartiality when selecting judges, are common. The law determines that the composition of the council will be decided by the Council of Judges (one-third), by the parliamentary majority (one-third) and the parliamentary opposition

(also one-third). In this context, the body remains highly politicized as more than half of its members are chosen by political parties (OECD: 2012).

However, there are still many deficiencies which could hamper judicial independence. Some analysts recommend that the country should focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of the judiciary and on the professionalization of judges and prosecutors. Clear criteria for the selection of judges could also be beneficial in ensuring more independence in judicial decisions (AETS: 2011).

### Impact of corruption in Kyrgyzstan

Evidence of the impact of corruption in Kyrgyzstan is scarce. Such impact may also be concealed by the country's economic and political instability combined with an underdeveloped infrastructure and a lack of qualified personnel. However, there is evidence that corruption in Kyrgyzstan has negatively impacted processes of economic and social development, as well as citizens' confidence in the government.

For instance, Kyrgyzstan's private sector has been facing major challenges to grow and diversify due to, among other things, burdensome legislation and preferential treatment given to companies linked to the previous ruling elites. Within this framework, personal connections, corruption, and organised crime, have been limiting business competition and equality of opportunity in the country (Shukuralieva: 2012).

Corruption is identified by companies and foreign investors among the top three constraints for doing business in the country, followed by political instability and economic uncertainty. A survey of manufacturing firms suggests that corruption imposes even greater constraints on small and medium sized enterprises (Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey: 2009).

In addition, corruption may have an impact on the informal economy. In Kyrgyzstan, the government estimates that the shadow economy accounts for 39% of the country's GDP (Kyrgyzstan Security Newswire: 2012).

When businesses are faced with onerous regulation, inconsistent enforcement and corruption, it has been argued that they have an incentive to hide their activities in the underground economy (Singh et al: 2012). Within this framework, businesses are most likely to opt for informality to reduce the burden of

regulation – therefore, countries plagued with corruption tend to have larger informal economies.

Furthermore, corruption in Kyrgyzstan has considerably undermined the trust of citizens and firms in the institutions of the democratic state. Similarly, public trust in politicians is also seriously undermined. For instance, businesspeople interviewed for the World Economic Forum's Executive Opinion Survey (2012) have demonstrated very low levels of trust in politicians in the country (1.9, on a scale where one is very low and seven, very high).

## 2. Governance structure and anti-corruption efforts in Kyrgyzstan

### Overview of anti-corruption reforms in Kyrgyzstan

#### *Past efforts*

Over the past few years, Kyrgyzstan has made numerous efforts to combat corruption. In 2003, with the support of the donor community, the government established the National Council for Good Governance which acted as the national coordination agency for anti-corruption issues. However, the council suffered from a lack of resources and qualified staff and therefore very little was accomplished.

In 2005, the government ratified the United Nations Conventions against Corruption and established the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption.

A new anti-corruption strategy and its implementation action plan were launched by former President Bakiyev in 2009. While the strategy was designed to fight corruption in a wide range of sectors and acknowledged the importance of collaboration with local civil society groups as well as the international community, little was achieved and the strategy was generally seen as formal and declarative.

#### *Current efforts*

After the fall of Bakiyev's presidency, the interim government intensified the efforts to fight corruption in the country, which have been picked up by the recently elected government. A new Anti-Corruption strategy was adopted in February 2012, but the content and

implementation of this strategy is yet to be assessed (OECD: 2012).

Public advisory councils at ministries and public institutions were also created by the government as part of its efforts to address corruption and strengthen local governments. These councils are comprised of civil society, academia, business and other non-governmental stakeholders. Information about the members, funding as well as activity report are available online (see: [www.ons.kg](http://www.ons.kg)). According to some analysts the initiative has helped increase transparency in most government structures. However, it remains to be seen whether this will also translate into a decrease in corruption in state institutions (OECD: 2012).

In 2011, with the support of Kyrgyz NGOs and international donors, the government has also improved its legislative framework with the intention of ensuring efficient local government administration across the country. While the majority of towns and villages in Kyrgyzstan are now administered by local authorities, many of them still remain in the hands of ineffective, poorly trained, or abusive officials (Freedom House: 2012).

As discussed in the previous section, extensive judicial reforms began in 2011. It remains to be seen how the new regulations will be applied in practice. Moreover, there is room for improvement in many areas to ensure that the judicial system is fair and independent.

Additionally, the government started an ambitious reform to improve the country's business environment. On top of creating a 'one-stop shop' to deal with businesses, the government is cutting/simplifying the number of procedures, inspection, licences and permits required in the country. In 2012, more than 72 types of licenses were abolished, and the number of activities subject to licensing requirements will be reduced from 500 to 220. Several agencies and government bodies were restructured or merged, reducing the number of civil servants by 15%. The number of services provided by the state was also reduced from 20,000 to 386 (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: 2012).

In June 2011, the government established the "Fuel and Energy Sector Transparency Initiative" (FESTI). The initiative aims to increase transparency and accountability in the energy sector. A Supervisory Board and a secretariat located within the Ministry of Energy were also created in an attempt to resolve the

problems that led to the country's energy crisis in 2009 (Wood: 2011).

## Legal framework

### *International conventions*

Kyrgyzstan ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2005, but it still has to improve its legal framework in order to be fully compliant with it.

### *National legislation*

Criminal responsibility for corruption is provided for in the Criminal Code of Kyrgyzstan. There is still a need to improve the country's legal framework in order to comply with international standards. For instance, Kyrgyzstan does not have a provision covering the liability of legal entities for corruption, or commercial bribery. Similarly, there is a need to criminalise foreign bribery, the promise and offer of undue advantages, as well as passive bribery. In general, anti-corruption laws in the country remain weak and lack proper enforcement mechanisms (AETS: 2011).

The law on the Civil Service from 2004 regulates conflict of interest, as well as related prohibitions such as post-public employment and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. However, application of the law is weak and enforcement remains a problem.

Civil servants are required to disclose their assets, as well as the assets of their close relatives. But the system is highly complex and appears to be ineffective for preventing conflicts of interest or identifying illicit enrichment (OECD: 2012). There is also a law requiring politicians and other individuals occupying special public positions to declare information about their property and various types of income upon their recruitment, annually, and during two years after the completion of the service. There are, however, several laws in the country which touch upon the issue of asset declaration (e.g. Law on the fight against corruption), establishing conflicting/contradictory requirements and exemptions, particularly with regards to the disclosure of such information to the public.

The adoption of the Constitutional Law on Elections in 2011 represents an improvement of political party financing regulations in the country. Nonetheless, according to analysts the country could benefit from the adoption of a new law on political parties and clearer rules on political financing.

The law on public procurement has also been amended several times over the past few years. This has led to a prohibition on breaking-up tenders into parts, the establishment of clear criteria for excluding bidders, and the adoption of standardised tender documents for all types of procurement. The public procurement process has also been decentralised, and procurement units have been set up in all state institutions responsible for public purchases (EBRD: 2011; OECD: 2012). However, implementation of this relatively strong legal framework is being hampered by the country's weak institutional capacities. For instance, the Procurement Division which is responsible for the development of procurement policies and guidelines, trainings, oversight and follow-up on complaints, as well as the maintenance of a database of non-reliable bidders, has only five employees and no representation in the regions (OECD: 2012).

The 2006 Law on Witness Protection guarantees the protection of witnesses, victims and persons reporting corruption. The Law on the fight against corruption also provides guarantees of state protection to the persons who provide assistance to the fight against corruption. In 2011, the government created a website that allows citizens to file corruption complaints online. One month following its inception, the website ([www.anticorr.gov.kg](http://www.anticorr.gov.kg)) logged 32 complaints, of which 22 are under consideration and 10 have been rejected as they were from anonymous sources (Trust Law: 2011).

Kyrgyzstan has strong legal provisions on access to information, but citizen awareness of the right to obtain information is rather poor. The country ranks 21<sup>st</sup> from 93 countries with access to information laws assessed by the global right to information rating 2012 (RTI rating). The RTI rating assesses the strength of the legal framework for guaranteeing the right to information in a given country, but it does not measure quality of implementation of the law. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the main problem of the access to information legal framework relates to exceptions set by the law, which are extremely broad (AccessInfo; Centre for Law and Democracy: 2012).

## Institutional framework

### *Anti-Corruption Commission*

The National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption was established in 2005 with a preventative and

educational mandate, but the agency was closed in 2010 during Baiyev's presidency.

A new body was established in 2011, the Anti-corruption Service of the State Committee on National Security, with the aim of further strengthening the country's law enforcement capacities to fight corruption. However, with the abolishment of the national agency for the prevention of corruption, the country lacks an effective institutional mechanism for corruption prevention and awareness-raising (OECD: 2012).

Since 2011, the Public Prosecutor's Office has been the body responsible for all corruption-related investigations. However, the office lacks technical skills to enable investigations of corruption-related cases or for cross-border asset identification and recovery (AETS: 2011). It is still to be seen how the role and tasks of both the Anti-Corruption service of the state committee on national security and the public prosecutor's office will be coordinated (OECD: 2012).

### *Supreme Audit Institution*

The Chamber of Accounts is the main body in charge of external audits. It is an independent institution accountable to both the President and the Parliament. While this audit institution does not conduct specific audits to uncover corruption, it has increasingly cooperated with law enforcement bodies (OECD: 2012).

### *Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)*

A Financial Intelligence Unit was established in 2005 to monitor financial transactions. It is an autonomous institution, but it is part of the executive. There is still room for improvement with regards to the agency's capacity and staff qualifications. Nevertheless, the establishment of such a body, as well as the enactment of money laundering regulations, are seen as an important step in the fight against corruption, particularly in comparison to other countries in the region.

### *Office of the Ombudsman*

The Office of the Ombudsman is mainly responsible for human rights related issues, but it is a rather weak organisation with limited funding. It plays a minimal role in increasing transparency and accountability in the country, and its weak performance when dealing with human rights issues in past years has led to a loss of public faith in the institution (AETS Consortium: 2011).

## Other actors

### *Media*

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan and other national laws guarantee freedom of speech and of the press. In reality, however, observance of these rights is inconsistent across the country and media operating in the south suffer from censorship and other restrictions. The new constitution, adopted in June 2010, includes provisions that decriminalise defamation and libel in the mass media (Freedom House: 2012), but independent journalists reporting on politically sensitive issues such as corruption are likely to face harassment from tax inspectors, security officers, and the state anti-monopoly committee.

While the press is still assessed as 'not free' by Freedom House, the organisation reports significant positive changes in the media environment after 2010. Kyrgyzstan's media outlets function in a relatively open environment, reporting on key political and social issues (Freedom House: 2012). The country ranks 108<sup>th</sup> from 179 in Reporter without Borders' Press Freedom Index 2011-2012, an improvement in comparison with the 168<sup>th</sup> position of the country in 2010.

### *Civil society*

Kyrgyzstan's Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of association. There is an increasing number of national non-governmental organisations working on governance issues since 2010. NGOs are now able to function more freely, particularly in the north of the country. However, NGOs and activists operating in the south of the country still suffer with harassment and oppression.

Civil society played an important role in overseeing both Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, as well as in supporting the government in important reforms such as in the judiciary, when a special presidential commission made up of NGO leaders oversaw the implementation of laws intended to combat corruption in the judiciary (Bertelsmann Foundation: 2012; Freedom House: 2012). Several NGOs were also involved in initiatives promoted by the government on ethnic reconciliation and promotion of religious rights (Freedom House: 2012)

There are three main local non-governmental groups working on corruption-related issues in the country: Citizens against Corruption; Transparency International Kyrgyzstan; and the Anti-Corruption Business Council.

They have all played an active role in supporting the government's recent anti-corruption efforts.

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