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[I. Ethnic Violence and Refugee Crisis](#) Ethnic violence has recently escalated in Kyrgyzstan, following the [uprising of 7 April 2010](#)

that saw former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev flee to Belarus. The former President's southern stronghold around the city of Osh has witnessed most of the violence, as supporters of interim President Roza Otunbayeva – mainly ethnic Uzbeks – have clashed with ethnic Kyrgyz's supporting former President Bakiyev.

Since 11 June, the small-scale communal violence that arose between Kyrgyz and Uzbek groups after the 7 April uprising has now escalated into full-scale street fighting.

[According to the UN](#)

, 190 casualties have been reported in the southern region of the country, with over 1,900 wounded.

On 15 June, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay [reported](#)

“indiscriminate killing and rape... taking place in Kyrgyzstan on the basis on ethnicity.” She emphasized the severity of the crises, noting that the inter-ethnic violence seems to be “orchestrated, targeted, and well-planned.” The same day, the United Nations Security Council met and issued a statement

[condemning](#)

the violence in Kyrgyzstan, “calling for calm and the restoration of the rule of law.”

The violence has sparked a massive refugee crisis inside the country. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (

[UNHCR](#)

), 300,000 have been displaced by the conflict. Uzbekistan reported to the UN that over 100,000 people have crossed their border from Kyrgyzstan, and that the number is steadily rising on a daily basis. IDP's and refugees have recently began to return to the city of Osh, but fears of

further ethnic violence continue to grip the south of Kyrgyzstan.

**II. Responding to the Crisis** *i. The Response of the Government* Following the outbreak of widespread violence, and the inability of the state's security forces to impose itself between the ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek gangs, the interim President - Roza Otunbayeva - [called](#) on Russia to deploy troops to help quell the violence in the country.

On 24 June 2010, the interim government [called](#) on the OSCE to deploy an international policing force to help restore law and order in the south.

### *ii. The Regional Response*

Russia has deployed just over 100 troops to protect a Russian airbase and its personnel, but has ruled out quelling the violence by leading a regional peacekeeping mission through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) of former Soviet states. Instead, Russia has agreed to send helicopters and other transport vehicles to increase the capacity of the interim government in Kyrgyzstan to deal with the violence.

The OSCE will meet during their upcoming parliamentary session between 6-10 July to discuss a resolution on Kyrgyzstan, amidst calls from the both the interim government and the [OSCE's Special Adviser on Central Asia](#) , Kimmo Kiljunen, to deploy an international policing operation.

### *iii. The UN Responds*

Top Officials from the United Nations and the Organization's various bodies have condemned the ethnic violence and urged for its immediate cessation

On 15 June 2010, [UN Special Advisors on the Prevention of Genocide and on the responsibility to protect](#) issued a call on the international community to operationalize its Responsibility to Protect. Francis Deng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and Edward Luck, Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, expressed grave concern over the eruption, pattern, and scale of the violence in Kyrgyzstan, especially the targeting and displacement of ethnic Uzbeks. The Special Advisors warned that the violence could amount to ethnic cleansing, and reminded the international community of the 2005 World Summit outcome banning of the commission or incitement of ethnic cleansing, genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Deng and Luck called on the "interim government, neighboring states, and the international community to take all possible steps to reduce the risk of violence along ethnic lines in the future." The

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also [expressed](#)

alarm at the scale of inter-ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan, and urged the local and national authorities to "take swift and decisive action to protect citizens, irrespective of their ethnic origin,

and curb the violence".

In response to large numbers of IDP's and refugees who have fled across the border into Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, both the UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) have [launched](#) emergency programs in Uzbekistan to assist with the high influx of refugees.

### *iii. The Response from Civil Society*

Civil society has also been quick to condemn the violence and call for the interim government and the international community to protect the citizens of Kyrgyzstan from ethnic violence.

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect issued a [statement](#) echoing the call to operationalize RtoP made by the UN Special Advisers

On 17 June 2010, the International Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch also [issued](#) a joint letter to the Security Council, calling for immediate international assistance in the form of a policing mission.

[Amnesty International](#) , [Human Rights Watch](#) , and [Minority Rights Group](#) have all issued strong calls for the interim government of Kyrgyzstan to take decisive action quell the violence and ensure the protection of its civilians.

Furthermore, on 23 June 2010 the ICRtoP sent an open [letter](#) to the Security Council that was signed by nineteen civil society organizations around the world urging members of the Council to take immediate measures to address the ongoing crisis in Kyrgyzstan as they have committed to do under the Responsibility to Protect.

### **III. Kyrgyzstan: An RtoP Crisis**

The actions of the interim government have clearly indicated their inability to protect their populations. Immediately after the outbreak of the violence, the interim President called for Russian assistance to impose peace. However, on June 15<sup>th</sup>, senior officials for the interim government in Kyrgyzstan with drew their plea for assistance from Russia, citing a normalization of the situation. Just days later, on 24 June 2010, the government reiterated its need for assistance, calling on the OSCE to deploy an international policing mission to restore law and order.

As paragraph 138 of the 2005

*World Summit Outcome Document*

outlines: “Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity... The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility.”

States have the responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Kyrgyzstan, like every other State, carries this responsibility. It is evident that the interim government of Kyrgyzstan has proved unable to protect its population from ethnic violence and avert the humanitarian crisis that has ensued. The international community should assist Kyrgyzstan to ensure that crimes taking place against its citizens are stopped immediately, and that the appropriate measures are taken to prevent these crimes from reoccurring.

**IV. Post-Conflict Developments** Kyrgyzstan conducted [national parliamentary elections](#) on October 10, 2010 and the [OSCE reported](#) that the process was conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner despite the few accounts of violence and voter intimidation. On November 30, 2010 the Kyrgyzstan parliament established a [coalition government](#) composed of three of the five political parties that previously won the elections. The creation of this coalition is important as this is [the region’s first parliamentary democracy](#).

In November 2010, 72 people were

[detained](#)

on charges relating to the June ethnic violence, and

[17 defendants](#)

from the Uzbek ethnic community were sentenced to life in prison.

The judicial process has been criticized by human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch, as “most of the arrests seem to be

[targeted against the Uzbek community](#)

,” and defendants, their families, and attorneys have been

[threatened and attacked](#)

. The United Nations and United States have called for an

[independent and impartial investigation](#)

into the ethnic violence; however no definitive investigation has yet to be carried out.

