

# CREATING AN INDEPENDENT ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODY IN KYRGYZSTAN

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First question...

Where is Kyrgyzstan?

# The Caucasus and Central Asia



# Some facts



- Population 5.5 million, approximately 2.7 million voters on voter lists
- But high internal and external migration – possibly up to 1 million people living abroad
- Most land-locked country in the world

# March 2005

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- February/March 2005 parliamentary elections assessed as flawed.
- CEC's independence questioned (6 members appointed by the president plus Chairperson, 6 by the parliament)
- Following violent protests, president Akayev forced to flee in the so-called "Tulip Revolution"



March 2005

*photo by Dmitry Shevkun, IFES Kyrgyzstan*

# July 2005



- Presidential elections in summer 2005 a formality – two main contenders agreed not to run against each other.
- CEC left largely in tact – Chairperson replaced.
- Election deemed as credible, but no real competition
- Strong suspicion of the inflated turnout

# 2007



- President Bakiyev turned increasingly authoritarian
- New constitution adopted in referendum, followed by parliamentary elections under PR system
- Bakiyev's newly formed party swept the elections
- Elections and referendum criticized by international and domestic observers – CEC singled out as non-transparent



# 2009

- Presidential elections in July 2009 asessed as flawed
- Same CEC with new chairperson, dominated by president's supporters
- Bakiyev won with more than 76% of the votes

# April 2010



- In April 2010 president Bakiyev overthrown, 86 people killed in Bishkek
- Followed by inter-ethnic violence in May-June with hundreds of deaths



April 2010

# 2010 CEC



- In April-May 2010, CEC dismissed by the interim government and new CEC formed by decree
- Consists of 8 political party representatives, 7 NGO representatives (after two resignations, 7 party and 6 NGO representatives)
- Provision for up to 6 international members with advisory vote, two eventually filled

# Referendum 2010



- Interim Government, consisting of opposition leaders, ruled by decree until the new constitution was adopted in referendum 27 June
- Introduced a semi-parliamentary system
- CEC praised for “transparency”

# Referendum 2010

- By and large referendum successful (72% turnout)
- However, interim government ruled by decree that voters can vote anywhere in a bid to increase the turnout and in certain places voting without ID allowed
- Invisible ink as the only prevention of double voting

# Parliamentary elections 2010

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- Parliamentary elections on 10 October, 5 parties entered into parliament, judged as generally fair
- Confidence in CEC
- However, last-minute increase in threshold requirement excluded one party from parliament.

# Presidential elections 2011

- Presidential elections expected in October 2011
- New election law expected any day – new CEC to be formed to conduct presidential elections
- 12 members – 4 parliamentary coalition, 4 parliamentary opposition, 4 president
- Chose Chairperson among each other



# Presidential elections 2011

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- Election Commission structure to be changed from 4-tier to 3-tier
- Now CEC, Oblast ECs, Rayon ECs, Precinct ECs
- Proposal to remove Oblast ECs

# Independent CEC?

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- CEC independent from political influence
- But not “independent” from the circumstances –  
Presidential elections 2005, Referendum 2010,  
Parliamentary elections 2010
- Played a role in maintaining stability



Thank you