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Gov't Plans to Invite Int'l Experts to Zhanaozen

Prosecution Initiates Cases against Police for Use of Deadly Force

CNPC- Aktobemunaigas: Delivering Growth and Benefiting the Community

An oil and gas operator views sustainability and social responsibility as priorities

Parliament Adopts New Broadcast Law

A new law envisions digital TV across the country by 2015

Rukhaniyat Party Disqualified from Running for Majilis

CEC nixes party registration as Prosecutor General finds it violated election law

Parliamentary Election Campaign Coverage

Also in the News

Things to Watch

Gov't Plans to Invite Int'l Experts to Zhanaozen



Altai Abibullayev, spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry
Photo by Foreign Ministry

Kazakhstan is taking steps to ensure complete and objective investigation into all circumstances of the December 16 mass disturbances in Zhanaozen, and also considers the possibility of inviting independent foreign experts to join the process. Official representatives of the Foreign Ministry and the Prosecutor General's Office announced the corresponding messages on December 29.

"The Government of Kazakhstan is committed to ensuring full and objective investigation of crimes, the establishment of true organizers and all participants of mass disturbances in Zhanaozen with the observance of human rights of citizens in

accordance with the Constitution and international obligations of Kazakhstan," Altai Abibullayev, the Foreign Ministry's spokesperson said at the Ministry's briefing.

"Consistently acting in the spirit of openness and transparency, the Government of Kazakhstan is considering the possibility of bringing in the near future UN experts and independent experts from other countries to ensure an objective and thorough investigation into the facts relating to mass disturbances in Zhanaozen in compliance with all norms of the national legislation, human rights, and international legal practices in the investigation of mass disturbances," he added.

On December 27, the Prosecutor General's Office initiated a criminal case on the fact of death caused by the use of weapons by police officers under a Criminal Code Article that envisages responsibility for abuse of power and authority with the use of weapons, spokesperson of the Office Nurdaulet Suindikov said at his briefing today.

To ensure objectivity, this case is being investigated by a team led by a special prosecutor. At present, a number of necessary legal examinations have been assigned under the case. The Prosecutor General's Office has adopted a package of measures to ensure the investigation is transparent, Suindikov said.

The investigation task force also includes a public commission, headed by the Chairman of the Board of Veterans of the Mangistau region Omirzak Ozganbayev. Members of the Commission have access to the town morgue, the detention centre and can meet with the people detained under the criminal case.

In order to resolve complaints relating to the unlawful detention of citizens and use of illegal methods of investigation, the commission was set up including labour veterans, elders of the town, members of nongovernmental organizations, as well as relatives of the detained people along with the prosecution personnel.

The commission members were presented lists of arrested persons and administrative detainees. They were able to visit the temporary detention centre and a special detention centre for administrative detainees. Members of the commission talked to the detainees, personally inspected the conditions of confinement and made sure the detainees are in the normal state of health. In addition, at their own initiative, they examined the household court, territory, and garages of the town's police department, as well as the basement and the morgue of the town's hospital.

"This work has allowed the commission members to see that rumours about illegal detention, torture, and murder are groundless," Suindikov said.

The law enforcement bodies continue to verify information from various sources concerning the Zhanaozen events, not confirmed by official data.

"We interviewed Aluash Ungarova, who previously stated to separate media representatives that during the riots in Zhanaozen her daughter-in-law Sholpan had personally closed eyes to 23 dead people. Meanwhile, Sholpan Otekeeva has denied Ungarova's words and said she had not closed eyes of the dead and personally saw only three people who died on the town square on December 16. In addition, she noted that she is not Ungarova's daughter-in-law," Nurdaulet Suindikov said.

At present, the prosecution considers bringing Aluash Ungarova to administrative liability for knowingly giving false information to the media.

According to the prosecution, to this day, the investigation task force has apprehended 20 people under the criminal cases launched previously. Eighteen of them were arrested with the court's approval.

"According to the latest data, a total of 16 people died as a result of the Zhanaozen events. As noted earlier, the death of some of them is not related to the actions of law enforcement bodies," Suindikov said, adding that the Office is investigating circumstances and performing legal assessment for each case of death individually.

At the briefing, Nurdaulet Suindikov called on the media representatives to rely on proven facts and information, when covering the events, and prevent the publication of false information. He also asked citizens of the Mangistau region to observe the rule of law and not give in to provocation in a distributed misinformation.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Internal Affairs informed that a total of 17 law enforcement officers were injured during mass disturbances in Zhanaozen. One of them was admitted to the Aktau hospital in a serious condition. From December 16 to 18, a total of 35 police officers turned for medical help with a variety of injuries, the [Novosti-Kazakhstan](#) agency wrote on December 29.

The Government of Kazakhstan is considering the possibility of bringing in the near future UN experts and independent experts from other countries to ensure an objective and thorough investigation into the facts relating to mass disturbances in Zhanaozen.

[Back to Contents](#)

CNPC- Aktobemunaigas: Delivering Growth and Benefiting the Community



Photo from Munaigaz.kz

Social responsibility is becoming a key priority for Kazakhstan's oil and gas industry. More and more companies today are paying attention to social responsibility and close partnership with local communities. One of such companies is the JSC "CNPC-Aktobemunaigas", one of the five leading oil and gas operators of Kazakhstan in terms of hydrocarbon production.

The company's activity is based on the principle of "harmonizing energy and nature". It has gained ISO 14001 certification, which is an internationally accepted standard that sets out how a company goes about putting

in place an effective Environmental Management System (EMS).

The company operates on a contractual basis developing the Zhanazhol oilfield, Kenkiyak the Subsalt and Kenkiyak the Suprasalt oilfields in the Aktobe region and, since 2002, has been engaged in the exploration of the central-eastern part of the Caspian basin.

From the very beginning of its investment activities in 1997, the company has been carrying out large-scale economic and manufacturing projects, attaching great importance to achieving the objectives of social importance. As one of the leading companies in Aktobe, "CNPC-Aktobemunaigas" employs more than 6,700 people, and in many respects determines the social wellbeing of the region. The overall amount of taxes and other payments made to the budget over a fourteen-year period is about 1.4 trillion tenge. Over these years, the company has spent more than 9.6 billion tenge for the development of the social sector and infrastructure.

In order to ensure energy independence and social infrastructure of Aktobe, the company supplied more than one billion cubic metres of marketable gas at a lower price to the region.

Supporting the initiatives of President Nursultan Nazarbayev concerning the priority development of rural areas, "CNPC-Aktobemunaigas" annually invests more than US\$ 1 million in the development of infrastructure in the rural areas of the Aktobe region, as well as in the sowing and harvesting campaigns.

A Memorandum of Cooperation and Understanding signed every year between the akimat (Governor's office) and the company contributes significantly to the enhancement of its socially oriented activities. As part of its charity work, the company is implementing targeted social campaigns in the spheres of health, education, agriculture, sports, and culture.

In 2010, the company was awarded the Grand Prix of the national contest "Paryz" in the field of social partnership established by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. In 2009 it also won the same contest with its US\$ 91,000 worth Zhanazhol - KC-13 pipeline, which supplied gas to the neighbouring villages nominated as the "Best Social Project".

"The implementation of the project [the Zhanazhol – KS-13 gas pipeline] has given an impetus to the development of small and medium business in the district: new enterprises have been set up, new jobs have been created. Equally important is that gas supplied by the company is one of the cheapest in the country," Serik Shangutov, akim of the Mugalzhar district, said.

"In 2011 alone, the company has allocated 5 million tenge to support housing and utilities infrastructure in the Zhaksymai village of the Temir district, 15 million to open a psycho-correctional office in the Baigana district," Murzagali Karazhanov, chairman of the company's trade union, said.

"CNPC-Aktobemunaigas has been recognised as the Best Socially Responsible Enterprise of the year in the national Paryz (Duty) contest," Ondasyn Sadakbayev, head of the technical production department, said. "Our company attaches special importance to ensuring comfortable working conditions, providing the workers with a set of insurance, benefits and compensations," he added.

"For the second year in a row CNPC-Aktobemunaigas has granted scholarships to five orphan students studying at the oil and gas college. Sponsored by the company, two other graduates of a Zhanazhol secondary school currently study at best universities of China," Zhankuzha Aitzhanov, head of the training and retraining department, said.

The company's activity is based on the principle of "harmonizing energy and nature".

[Back to Contents](#)

Parliament Adopts New Broadcast Law



Building of the Parliament

Photo by Foreign Ministry

The Senate of Kazakhstan's Parliament adopted a new bill on television and radio broadcasting in Astana on December 28.

The bill was adopted after lively discussions at a plenary session of the Senate of Parliament chaired by its speaker Kairat Mami. According to the government, the law has been developed to improve the content and increase access to products featured in the national media, as well as to protect Kazakhstan's media space against external influence. It is also believed that the new law will regulate the relationships that arise in the sphere of TV and radio broadcasting, defining the

rights and responsibilities of its main actors and providing a strong impetus to the development of domestic television and radio services.

President Nazarbayev stressed the need to support Kazakhstan's mass media in his September 2011 address opening the parliamentary season.

According to Vice Minister of Communications and Information Lyazzat Tanysbai, the new law envisions that the entire country will have a 100% digital television and radio coverage by 2015, and includes provisions to eliminate low-quality content that inflicts psychological or emotional damage on viewers, especially those in the younger age. It also stipulates governmental support of lower-income families to enable them to purchase digital TV devices.

The new provisions were welcomed by the members of parliament who said in the modern age of information technologies appropriate mechanisms were essential for refocusing people's attention on different priority areas. In their words, mass media should form the nation's present-day cultural value system.

To this end, the production of domestic television and radio programmes, and films should be enhanced with due attention to high quality and content that would be capable of competing with popular international media products.

Lyazzat Tanysbai said systematic work in the area has been carried out and has produced promising results. For instance, she said, the new children's TV channel "Balapan" has already won popularity among the Kazakh audiences.

To sustain the trend the law requires Kazakhstan's cable operators mandatorily to include the entire list of domestic TV channels into their basic packages. Non-resident broadcasters operating in Kazakhstan will, in turn, be required to register by the administrative authorities and follow the requirements of the country's legislation, involving the ban on advertising of products that are considered illegal or those propagandizing scenes of violence and cruelty.

Foreign electronic media will also be required to register within the next year and follow the Kazakh legislation.

"This does not necessarily mean that the broadcasters will have to open their affiliate branches or sub-offices in Kazakhstan. They will just need to gather some documents, including an application form for the registration and the channel's subject-matter so that we know they are not going to propagandize religious extremism in our country, for instance," Lyazzat Tanysbai explained.

In her words, cable operators will be required to broadcast only those channels that were registered with the authorized agencies.

"I think some of them will possibly choose to open representative offices here in Kazakhstan, others will find private companies which will broadcast on their behalf," she added.

Lyazzat Tanysbai contended the law by no means infringes on freedom of speech: "We know there are NGOs that criticize some of the provisions of the law, but we have to pay due attention to the market as well."

In addition, the digital format will allow the opening of new niche TV channels. "We suppose a lot of niche TV channels will start working in the country within the nearest future and our goal is to oversee this transient stage to enable even the most remote villages to watch a vast number of international and domestic TV channels," she said.

Foreign electronic media will also be required to register within the next year and follow the Kazakh legislation.

Another important aspect is the enhancement of broadcasting in the Kazakh language: by 2018 the Kazakh-language broadcasting ratio will have to amount to 50 percent of every channel's content. According to Tanysbai, appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and control over compliance of the broadcast content with the requirement have been worked out.

During the session, Senator Gani Kassymov noted it is necessary to create public broadcasting television which would not only meet the aspirations of various social groups, but also qualitatively increase the intellectual wealth, educational and cultural potential of Kazakhstan's mass media.

While elaborating the legislation, lawmakers received a number of proposals from representatives of non-governmental organisations. They received over 200 letters which were discussed at the sessions of the working group in the course of the year. Some of the amendments were introduced by the MPs themselves. In particular, they suggested dividing competencies between the Government and the authorized agency when defining qualification criteria for mandatory channels to be formed as a result of a tendering, registering and re-registering them, and frequency allocation.

In line with the newly adopted law, an independent advisory body under the Government and a National TV and radio Operator under the auspices of JSC "Kaztelradio" is to be established.

For the bill to come into force, it has to be signed by President Nursultan Nazarbayev within 15 days.

[Back to Contents](#)

Rukhaniyat Party Disqualified from Running for Majilis



Logo of the Rukhaniyat Party

The Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan (CEC) has annulled the registration of the Rukhaniyat party list for the elections to the Majilis (the lower chamber of the Kazakh parliament) due to take place on January 15, 2012.

Altynshash Zhaganova, the founder and former leader of the Rukhaniyat Party, accused Serikzhan Mambetalin, who took the leadership of the party in 2010, of fraud and demanded that Rukhaniyat should not be allowed to participate in the upcoming parliamentary election.

At a Dec.28 meeting of the Central Election Commission chaired by Kuandyk Turgankulov, attended by representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office, international observers, members of the Rukhaniyat party as well as other political associations, one single question on the agenda was discussed – the cancellation of the registration of the Rukhaniyat party list.

"Based on the findings that have become available to the Prosecutor General's Office after it conducted an inspection following the application of Ms. Zhaganova and in accordance with Article 89.6.4 of the Law on Elections the Central Election Commission has canceled the registration of the Rukhaniyat Party list from December 14, 2011," CEC Secretary Bakhyt Meldeshov read out the resolution at the meeting.

The resolution was approved by all the CEC members.

In accordance with the resolution, "Rukhaniyat Party" will be deleted from the ballots to be used during the elections to the Majilis scheduled for January 15, 2012.

Meldeshov said the 8th extraordinary congress of the Rukhaniyat Party was held in conflict with the Rukhaniyat Party Charter.

"According to the minutes, the 8th extraordinary congress of the Rukhaniyat Party was attended by 203 delegates from all regions and Rukhaniyat branch offices. However, the inspection conducted by prosecutors revealed the party had not held conferences in most of the regions and, thus, had not sent their delegates to the congress. Moreover, the party leadership invited Rukhaniyat members from some of the regions, though these members were not duly authorized to participate in the congress," Meldeshov said.

According to the Prosecutor General's Office, the Rukhaniyat Party did not hold conferences in 12 of the regions and such conferences were organized in conflict with the existing regulations in the other two regions.

"The inspection showed representatives of separate regions did not participate in meetings. Moreover, the inspection defined some infringements during the meetings. In particular, the meeting involved 19 members of the party, which are less than two thirds of all its members. Additionally, Ms.

Syzdykova and Mr. Karzhubayev are not party members. Finally, during the inspection a number of people said they were not the members of the national committee of the party, either,” said Kanat Seidgapbarov, the head of a department of the Prosecutor General’s Office.

The party’s most recent congress that nominated candidates to the lower house of the parliament had the most problems, according to Zhaganova.

“The congress was absolutely illegitimate. There are only seven people on the Republican Committee, plenum and political executive committee. Five of them did not take part in the forum. Moreover, under the statute an extraordinary congress of the party cannot be held without the approval of the plenary session and regional conferences, which had not been held. Some regions did not have delegates at the congress. At the same time it was attended by people, who had no relation to our party. I think the congress was illegitimate and Mambetalin’s behaviour absolutely dishonest. He misled the candidates who were not aware of the situation,” Zhaganova said.

“The Rukhaniyat party violated the existing Law on Elections when nominating its candidates to the Majilis,” Meldeshov summed up.

According to various opinion polls, Rukhaniyat (which means Spirituality in Kazakh) was trailing almost all other political parties running for Majilis, registering the support of less than one percent of those polled. Without Rukhaniyat, the field is now left for seven political parties, which will need to clear the 7 percent threshold to enter the Majilis.

According to the 2009 amendments to the law on elections, if only one party manages to do that, the runner-up party will also be allowed to have members in the Majilis. So far, though, polls show there are two parties capable of clearing the legal threshold by themselves: the ruling Nur Otan party and the Ak Zhol party which positions itself as a pro-business group.

[Back to Contents](#)

Parliamentary Election Campaign Coverage

On Dec.28, Kuandyk Turgankulov, Chairman of the CEC, received U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan Kenneth Fairfax. Turgankulov informed the Ambassador about preparations for the parliamentary elections due on January 15. According to the CEC Chairman, the election campaign is being held within the legal framework, and in all campaign forms allowed by the law. The exception is the town of Zhanaozen where the state of emergency forces the political parties and candidates to restrain from mass public events and instead make full use of the media and visual campaign forms. The CEC offices in that town are doing everything possible to provide town inhabitants with the opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to elect and be elected on January 15.

According to a release from the CEC, Fairfax expressed his confidence current electoral legislation and the political will of President Nazarbayev will allow Kazakhstan to hold the forthcoming elections in a transparent way.

In the meantime, the parties are continuing their election campaigns across the country, presenting their programmes to voters. The Communist People’s Party is campaigning in Almaty with a show “Father Frost Is also Red”, as well as in Astana and Atyrau. The Auyl Party went to Aktobe’s suburbs, to Oskemen, Almaty and Schuchinsk, a town near Astana. The Patriots Party is actively campaigning in Almaty, Aktobe and Oskemen, whereas the Ak Zhol Party and the Nur Otan Party have talked to plant workers in Astana and Temirtau respectively. The candidates from the Ak Zhol Party dived into the cold water of the River Yessil in Astana to promote healthy lifestyle, and the ASDP party met with voters in the Bakai micro-district in Almaty.

Kazakhstan’s embassies across the globe are getting ready for the elections to ensure that Kazakhstan’s citizens abroad can vote for their candidate parties.

Prosecution authorities of Kazakhstan revealed the facts of early campaigning. In particular, before the officially sanctioned start of the campaign on December 16, the prosecution revealed various

interviews of leaders of political parties in the media that could be considered as campaigning. Among those leaders are Maksut Narikbayev (Adilet), Zharmakhan Tuyakbai (ASDP), Bulat Abilov (ASDP), and a public activist Zhasaral Kuanyshalin. The advisor to the President of Kazakhstan Yermukhamet Yertysbayev was also highlighted for carrying out illegal campaign.

“For these acts, warnings of violating the requirements of the Constitutional Law have been announced,” a press release from the Prosecutor General’s office issued on Dec.29 said.

Moreover, the prosecution has revealed facts of placing campaign posters of the Nur Otan at the Almaty airport by unidentified persons. Administrative proceedings were initiated under Article 99 of the Administrative Code, and were sent to the police for identification of perpetrators.

A round table “Political parties of Kazakhstan: election agenda” took place on Dec.27 at the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies (KazISS) in Almaty. The participants gave their evaluation to the election campaign and discussed the possible alignment of forces in the new parliament. The most interesting question, according to the experts, is which party will take the second place after the Nur Otan party, the undoubted leader of the race. The possibility of a third party in the Parliament was also discussed.

Experts also noted the similarity of political agendas of the parties which is why voters would most probably choose parties judging by their leaders.

At the same time, analysts admit that only the upcoming election and the future practice of political parties will show whether they have people’s support, and whether they can actually claim power and become an organized opposition to the existing authorities.

[Back to Contents](#)

Also in the News:

- During 2011, the Senate of Kazakhstan’s Parliament has had 36 plenary sessions and passed 152 legislative acts. This year the parliament members have made 206 parliamentary inquiries to the Government, most of which have been implemented through specific measures. One of the most recent documents was the Declaration of Kazakhstan’s 20th anniversary of Independence adopted by the Senate on Dec.10.
- The country’s GDP as initially estimated has grown by 7.5%, Kazakhstan’s Minister of Economic Development and Trade Kairat Kelimbetov said at a Governmental meeting in Astana on December 28. The volume of the gross agricultural output increased by 27.3%, the social welfare of the country’s citizens is improving, where real cash incomes increased by 6.7% and real salary increased by 5.5% in ten months from January till November 2011, he said. Processing industries have seen growth of 6.7%, with the mining sector growing by 1.6%. Industrial production output for the period grew by 3.8%. Kelimbetov concluded saying that Kazakhstan is capable of overcoming a new wave of the global crisis.
- Kazakhstan’s Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Bulat Sarsenbayev met His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Amman, on December 29. The Prince conveyed greetings and best wishes to President Nursultan Nazarbayev on behalf of King Abdullah II and praised Kazakhstan measures to promote global intercultural and interfaith dialogue. The sides discussed further development of Kazakhstan-Jordanian relations. On behalf of Kazakhstan’s Senate Speaker Kairat Mami, Sarsenbayev invited the Prince to the 4th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions to be held in Astana in May 2012.
- On behalf of President Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan’s Ambassador to Lithuania, non-resident Ambassador to Latvia, Estonia and Finland Galymzhan Koishybayev awarded a jubilee medal to ex-President of Estonia Arnold Ruutel for his contribution to Kazakshtan-Estonian cooperation and strengthening of multilateral ties between the two countries in Tallinn, Estonia, *kazinform* reported on December 29. Ruutel congratulated Kazakhstan on the anniversary of independence and wished happiness and well-being to the people of Kazakhstan and President Nursultan Nazarbayev.
- Pursuant to the Presidential Decree and on behalf of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan’s Ambassador to Azerbaijan Serik Primbetov awarded a commemorative medals to

Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Industry and Energy Natig Aliyev, Minister of Emergency Situations Kamaladdin Heydarov and Chairman of Writer's Union Anar Rzayev for their contribution to the development and strengthening of statehood and sovereignty of Kazakhstan, *kazinform* reported on December 28.

- Kazakhstan's Government, Federation of Trade Unions and "Atameken Union" National Economic Chamber of Kazakhstan signed a general agreement for 2012-2014 in Astana, on December 29. The sides agreed to strengthen efforts in implementing the Programme of Employment 2020, develop and protect human resources, improve standards of the population. In addition, the agreement envisages measures concerning labour market development, improvement of wage policy, social protection, occupational safety, as well as industrial and environmental safety.
- The third International Conference of Young People of the Kazakh Diaspora in Europe took place in Paris under the auspices of the Kazakhstan Embassy to France on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of independence of Kazakhstan, *kazinform* reported on December 28. The focus of the event was preservation of ethnic identity and national culture through the history of the Kazakh Diaspora formation, integration problems of Kazakhs in Europe through native language proficiency, and urgent issues of cooperation through Kazakh youth education in Europe and Kazakhstan.

Things to watch:

- Kazakhstan will host the Four Countries Boxing Tournament in Almaty on February 14-18, 2012. Boxers from France, India and Russia will compete in the Championship along with Kazakhstan fighters.

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