



# Kyrgyzstan: Beyond the Headlines

Anna Kirey, MA RUES '2014

# Country Facts

- **Full name:** Kyrgyz Republic
- **Population:** 5.5 million (UN, 2010)
- **Capital:** Bishkek
- **Ethnic groups:** Kyrgyz 64.9%, Uzbek 13.8%, Russian 12.5%, Dungan 1.1%, Ukrainian 1%, Uighur 1%, other 5.7% (1999 census)
- **Area:** 199,900 sq km (77,182 sq miles)
- **Major languages:** Kyrgyz, Russian
- **Major religions:** Islam, Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 65 years (men), 73 years (women) (UN)
- **Main exports:** Fruit, vegetables, gold, tobacco
- **GNI per capita:** US \$870 (World Bank, 2009)

Sources: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country\\_profiles/1296570.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1296570.stm)  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html>



# Most recent news

## **Kyrgyz Mountain Named for Putin**

21 February 2011 Moscow Times

## **Kyrgyzstan: Driving the Russian Language from Public Life**

17 February 2011 Eurasianet.org

# Headlines: BBC

- 14 Oct 10 [Kyrgyz election exposes ethnic divide](#)
- 12 Jun 10 [Kyrgyzstan plea for Russian help](#)
- 11 Jun 10 [Audio slideshow: Kyrgyzstan journey](#)
- 21 Apr 10 [Q&A: Kyrgyz unrest](#)
- 16 Apr 10 [Kyrgyzstan extends US base lease](#)
- 13 Apr 10 [Uprising worsens Kyrgyz economic woes](#)
- 08 Apr 10 [Profile: Roza Otunbayeva](#)
- 08 Mar 10 [Kyrgyz women hope for equality](#)
- 06 Feb 10 [Brutal attacks shock Kyrgyz journalists](#)
- 19 Jan 10 [Kyrgyzstan keeps a tight grip on religion](#)
- 22 Dec 09 [Kyrgyzstan for adventure tourists](#)



# Headlines: New York Times

March 14, 2009 [Critic of Kyrgyzstan Leader Is Believed Dead in a Suspicious Car Crash](#)

February 5, 2009 [U.S. Searches for Alternative to Central Asian Base](#)

February 4, 2009 [Kyrgyzstan Says It Will Close U.S. Base](#)

August 25, 2008 [Plane Crash in Central Asia Kills 68](#)

May 15, 2008 [In a Kyrgyz Garden, Unburied Soviet Memories](#)

December 21, 2007 [Shut Out in Kyrgyzstan Elections, Opposition Party Vows Protests](#)

December 19, 2007 [Kyrgyz Vote Law Voided](#)

December 17, 2007 [Kyrgyzstan Leader's Party Wins in Landslide](#)

# Headlines: Fox News

- 18 Mar 2009 [Kyrgyz opposition says activists detained](#)
- 16 Mar 2009 [Kyrgyz opposition calls for mass protests](#)
- 11 Mar 2009 Kyrgyz opposition leader charged with murder
- 4 Mar 2009 [Kyrgyz reporter stabbed, beaten](#)
- 5 Aug 2008 [Kyrgyz cops find weapons in US citizen's apartment](#)
- 10 Apr 2008 [Infected Babies Pass HIV to Mothers](#)
- 20 Dec 2007 [Kyrgyzstan to Name Peak 'Mount Santa Claus'](#)
- 6 Dec 2006 [U.S. Serviceman Kills Civilian at Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan 'In Response to a Threat'](#)
- 7 Nov 2006 [Pro-Government, Opposition Clash in Kyrgyz](#)
- 6 Oct 2006 [Sources: Justice Department Probing Air Force Major's Disappearance in Kyrgyzstan](#)

# Time Line

- 1990** Kyrgyz Communist Party leadership opposes change to the Soviet constitution which allows non-Communist parties to take part in political life; state of emergency imposed after several hundred people are killed in interethnic clashes between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz over access to land and housing around the town of Osh, near border with Uzbekistan; Askar Akayev elected to the newly created post of president, later wins 'first democratic election'.
- 2000** Askar Akayev re-elected for his third term.
- 2005** Akayev's son and daughter are elected to the Parliament dominated by one party. Demonstrators seize official buildings. Akayev and his family flee to Russia. Capital city of Bishkek heavily looted. Kurmanbek Bakiyev is appointed as an acting president, later wins 'first democratic election'.
- 2010** Opposition protests spread from northern Kyrgyzstan to capital Bishkek. President Kurmanbek Bakiyev flees to Belarus. 87 protesters are shot at the main square of Bishkek. Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva appointed a president. June - More than 400 people are killed in clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic communities in the southern cities of Osh and Jalalabad. Hundreds of thousands of people flee their homes. More than 90% of voters in a 'first democratic' referendum approve a new constitution reducing the powers of the presidency and turning Kyrgyzstan into a parliamentary republic.

# The 2010 Conflict







# The 2010 Conflict

- Exactly 20 years since the first riots
- Hundreds killed
- 400,000 refugees
- Kyrgyz-dominated military taking sides instead of controlling violence
- Other ethnic minorities fleeing

# President Roza Otunbayeva

- 'Caretaker' president until 2012
- Professional Diplomat
- Speaks English
- Has a Facebook page



# Russian and US Military presence

- Dependent position politically between Russia, US and China





# Resources

## New York Times Country Profiles

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/kyrgyzstan/index.html>

## BBC Country Profiles

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country\\_profiles/1296485.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1296485.stm)

## International Crisis Group

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/kyrgyzstan.aspx>

## NewEurasia – bloggers from the region

<http://www.neweurasia.net/category/kyrgyzstan/>

## Eurasianet

<http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kyrgyzstan>



# Central Asia Connect Project

Connecting North Carolina and Central Asia

<http://centralasiacconnect.web.unc.edu/>

# New Central Asia: Policy Challenges 20 Years Later

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill March 25-26, 2011

## PROGRAM

### Friday 25 March 2011

#### 5:30 PM Panel 1: Ethnicity and Politics

Zumrat Salmorbekova "Ethnic policy in post-conflict Kyrgyzstan"

Dr. Graeme Robertson "Ethnicity, Clan and Region in Kyrgyz Politics"

Acacia Shields "Fanning the Flames: How anti-fundamentalist policies have contributed to ethnic intolerance in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan"

### Saturday 26 March 2011

#### 10:00 AM Panel 2: Energy and Environment

Csaba Marosvari "Twenty years of geopolitical wrestling over the hydrocarbon resources of Azerbaijan"

Dr. Erika Weinthal "Oil and Environmental Activism in Kazakhstan"

Dr. David McNelis "Ecological Problems of the Caspian Sea"

#### 1:00 PM Panel 3: Gender and Human Rights

Zumrad Ahmedjanova "Self-immolation in Uzbekistan. An act of protest or the only choice?"

Anna Kirey "Formal and informal organizing by transgender people and women-loving women in Central Asia: notes from the field"

Will Meyer "Hiding and Seeking in Tbilisi: Global Sexuality Discourse and Georgian Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM)"

**3:00 PM Roundtable: New Central Asia: Policy Challenges 20 Years Later | 4003 GEC  
Tentative Invited**