Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic
Table of Contents

Models of State-Islam Relations in Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Norway, and Israel: Lessons to be Learned ................................................................. 3

The Muftiyat as an Institute of the Muslim Community and its Potential for Building Interfaith Dialogue in Kyrgyzstan ......................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Interaction Mechanisms of State Structures and Islamic Organizations in Preventing Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic ................................................................. 36

Teaching Pluralism in Conflict Resolution through Central Asian Religious Traditions ................................................................................................................................. 49

Assessing the Possibility of Building a Kyrgyz Theological School .................................................. 62

The Role of Imams in Conflict Prevention ......................................................................................... 71

Assessing the Role of Imams in Conflict Resolution ................................................................. 82

Problems within the Interaction between Law-Enforcement Authorities and Religious Organizations in Countering Religious Extremism: National and Public Security ...... 88

Strategies for Combating Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic ........................................... 103

The Psychological and Social Portrait of an Extremist and Terrorist ........................................... 118

The Typology of Thought and the Steps of an Extremist: Internal Reasons for Radicalization and Protest ......................................................................................................... 134
Models of State-Islam Relations in Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Norway, and Israel: Lessons to be Learned
Introduction

Selecting the correct model and the role of state-Islam relations in Kyrgyz socio-political life are high priorities for the Kyrgyz Republic and for all secular countries with significant Muslim populations.

Today, there is a wide range of at times opposing viewpoints on the future development of Islamic processes in the Kyrgyz Republic. The increasing popularity of Islamic values in public life has led to ambiguity, which can be expressed as such: Depending on the social and political circumstances, Islamic values may either help stabilize society, or, to a certain extent, be a source of instability, divides, and destruction. Additionally, this religious ideology and set of beliefs are projected into practice, revealing differences of views and positions and having a direct impact on citizens’ socio-political behavior; the high social significance and severity of this problem requires careful analysis and forecasting.

However, recent publications indicate that intellectual pursuits on the fate of Islam in our society have reached a new level. Euphoria, natural for the first years of religious renewal, has been gradually replaced by serious reflections on the essence of Islam, necessary for citizens and coinciding with the existing realities.

Encouragingly, in recently years, the state has engaged in active regulation of the religious sphere. The Council of Defense of Kyrgyzstan’s recent decision On State Policy in the Religious Sphere (February 3, 2014) rocked intellectual pursuits on the role of religion in a secular society; the issue received great attention in the media, and puzzled state officials, experts and ordinary citizens. This decision led to the adoption of a large-scale reform program targeting religious aspects and addressing state-Islam relations.

Policy-makers developed a draft of the Concept of the State Policy, discussed in all regions; is working to improve the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations; and conducted a functional analysis of public authorities dealing with religion and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SAMK). The Concept of Interaction between the Internal Affairs Bodies and Religious Organizations has served as a basis for combating religious extremism.

To draw lessons for Kyrgyzstan, we analyzed the international experience of state-Islam relations in various countries of different forms, types, levels of religious diversity, and the legal regulation of religious organizations. In accordance with the purpose, the research covered the theoretical basis of essence and content of state-religion relations, and conducted a comparative description of state-Islam relations in countries with Muslim population such as Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Norway, and Israel. The development of state-Islam relations in Kyrgyzstan was also analyzed. The research’s conclusion offers a set of practical recommendations.

Nature and Content of the State-Religion Relations
State-religion relations are a part of a state’s religious policy, and are a set of interactions between state bodies and religious associations, including legally registered religious groups and those that are unregistered.

**Key Participants of the State-Religion Relations**

**State:**
Legislative, Executive, and Judicial authorities and institutions, including state media

**Religion:**
religious organizations and groups, their senior or coordinating bodies, interfaith institutions, and organizations

Relations between the state and religious organizations depend on legislatively enshrined ideas about the place of religion and religious organizations, their functions, and areas of competence in society.

**Subject Matter of State-Religion Relations**

- Implementation of constitutional human and civil rights on freedom of conscience and religion;
- Implementation of religious organizations' legal rights, control over law enforcement, and compliance with legal responsibilities;
- Implementation of the constitutional principle of separation of religious institutions from the state; and
- Regulation of interfaith relations in cases of rising social conflict.

Universal practice indicates that secular states implement the democratic principle of the freedom of conscience by clearly defining the competencies and functions of the state and religious organizations in accordance with the law. However, this principle
does not equate the exclusion of religion from all areas of society or the suspension of religious organizations from solving socially significant problems.

Currently, religious organizations operating in our country engage in a wide range of activities in addition to those which are liturgical. Therefore, state authorities and religious organizations interact in almost all spheres of life.

A state body’s defining feature is a set of powers of which religious organizations cannot be endowed. State bodies cannot delegate to religious organizations any of the state’s social and cultural functions, nor can they grant sufficient authority and resources.

Also, the state cannot be justified in assigning religious organizations functions that constitute the state’s exclusive prerogative such as law-making, executive and administrative function, law enforcement, administration of justice, or civil registration.

However, this is different from the cooperation between the state and religious organizations in social, cultural, and educational, etc. activities often implemented on the basis of a contract or agreement. Without imposing on religious organization the functions of citizens’ social security, the state, at the same time, may, within the law, support the activities of religious associations to help the elderly, orphans, the sick, prisoners, and other citizens in the form of charity. The interaction of state and religious organizations typically take place in the following social and political spheres:

**Appendix 3**

**Spheres of State-Religious Organization Relations**

The nature of the state-religious organization relations shows *firstly*, the status of human rights and freedoms related to religion in any state; *secondly*, the degree of the state’s respect for the citizens’ beliefs; and *finally*, the state's attitude to non-governmental institutions with strong ideologies.

The state-religious organization relations are impacted by the following factors:
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- The overall situation in the country, including the socio-economic environment and ethnic and social relations;
- Historical factor, including historical impacts and established notions of the role of traditional religions;
- The need to incorporate international norms protecting human rights and freedoms, and respect for commitments to international treaties signed by the Kyrgyz Republic;
- The low level of legal and religious culture demonstrated by not only citizens’ ignorance of legislation, but also the reluctance of individual civil servants and representatives of religious organizations to comply with the law;
- The lack of a holistic concept of public policy, national idea such as ideological foundations of state-religious organization relations, and understanding of the role of religious organizations;
- Poly-confessionality;
- Interconnection of ethnic and religious relations.

A Comparative Description of State-Islam Relations in Countries with Significant Muslim Populations

Below, we will describe existing models of state-Islam relations (SIR) in various countries in order to implement positive experiences in Kyrgyzstan.

The Russian model of state-Islam relations is formed with a focus on two directions: Pro-Western and domestic. The first, entitled, Theory of the Russian Revolutionary Islamism is being developed by G. Dzhemal, a secular philosopher, and V. Sidorov, a civic activist, with the support of pro-Western Russian political actors. The second, entitled, Theory of Religious Traditionalism - Enlightened Islam is the effort of professional Muslim theologians V. Yakupov (1963-2012) and M. Sadikov (1963-2011). After the death of the latter, the theory is being developed by F. Salaman, a Russian Tatar theologian. Both theories continue to compete with one another, are implemented in modern state-Islam relations, and serve to fragment the field.

The basis of the modern Russian SIR model are the improvement of inter-religious dialogue and the mitigation of the threat of religious conflicts.

These measures are being successfully implemented by the Foundation for Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education established in 2005 by the Russian Presidential Administration to study the interconnection of state-religions relations within nation-building. The Foundation’s activities support research contributing to improving the legislative framework, play an important role in preparing a package of proposals to combat religious extremism and terrorism, and positively impact inter-religious relations. Additionally, the Foundation has developed a multi-objective evaluation system on the effectiveness of state-religious organization relations.

Today, the political and ideological spheres of state-Islamic relations in the Russian Federation are guided by the five “de’s”:

1. De – wahabization: The Muslim community should preached Islamic ideology with the state and Muslim organizations’ cooperation in order to strengthen national security;
2. De – archaism: Islam should not lead to society’s regression to the Middle Ages; instead, Islam must lead to development and innovation;

3. De – politicization: Islamic religious organizations should consider the principle of secularism in their activities;

4. De – internationalization: Muslims should be patriots first, and members of the Muslim Ummah second; and,

5. De – commercialization: Islam should neither be discredited by commercialization nor cheapened by business opportunities.

The cultural sphere aims to restore Islam as a national practice, from public preaching, the appearance of imams, and the wearing of hijabs to the construction of mosques, taking into account urban, Russian architectural traditions and ethno-national and civilizational details. The economic sphere utilizes Muslim organizations’ transparency and cooperation with the state, accountability, and centralization. The total state control over the so-called “Islamic economics” is an indicator of the success of state-Islam relations.

Advocacy-oriented activities are also under full state control, and their success is reliant on patriotism and willingness to cooperate; state-Islam relations can only be successful if the anti-Russian segment of Muslim media is reduced while pro-Russian sentiments are increased. Only highly professional journalists with knowledge of language and with both theological and secular education should be allowed to cover Islam-related topics.

For many years, Kazakhstan led the former Soviet Union with its positive interfaith dialogues, held congresses of world leaders, and changed its religious policy in 2011 after the famous Atyrau events. Law-makers updated the Law on Religious Activity and Religious Associations to provide systematic monitoring and analysis. The Research and Analytical Center for Religious Affairs were established under the Ministry of Justice in the interest of qualitative scientific research in the field of religion. Kazakhstan and Russia create both institutions to cooperate with law-abiding communities of believers, and tougher criminal penalties for extremism and terrorism. In accordance with the updated Law (2011), all religious organizations must register with the state, making small, inefficient religious organizations illegal. Following Kyrgyzstan’s example, the Law also imposed a ban on religious activities conducted outside officially designated places. This led to shutdowns of informal prayer rooms, bans on religious ceremonies in state, educational, and health care institutions, and military units. Russia, by contrast, demonstrated a return to the institutions of “chaplain” and “akhuns” in the army. Other restrictions in Kazakhstan increased government control over the activities of missionaries, the issue of religious literature, and charity work, despite protests from the liberal international community, civil society activists, human rights defenders of the Helsinki accords, and local human rights groups. Parliament urgently passed the final version of the law after the events in western Kazakhstan, where clashes broke out between police and militants. In September, during Parliament’s first session, President Nursultan Nazarbayev stated that the law was intended to “protect the country from extremists and not cut back on the freedom of religion.” According to the law:

− National-level Muslim organizations re entitled to activities such as religious training of clergy and the publication of literature;
− A change in jurisdiction alters the status of a preacher; that is, if a clergyman of a district religious organization moves into a neighboring district, he is considered a missionary;
− Young people cannot gain knowledge from informal missionaries:
Army recruits must undergo a special survey to identify their degree of religiosity;

Collective prayer is prohibited in prison, and the numbers of believers who were converted will be tracked (immediately after the law was enacted in the city of Atyrau, prosecutor sanctions closed the mosque at a local penal colony); and,

Pray in public institutions is prohibited.

The Criminal Code was also updated; in 2013, the new draft of the Criminal Code decreased the age of criminal liability from 16 to 14 as a response to the spread of radical ideologies, including those using the latest technology. The Article on financing and abetting terrorism was also completely redesigned. Violation of legislation on religious activity and associations in Kazakhstan starting from 2013 is regarded as a criminal offense. These and other measures aim to protect Kazakhstan’s spiritual security and ensure stable, internal politics.

The Turkish model of state-Islam relations has potential to be well-adapted to the Kyrgyz context. Additionally, young Kyrgyz citizens aspire to study in Turkish religious schools due to historical similarities between the two states, Turkish commitment to secular practices, high quality of education in Turkey, similarities between the Turkish and Kyrgyz languages, and, most importantly, geographical proximity and a relatively small travel expense. Additionally, graduates of Turkish universities clearly demonstrate secular views as opposed to graduates of Islamic schools in other countries, have a higher level of knowledge, westernized ideologies, and modern views on Islam; a large number of theologians also have PhDs. It should be noted that some of the experts in Kyrgyzstan, including the clergy themselves, who are familiar with the Turkish experience, propose to adopt the Turkish model of state-religious organization relations in Kyrgyzstan. Also, official-level experts propose to equate imams to officials in providing them with salaries and pensions after they retire.

The effective SIR model in Turkey is based on the following:

- The secular model of state-Islam relations in Turkey is a combination of secular and religious traditions, and a strong Hanafi madhhab. Turkish nationalism is the ideological foundation of the Turkish Republic embodied in the doctrine of Kemal Ataturk.

- To ensure societal sustainability and prevent conflicts, sects were prohibited at the legislative level. To prevent radicalization, a separate Islamic religious education system was created.

- Turkey implemented a clear development concept of the Muslim system of education; universities opened theological faculties with unified learning and teaching plans, quality assessment of graduates, and requirements for the educational process. The Office for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (Dianet Vakf) provides financial support for the clergy.

- Through historical experiences, Turkey understands that religious minorities are often self-sufficient. Therefore, the government provides assistance only upon request. Sponsorship and financial assistance may only be provided by Turkish citizens; foreigners are not allowed to participate in the activities of minority religious groups as the government believes that imported funds impose foreign ideology.
Hajj in Turkey is not only a religious, but also an economic process organized by the Dianet, requiring participants to understand not only Islam, but also the Islamic economy.

As for the lessons learned from state-Islam relations in Pakistan, the following shall be avoided in Kyrgyzstan:

- Any tension on the external borders is unacceptable, including using Islamic slogans to influence foreign policy as is the case in Pakistan, which became the center of terrorism and extremism. The age old Indo-Pakistani conflict is exacerbated by religious enmity between the two nations.
- Religious education should not be the prerogative of religious organizations. In Pakistan, many Islamic schools remain uncontrolled. Graduates of jihadist madrassas out of state jurisdiction have joined other extremists in Syria, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Jammu, and Kashmir.
- The state should monitor the activities of religious communities. Pakistani radical terrorist organization Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and others are involved in the activities of the International Islamic Front for Jihad of Osama bin Laden as part of Al Qaeda.
- The actual responsibility for official Islam in Pakistan lies on political parties in the Pakistani Parliament, but they are threatened by extremists and corrupt, their authority discredited, and they indulge religious lobby.
- A deeply rooted feudal culture with a weak political system requires reliance on the army or religious fundamentalists.
- Foreigners should be prohibited from establishing Islamic schools. The state must require parties to submit information regarding the origin of funds used to establish religious schools. The import of foreign money indicates the imposition of foreign ideology.
- Tablighi Jamaat's activities in Pakistan further suppress marginalized people within low socio-economic levels as a form of population control.

State-Religion Relations in the Republic of Indonesia can be summarized as follows:

- Indonesia is a secular state where the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Simultaneously, a 1965 legislation, grants special state protected status to the country’s six major religions - Islam (88%), Protestantism (5.7%), Roman Catholicism (3%), Hinduism (2%), Buddhism (1%), Confucianism (1%) – while allowing citizens to practice other religions.
- Some indigenous population living in areas least affected by civilization, especially in Kalimantan, New Guinea, Sulawesi, and the Moluccas, professes archaic forms of religion, and traditional indigenous beliefs persist in varying degrees in other parts of the country.
- Peaceful, conflict-free Indonesian Sunnis and Shiites of about 1 million people live primarily on the Java Island, and demonstrate a unique coexistence of Shiite and Sunni Muslims.
- In 2011, the Sunni-Shiite Theological Council was established to strengthen mutual understanding and formalize dialogue between Sunnis and Shiites.
- The Shiite community, Ahmadiyyas, and local Islamic groups support local traditions and local religious beliefs.
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- The six officially recognized religions and their relations are built on the three principles of harmony: 1. interreligious and interfaith harmony; 2. religious harmony; 3. state-religious harmony.
- Atheistic religion is officially banned, as is interfaith marriage; people practicing different religions must leave the country to get married.
- In Indonesia, the state ideology Panch Sheela Yaz Kindi unites Indonesian society.
- Interfaith dialogue in Indonesia is a powerful social presence. There is a temple in Indonesia with a mosque in one corner and a church in another.

Before becoming a model of religious freedom, **Norway** had numerous Constitutional religious restrictions, gradually abolished over a hundred years. Norway became a secular state in 2012 when Protestant Lutheranism, the state religion, was separated from the state. Since 1969, the government has provided financial assistance to registered religious and civic organizations. The clergy in Norway is trained in theological faculties of universities and in missionary and theological schools. Men and women can become members of the clergy. Norway’s extensive history of inter-religious dialogue with various religious communities has strengthened its current active cooperation during forums and meetings. The Norwegian Humanist Association is considered to be the largest non-governmental organization offering its members a humanistic alternative to Christian lifecycle rituals through, for example, a civilian confirmation program. The Association is also actively involved in the debate on alternatives to Christian religious education.

Other world religions, mainly Islam, have begun to play an increasingly important role in Norwegian society in the past few decades. There are about 55-65,000 Muslims, primarily Shiites, in Norway, and about 6,000 Buddhists, most from Vietnam. The number of officially registered Hindus is about 1,500, and the Jewish community, founded over 100 years ago, is currently made up of around 1,000 people.

The issue most pressing for religious minorities is religious education in schools. The Norwegian state church requires that the foundations of Christianity are taught in all public schools; however, a number of schools opened recently teach alternative doctrines.

The Israeli state-religion experience can be described as follows:
- Active religious councils are present in municipal and village councils;
- The Ministry of Religious Affairs supports not only the religious majority, but also creates agreeable conditions for religious minorities, such as reinstating the Muslim clergy and Sharia justice bodies, etc., and the corresponding payment of remuneration;
- Sharia courts are allowed to resolve issues related to citizens’ personal status including marriage, divorce, alimony, custody, etc. There are stringent requirements for the competence of judges.
- Strong interfaith cooperation and dialogue with public authorities;
- High staff training requirements of religious organizations;
- All religious and ethnic minorities endowed with the right to establish schools must do so with national professor and teachers instructing in their native language, and the curriculum must include special subjects related to the history and culture of the given religious and/or ethnic group;
Agreements were made with specific religious organizations on missionary activities, solving religious conflicts, working with vulnerable groups, etc.

Muslim organizations are independent from the state, and do not focus on external challenges of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This study of the international SIR experience led to the following conclusions:

A model of state-religion relations cannot be adopted without thorough reflection. Each state must develop its own model based on the inherent political, cultural, and traditional features found within a specific nation. For example, though almost all Turkish-speakers are Muslims, Islamic practice varies depending on geographical area and community preferences. Additionally, a nation’s cultural traditions must be taken into account though the Quran and Sunnah often determine much of believers’ lifestyles.

The Kyrgyz people have a wealth of experiences in a variety of religious beliefs practiced during different eras. Much of the loss of Islamic dynamism in Kyrgyzstan is connected with Kyrgyzstan’s past atheism; due to Kyrgyzstan’s history, the revival of Islam was rather passive and archaic. While Islam in Turkey is highly advanced and adapted to changing realities, the interaction of Islamic and Western values, democracy and Islamism, and Islamic and Turkic identity helped to establish an Islam of progress and development.

Scientific research will aid Kyrgyzstan revive its historical experiences such as the past teachings of Hanafi madhhab Islamic scholars in the Fergana Valley, which was the center of Central Asian Islam. Research will help Kyrgyzstan confront a variety of ideas and trends, and facilitate the understanding of the religion in the future.

Kyrgyzstan’s Development of State-Islam Relations: Finding Improvements

The analysis of the development of Islam in Kyrgyzstan led to the following conclusions:

1. Kyrgyzstan experienced two types of separation models of state-Islam relations: totalitarian atheistic during the Soviet era and liberalism after independence.

2. A low level of religiosity in the past, a weak Jadid movement, and over 70 years of atheism removed Kyrgyzstan from the intellectual space of the Muslim world, forcing Islamic revival to develop archaically, “not with Islam being a moving force, but a deterrent.”

3. The potential for conflict was enhanced by a contradictory trend of societal de-secularization in addition to a low level of socialization in most of the country, the state’s disengagement from the spiritual and ideological spheres, and the lack of experience in practicing a religion in a secular society.

4. The period under study encompassed the first wave of Islamization characterized by a “superficial” revival and restoration of Muslim culture, traditions, and education system. Due to an active search for mechanisms and modalities of participation in the country’s social and political processes, Muslim community established various types of Islamic human rights educational and socially oriented NGOs such as Adep Bashaty, Dil Murogu, Mutakallim, Islah, Teiba, Congress of the Muslims of Central Asia, etc. A second, future wave of Islamization will take into account the interests of the religious majority in the country’s socio-political life.
5. Islam’s spiritual and moral potential is a deterrent in the dissemination of harmful and dangerous societal phenomena such as spiritual crisis, alcoholism, discreditation of family values, etc., in times of cultural and historical changes in a secular state.

6. The high degree of individuals’ religiosity and increasing spirituality can be beneficial for society as a whole; however, this can lead to maladjustment as these individuals do not conform to the basic system of values.

Problems in State-Islam Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic:

- Misunderstandings within state-Islam relations;
- The lack of Islam as a concept in the Spiritual Administration of Muslims;
- An inadequate intellectual Islamic elite;
- The lack of experience of domestic Muslim clergy in a secular state;
- A cautious attitude toward secular values;
- A lack of mobilization, and financial, material, and technical resources;
- Problems within Islamic education;
- Religious conflicts on the basis of proselytism;
- Manifestations of religious extremism and terrorism;
- Participation of Kyrgyz Muslims in armed conflicts abroad.

Trends in the development of state-Islam relations:

1. Strengthening of secular-Islamic ideological contradictions and the “conflict of generations” in society;
2. Fragmentation of Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim community. There is an ideological struggle for hearts and minds among supporters of various Islamic movements. Though this may lead to increased religious literacy, it can also lead to confusion as discussions are at times led by self-taught individuals such as internet imams; previously, discussions on Aqida were conducted by a narrow circle of experts of Islam.
3. The politicization of Islam. Transnational groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HTI) aim to promote a caliphate by supporting Islamist infrastructure in the country. Despite being banned, HTI continues working with the population, proving effective in manipulating the conscious and behavior of the wider public. HTI’s promotion of so-called “pure Islam” is implemented not only in open society, but also in places of detention; the group also provides full or partial material support to prisoners’ families. As a result, convicts and their families are loyal, fanatic supporters of HTI, a particularly worrying factor upon their release.
4. An increase in the population’s religiosity is simultaneously accompanied by a superficial practice of Islam.
5. Radicalization of a part of the population. The popularity of radical Islam in the country is rooted not so much in the penetration of extremist ideologies and ineffective prevention measures, but rather on socio-economic grounds: poor living standards, a corrupt and arbitrary bureaucracy, mushrooming poverty, deprivation, and consequently, social and cultural regression.
6. Attempts of some officials and politicians to use Islam for their mercantile interests.
7. The growing influence of negative socio-political factors on SAMK activities.
8. The internal mobilization of the Muslim community.

The International Experience of State-Islam Relations: Lessons for Kyrgyzstan
From the above findings, we will now identify lessons for Kyrgyzstan in order to adequately answer the question, “How should an effective relationship between the state and religion be built in a secular society?”

In order to accomplish this, we must first understand the nature of a secular state, which is often equated with an atheist state. Recent years have seen an ongoing, domestic debate at roundtables and conferences over the definition of secularism and the place and role of religion. However, the reference to the secular state defines only the general parameters of state-religion relations. Despite the popularity of secularism in the modern world, it is understood differently in each country. It can have various manifestations, interpretations, and practices, depending on historical, cultural, political, and ideological, factors, among others.

Despite the multicriteriality of secularism, the following criteria are the most common:

1. The lack of an official state religion;
2. No religion is recognized as binding or preferred;
3. Religious canons are not sources of law;
4. The state system of education is secular in nature and does not aim to form a specific religious attitude;
5. Freedom of conscience and choice, and the free spread of religious belief are essential, and the state and private individuals have no right to intervene.

The state should only perform a servicing function in a democratic, secular society, with the interests of citizens are primary.

Based on international experiences, we will try to predict the prospects of building a new model of state-religion relations in Kyrgyzstan.

Theoretically, there are three main models of state-religion relations:

- Separation;
- Authoritarian;
- Partnership or mutual cooperation.

The use of these classifications in the Kyrgyz context allows for the conclusion that we have experienced two extreme separation models: A totalitarian-atheist model under the Soviet regime, and liberal democracy of sovereign Kyrgyzstan. In both models, state and religion existed independently of one another.

In case of the separation model, the state and religious organizations are independent of each other; however, they have opposite parameters in different political directions.

Under Soviet rule, the discriminatory law On Freedom of Conscience adopted by Stalin was in force until 1990 and prevented practitioners from living according to their conscience. In autumn 1990, the law On Freedom of Religion was passed. Though it was far from perfect, it endowed citizens with the right to believe in God. In December 1991, sovereign Kyrgyzstan’s policy-makers adopted the law On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations.

Despite the USSR de jure declaration of freedom of conscience and religion, the government still promoted only an atheistic ideology. States did not allow religion to
become part of social and political life, and even attempted to eradicate it from the culture, consciousness, traditions, customs, and rituals of daily life.

Simply speaking, the government built a blank wall between the state and religion; faith was suppressed by the pressure of the Soviet atheist ideology and religion was forcefully de-legitimized. In a figurative, widespread expression of Marxism, religion was considered the “opiate of the masses” and the lot of the uneducated.

The state also strictly controlled the clergy and prosecuted even the slightest commitment to religion; if a person was a clergy member, he/she was subjected to ostracism or a worse repression. The state itself did not provide any assistance to religious organizations and prohibited them from gaining funds. Religious organizations mandated to only address the populations’ religious needs, and their religious activities in existing mosques served merely as propaganda of CPSU and USSR policies.

However, the government was unable to completely eradicate religion: Muslim rites such as “azan chakryruu” (giving an individual a Muslim name), “sunnat” (circumcision), “nikeh” (wedding), and “janaza” (funeral prayer) were everyday aspects of all citizens, even members of the Communist Party.

As the struggle of the Soviet power with religion was not fully a struggle of an atheist ideology with a religious one, Communism was increasingly considered an artificial secular religion that did not allow any dissent. This explains the fact that Kyrgyzstan’s liberalization in the post-Soviet period resulted in religious pluralism.

Kyrgyzstan made the leap from complete prohibition of religion under the Soviet system to the other extreme of universal freedom of religious consciousness in the 90s. Sovereign Kyrgyzstan’s Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and religion; all legislation relevant under this category was brought in line with international norms. The collapse of the atheist ideology led to a rapid growth of religious sites and organizations, educational institutions, centers and foundations, and legalization.

At the same time, religion and the state continued to exist separately from each other; the state did not interfere with the development of religious processes, even those which were destructive. No other country in the world has ever had full religious freedom. Therefore, democratic transformation contributed to the development of religious freedom in Kyrgyzstan, resulting in a separation model of SIR recognized as the most favorable for religious organizations in the former Soviet Central Asian region by foreign experts.

There have been negative trends threatening societal stability; the state did not resolve any issues of religious significance, leading to numerous conflicts. In the context of this socio-economic crisis, political instability and amorphous state institutions, and the lack of state ideology, the state faced problems related not only to the activities of banned Islamic political parties and movements, but also their ideological preferences, leading to inter-community opposition on religious grounds due to narrow interpretations of Islam.

Despite a strong desire to solve a large number of problems in the Muslim community on its own, the SAMK was unable due to a lack of human and material resources. Failures to resolve the state-religion relation problems became increasingly obvious,
and societal structures began to regress away from civilized development. Thus, the separate existence of the state and religion reaped no benefits, an admittance owned by authorities through decisions of the Defense Council. Any contradictions in a democratic society must be addressed by improving the legal framework, but not through restrictions.

The authoritarian model, in turn, can function in both a dictatorship and a democracy. In authoritarian states in which leaders recognize religious values, there is an attempt to subordinate religion to ideological interests. In democratic countries, religion sometimes also faces strong pressure from authorities, especially in cases where the clergy receive government salaries.

The cooperation model of state-religion relations virtually does not depend on the political structure of society, and the state and religion are equal partners. In accordance with the contract (law) on social partnership, they may agree on mutual support, rights, and responsibilities. If the state has only one Church, no jarring issues will ever arise. The challenge would be to not violate the rights of minority religious groups, and comply with democratic principles. The main feature of the cooperation model is a bilateral legal regulation under the Constitution and legislation, and agreements and arrangements with religious organizations within the law.

The cooperative relationship implies protection of main confessions, and the preservation of religious minorities’ basic civil rights. Major religions have privileges (wages, benefits, etc.) as the government delegates some power to them within social services such as hospitals, orphanages, and children's homes. Denominations that do not have such agreements with the state cannot conduct extensive missionary work. No questionable religious group with activities related to mental or parapsychic phenomena, curative effects, or the spread of philosophical, humanistic or spiritualistic values can be registered as a religious organization.

However, each state can resolve this issue utilizing their unique historical, traditional, cultural and civilizational specificities. A differentiated system allows the state and religious organizations to collaborate based on democratic principles. Vitally, each of the above models is presented here in a simplified form; in reality, each model can be made up of many intricate layers.

Thus, the model of mutual cooperation is the most appropriate for Kyrgyzstan. The interaction between the state and religious organizations is based on contracts (agreements) on cooperation, establishing mutual rights and obligations.

In accordance with the law, a secular state must implement the democratic principle of freedom of conscience by clearly defining the state and religious organizations’ jurisdiction and functions. The state creates the legal framework of religious organizations’ activities and should not interfere in religious life; religious organizations, in turn, are required to comply with legal regulations. This makes the state-confessional relations harmonious and creates a balance between religious and secular life.

It should be noted that the liberal, Western standards of religious freedom took much time to evolve into its current form, partly due to the understanding of national interests in a particular historical period. For example, Norway, which we visited with a Kyrgyz delegation to learn from the experience of religious relations, also imposed numerous
religious restrictions before becoming a model of religious freedom. The 1814 Constitution established restrictions on religion, which were abolished gradually over more than a century: In 1845, the ban on religious sectarianism was lifted; in 1854, a ban on Jews living in Norway was dissolved; in 1878, the requirement for civil servants to be Lutherans was removed; in 1897, Catholic monastic orders were allowed, with the exception of the Jesuits having obtained this right only in 1956; in 1964, Article 2 of the Constitution was amended, guaranteeing full freedom of religion in Norway.

Thus, the liberal standard of religious freedom encompassing the freedom of conscience and the separation of religious institutions from the state has a field of application depending on the situation, time, and place. The basis for the formation of an ideal model of state-church relations was B. Chicherin’s thesis: “Liberal measures and strong power.”

**Practical Recommendations for Improving State-Islam Relations in Kyrgyzstan**

- Change the model of state-Islam relations in the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Improve religious legislation;
- Strengthen the role of state authorities in regulating Islamic religious organizations in order to ensure the protection of public order, spiritual security, territorial integrity, and constitutional order from religious extremism;
- Reform the SAMK by making amendments to the Charter, providing financial support to pay wages to clergy, granting the right to license religious educational institutions, and ensuring organized travels to foreign Islamic schools;
- Allocate land for proselyte cemeteries;
- Accumulate financial flow from abroad in the public foundation “Yiman” to order to develop Islamic culture and education.
- Reform the religious education system and introduce religious studies as a course into general and higher education.

This will lead to cooperation between the state and religious organizations based on cooperative contracts (agreements), establishing mutual rights and obligations.

The state must establish interfaith and state-confessional dialogues. Only adequate state-religion relations can serve as a stabilizing factor in the socio-political life of the country; otherwise, relations will be manipulated by stakeholders feeding harmful self-interests. Youth’s growing religiosity must be harnessed as a powerful, creative force; if mismanaged, this potential can become destructive. The official Islam, Hanafi Madhhab of Maturidi Aqidah, should be strengthened while combining a high level of religious literacy with high quality secular education. The state must deal with conditions that cause radicalization, and establish a sound economic basis making citizens apolitical and immune to extreme ideas.

Studying experience of state-Islam relations in countries with significant Muslim population led to the following recommendations in forming our own national model of the state-Islam relations, taking into account socio-political and economic realities and traditional, and cultural and mental features of our society:

- State authority activities aimed at strengthening the positive involvement of Muslim communities in civil society life, political and economic processes, intensifying its impact on the lives of local communities should make
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

Islam socially oriented. These activities should cover three main areas: a) encouraging economic activity, b) implementing target-oriented state programs, and c) adequate information policy;

- SAMK should monitor mosques and namazkanas (oratory premises) in prisons and send imams with training-based lectures for prisoners;
- To solve numerous problems in Kyrgyz Islamic education, it is necessary to draft a law and concept on religious education and adopt amendments to the law on education allowing religious universities to accredit their educational programs to state standards;
- A state-confessional council should be established consisting of religious and political leaders and civil society representatives to make decisions in the field of inter-religious cooperation and law-making;
- To solve numerous problems with a particular religious organization, bilateral state-confessional councils consisting of a mixed composition under the State Commission on Religious Affairs must be used through signing of bilateral agreements on social partnership;
- Activities of religious organizations operating in the Kyrgyz Republic should take into account the cultural and historical foundations and spiritual traditions of the people of Kyrgyzstan;
- The official Islam - Sunni Hanafi domestic theological school of Islam – should be supported;
- A positive image of Islam should be formed along with the development of intellectual Islamic thought;
- Models of social partnership and cooperation with religious organizations should be developed;
- The clergy and religious leaders should be supported and rewarded for their special contribution to harmonizing state-religion, interfaith and interethnic relations, social partnership, and promoting patriotism;
- To prevent extremism, Islamic education should be consistently and systematically implemented.
- Religious organizations’ financial and economic activities, and foreign investments for religious organizations, should be transparent, centralized, and accountable to the state;
- Cooperation among government agencies, civil society, the media, and religious organizations in combating extremism should be strengthened;
- State structures, the academic community, and religious organization representatives should develop algorithms and methodologies for religious and theological examination;
- The establishment of an interdepartmental commission combating extremism through information sharing should be considered.

Governmental structures’ interaction with religious organizations is most successfully implemented in social and cultural spheres where political and ideological motives are of secondary importance. This cooperation develops more effectively in the presence of official contractual obligations. Time has shown that a positive effect on church-state relations can be expected only if all stakeholders consolidate their efforts in all areas and at all levels of both secular and spiritual power.

In modern Kyrgyzstan, we have seen the formation of a new model of religious policy. Positive tendencies in inter-confessional and state-religion relations will be stronger if
the state is able to reject the inertia of past decades during which religion was considered a hindrance to state interests.

Church-state relations can be a positive factor in internal, interethnic state policy, if it not only declares the freedom of conscience and religion, but also guarantees and protects this constitutional principle; removes every factor that could lead to division and conflict on religious grounds; ensures equal conditions for meeting the spiritual needs of believers and unbelievers; rejects the attempts of indoctrination of relations between the state and religions; and refuses the temptation to “use” religious organizations for pragmatic purposes within the country and abroad.
Introduction. Organizational Structure of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan

The collapse of the Soviet Union and a liberal policy declared by the Kyrgyz Republic created favorable conditions for religious pluralism in the country. Folk Islam also developed during the 70 years and became a valuable and significant sector of social and political life of the country. Open borders made it possible for foreign missionaries to promote their ideas in the country, and for Kyrgyz citizens to secure education and improve their religious literacy abroad, especially in Muslim countries. A dynamic revival of spiritual and national heritage, the Islamic value system, and the connection with external Islamic cultural and study centers resulted in the emergence of a new active social class – the class of believers.

However, these tendencies are not limited by mere constructive consequences. Middle East religious education center graduates returned to the country with an understanding of host countries’ Islam, which includes religious ethnic ideas, legal regulations, customs, and cultural traditions of a particular country and region. Some imply radical Islamic political ideology. As a result, the Kyrgyz Muslim Ummah was represented by
diverse ideological religious movements and jamaats, sometimes confronting and competing with each other.

At the same time, the presence of both moderate and radical Islamic movements, including extremism and terrorism increases year by year. In the context of the International Security Assistance Forces withdrawal from Afghanistan, as well as the shutdown of the Transit Center in Kyrgyzstan in 2014, a number of experts forecast activation of Islamic radical groups in Central Asia. Experts predict that Islamization of the population will increase during government failures to respond adequately to the circumstances, which, in turn, will bring interfaith and sectarian violence between radical Islamic groups, representatives of moderate Muslims, and other religious movements.

At the same time, an unstable political situation, youth marginalization, popularity of internet videos made in conflict zones covering scenes of violence in Syria or outreach campaigns directed towards believers, and domestic socio-economic problems adversely affecting the population create conditions for radicalization and the export of Kyrgyz citizens to Syria and Afghanistan.

This demonstrates the increased role of the SAMK, the traditional regulator of Muslim communities, as a dialogue platform able to unite Kyrgyzstan’s Muslims.

The goal of the study is to scrutinize the Muftiyat as an institute representing the Muslim community, and its potential as an interfaith dialog platform.

Objectives:

1. Assess the Muftiyat’s organizational potential as an institute of Muslim spiritual conscience, structure, human resources, intercommunications, and ability to optimize operation.
2. Assess the government’s internal and external communications with the Muslim community other denominations and ethnic groups.
3. Identify risks and threats to dialogues with non-traditional Islamic movements, groups, and communities.

Normative legal documents provided by the SAMK; relevant Kyrgyz legislation including the law “On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations,” the National Sustainable Development Strategy, and the Concept of the State Policy in Religious Sphere; similar researches in this area; informational materials including mass media publications; interviews with experts, workers, SAMK clergy and its subdivisions; interviews with representatives of non-Muslim religious organizations, workers of relevant government institutions, and leaders of religious and ethnic groups served as the study’s basis.

The Structure of Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim Community

Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim community is non-uniform, consisting of various ethno-religious, social, and age groups. There are four categories of religious organizations and communities depending on their functions¹: official religious authority represented by SAMK and its structural subdivisions; education institutions (madrasas, institutes, theological faculties in secular universities, and other religious education centers and institutions); non-governmental organizations and foundations, foreign charitable and

¹ Classification developed by K. Malikov.
humanitarian organizations; and informal movements, non-official communities, and their leaders existing and acting without legal status in Kyrgyz territory.

The SAMK is the largest centralized religious organization in Kyrgyzstan representing the assembly of various Muslim institutions in the country.

Before the Kyrgyz Republic became independent, Islamic organizations of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic was a subordinate of the Central Asian Spiritual Administration of Muslims (CASAM), initiated by the Peoples’ Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union in 1944, which coordinated the activities of Muslim communities of Central Asia. Most of Muslims who joined the CASAM were Hanafis. CASAM Headquarters was situated in Tashkent, and its chairperson was given the spiritual title of mufti. All CASAM chairpersons were Uzbek. Basically, the State Commission for Religious Affairs (SCRA) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics considered CASAM as the main Muslim structure of the country, as the majority of the Muslim community, and as having two subordinate educational institutes: the Bukhara Middle Madrasa “Mir-i Arab” and the Tashkent Islamic Institute. In 1992, CASAM ceased to exist and was divided into Post Soviet Republics Muftiyats.

Established in 1993, the SAMK was based on the former CASAM kaziyat. Kyrgyzstan’s first mufti was elected during the first Muslim Kurultai in 1996. More than ten muftis held this position since independence. According to SCRA data, 2,460 Islamic organizations and religious sites, including 9 regional kaziyats, 10 Islamic institutes, 67 madrasas, and 69 other Islamic associations and organizations are under the SAMK as of 2014. Most of the Muslim organizations in the Republic are situated in Osh (730) and Jalal-Abad (538) regions. According to SCRA, approximately 400 mosques have no registration mostly because the buildings do not comply with construction, technical, and other requirements. Statistics between the SCRA and SAMK vary; interviewers emphasized that the Muftiyat does not implement a systematic registration of religious organizations entering SAMK. For this reason, there is no common database. It should be noted that a considerable and dynamic increase in the number of Islamic religious organizations in the country is just a quantitative indicator, while qualitative indicators such as the growth of religiousness and religious literacy are negligible.

The Structure of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan

According to the Charter, SAMK’s main objectives are:

1. To observe the Kyrgyz Republic’s interests, and strengthen statehood.
2. To provide the religious and spiritual needs and demands of Muslims living in the Kyrgyz Republic.
3. To promote Islam and promote Sharia law.
4. To preserve societal peace and accord.

SAMK governing bodies include:

- Kurultai of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan;
- Council of Ulemas (21 persons);
- Muftiyat.

Functional responsibilities of SAMK governing bodies:
Kurultai: consideration of relevant issues/problems of Islamic development and provision of solutions; determination of the SAMK’s main objectives and fields of concern; approval of the Charter; assessment of the performance of the Council of Ulemas, etc. The Kurultai is convened every three years.

Council of Ulemas: enforcing the decisions of the Kurultai; controlling the Muftiyat and mufti activities; nominating and approving muftis; approving the annual report and controlling its fulfillment; determining the date for Orozo Ait and Kurban Ait celebrations; determining the time for Namaz prayers and topics for Friday Khutbas. The Council of Ulemas is convened once a month.

Currently, SAMK structure includes:
1) Muftiyat;
2) Regional and city-based (Bishkek, Osh) kaziyats.
3) Urban and district imam-khatibs.
4) Rural/local mosques, prayer rooms/namazkanas.

As an executive SAMK body, the Muftiyat works in cooperation with the state and local authorities in ensuring religious security. It is guided by the regulations of the Sunni Islam, Maturidi Aqidah, and the Hanafi Madhab. It is responsible for maintaining the unity of Muslim institutions, Sunni Madhhabs, and Muslim theological scientists in Kyrgyzstan, and for improvement of the quality of Islamic education, preservation of spiritual values, the prevention of interfaith and sectarian conflicts, and counteractions to radical movements.

The Muftiyat is ruled by mufti elected among Council of Ulemas members (with one third of votes) in consultation with state authorities and approved by the Kurultai for a three year period.

Kaziyats are structured regional units of the Muftiyat, officially representing the SAMK and working with local authorities. They implement the Muftiyat’s goals, objectives, orders, and prescriptions at the local level. They also provide assistance for local authorities in the implementation of state programs related to kaziyat activities. Kaziyats are ruled by kazis appointed by the mufti in consultation with local authorities. The structure and composition of kaziyats are proposed by a kazi and approved by the mufti. The kazis, in turn, appoint imam-khatibs of administrative and territorial units and imam-khatibs of mosques in consultation with local authorities. Every kazi submits annual and quarterly reports to the mufti.

According to the SAMK Charter, mosques and namazkanas operate in accordance with regulations on mosques and namazkanas which are currently being finalized. These units are headed by senior imam-khatibs and imams, and act based on the SAMK’s decisions and instructions.

The SAMK structure includes:
1. Islamic educational institutions (IEI) (Islamic universities, institutes, madrasas, etc.)
2. Economic and financial organizations.
3. Charitable organizations (foundations, nursing homes, children’s homes, etc.)
Islamic educational institutions, all of which are private, are part of the SAMK structure. They operate in accordance with the SAMK Charter and education programs. Kazis nominate all educational institution heads.

In the current context of the draft law “On Religious Education and Religious Educational Institutions” being developed, the Department of SAMK for Islamic Educational Institutions (IEI) is developing a unified educational standard for higher and secondary Islamic educational institutions. All Islamic educational institutions teach using individual curricula that are criticized for unilateral viewpoints and absence of secular disciplines aiming to broaden students’ knowledge of secular life.

The SAMK’s objective on Islamic education include: developing the Islamic education system to meet modern requirements, improving the quality of Islamic education, developing religious culture, forming a religious worldview for youth, strengthening public tolerance, training qualified theological personnel, and developing religious and secular education.

Every religious organization that joins SAMK should be registered with the Department of Justice and SCRA, and should have a charter. A sample charter is provided by the Muftiyat.

Administrative System of the Muftiyat (from the presentation of the mufti)

Deputy Mufti 1 heads the Education Department, Department for Dawat, and Department for Mosques. Deputy Mufti 2 is responsible for Umrah and Hajj, external relations, and youth. The Head of Administration deals with the Press Department, News Department, Secretariat, Accounting Department, Construction Department, and General Services Department.

According to the SAMK’s official website, the SAMK consists of the Fatwa, Dawat, Halal Committee\(^2\), Youth and Women, Madrasa and Education, Development of Islamic

\(^2\) Nowadays, the Halal Committee became an independent center outside the Muftiyat.
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

Economy, Mosques and Construction, Secretariat (ish bashkarmalygy) and Legal Departments.

The Department for Women and Youth was dismantled in the course of reforms and currently freelances. This department’s activities were implemented in close cooperation with the “Muttakalim,” a progressive women’s community which holds a well-developed network of representative offices in different regions of the country.

Altogether, 8,000 people are involved in SAMK operations, and the Muftiyat’s Administration employs 35-40 people\(^3\). For comparison, the SAMK employed just 15 people during a former mufti, Murataly ajy Jumanov’s time in office.

**Financing**

The SAMK’s sources of funding include voluntary donations (Orozo Fitr, Fitran, Zakat, and donations from pilgrims) from individuals and international organizations and revenues from publishing religious literature. The SAMK’s main source of funding is voluntary donations from pilgrims, amounting to over USD 900,000 – 1,000,000.

The SAMK provides salaries to Muftiyat staff, kazis, imam-Khatibs, and educational institute workers. Imams do not receive a salary\(^4\).

Interviewers emphasized that the loss of public trust has resulted in a continuous decrease in material and financial assistance for the Muftiyat. Believers contribute a required minimum (Zakat) only. They also noted that some non-government, Muslim organizations receive greater financial support from local people and international organizations due to their social activities and good reputation.

**Interactions with internal, external, interfaith, with government authorities, non-traditional, non-radical, and radical religious groups**

The SAMK’s national, regional and local level structural subdivisions presume a complex communication system. Studying the interactions between them has revealed the following problems:

1. **Language** – virtually all instructions, orders, and Fatwas from the Muftiyat are issued in Kyrgyz language, making it difficult to execute them in mosques with Russian, Dungan, and Uzbek speaking auditory. This brings certain risks and leaves these religious organizations and institutions beyond SAMK influence.
2. The immediate intermediaries between mosque imams and the Muftiyat are senior imam-khatibs who convene on a monthly basis. According to some imams, meetings are irregular; if they do not meet systematically, mosque imams and other local SAMK representatives do not receive instructions in a timely manner.

**Interactions between religious jamaats**

\(^3\) Information on the number of workers in SAMK is contradictory in different sources - from 7 to 10 thousand people. According to the data provided directly by SAMK, they have approximately 8 thousand employees in the country.

\(^4\) http://rus.azattyk.org/content/kyrgyzstan_religion_budget/24804856.html
Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim community is represented by various jamaats within Sunni Islam. In particular, experts note the following jamaats: the Tablighi Jamaat, Nurdjular, socio-economic movement Hizmet, Sulaymaniyah, and moderate Salafism. There are also regional (north and east) and ethnic divisions.

Various experts and religious leaders hold different assessments of the facts. Some note that the diversity of jamaats has an important positive social function in particular segments of the population. For example, dawatchis work effectively in regions and have their own social base. Nurdjular is popular among secular segments of the population and urban youth. Moderate Salafism-Wahhabism has its social base in Russian speaking, urban youth. Sufism is well spread among intellectuals and conformists. These movements are identical to Kyrgyzstan’s traditional Islam according to their doctrines (Maturidia), Madhhab (Hanafi), and the influence of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order.

Experts’ rejection of these movements is mostly due to a perception that these movements are external threats attempting to influence Kyrgyz Muslims. Society has criticized the shallow knowledge, “non-traditional” clothing, and violation of Dawat’s principles by some jamaats. Some of the movements developed into radicalization, and have been known as violent extremists and terrorists. Among other causes, religious illiteracy, availability of questionable information sources on the Internet, the lack of qualified personnel in religious organizations and law enforcement authorities have served to exacerbate the issue.

Additionally, the Ummah is divided based on religious and ethnic grounds. Regional division into the North and the South reflect societal attitudes. Traditional perception of the South as being more religious has led to almost all heads of regional Muslim communities coming from the Southern regions. Meanwhile, the growth of religious self-identity in the Northern part of the country has resulted in an increase of kaziyats, mosques, madrasas, and Muftiyat administration representatives from the North. According to experts, this ultimately resulted in the formation of regional groups attempting to designate their nominee as a mufti.

An additional particularity of the Ummah is a division on ethnic grounds leading to an unofficial introversion of Muslim communities, associated with the establishment of mosques of Muslim ethnic minorities in areas with large populations of such minorities, named after these ethnic groups, including but not limited to Uzbek, Uighur, and Dungan mosques. This division’s visibility is also conditioned by a liturgy language and cultural and national background.

These groups’ interactions are complex in virtue of mutual distrust and circumspection, especially after the tragic 2010 Osh events. Yet, it should be noted that there are no open conflicts or oppositions due to a supranational nature of Islam and its principles of tolerance. Individual jamaat representatives have shown that they are able to interact effectively if they have well-defined objectives and conditions.

However, this internal diversity of the Muslim Ummah creates certain difficulties in inter-dominance problem-solving as well in counteraction to external challenges. Islamic

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6 The same source. P.7.
principles regulating the relations within the Muslim community are the basis for integration; therefore, various risks stem from the introversion of some communities.

Solutions to this problem cannot be found in violent integration, but rather in quotas for regional representative units, and involvement of other ethnic groups and jamaats in decision-making processes, the Muftiyat, and its subdivisions' work. This will contribute to inter-community integration and enhance the status and the authority of the Muslim Ummah in resolving social and ethno-denomination problems.

The most popular Islamic legal school in Kyrgyzstan, as mentioned, is Hanafism. The second largest school by the number of adherents is the Shafi'i school followed by a particular group of Caucasian people adhering to the Hanbali school. Maliki Madhhab remains nearly unrepresented in Kyrgyzstan, except by foreign citizens. All these madhhabas are recognized by SAMK as legal schools of Islam. Distinguishing the Hanafi Madhhab in the interest of government-denominational interaction is viable taking into consideration the will of the majority of followers. Experts’ opinion dictate that this distinction would not discriminate against other madhhabas as it is related to the resolution of the existing legal issues. Additionally, Shafi’i Madhhab religious leaders have noticed that they understand and share similar objectives with Hanafi Madhhab and do not see any barriers for continuous cooperation.

It is important to note that some SAMK members have expressed contradictory opinions. For example, at the March 15, 2014 roundtable, a SAMK member questioned the necessity of Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi’i, potentially resulting in tension, loss of efficiency in inter-denomination dialogue, and becoming an obstacle for the integration of Muslim Ummah.

External interactions

Interfaith interactions
The SAMK is the most valuable actor in Kyrgyzstan’s interfaith communications; additionally, experts also recognize the role of the Russian Orthodox Church, organizations of Evangelical Christian Baptists, other Christian denominations and other, smaller organizations. Traditionally, relations between the SAMK and the Russian Orthodox Church have been positive, mostly reasoned by neutral positions and not by an active interreligious dialogue. The dialogue between traditional and non-traditional religious movements was characterized as declaratory, mainly due to missionary activities and their consequences for the Kyrgyz population, such as burial problems. These problems make up the majority of potential drivers of conflict between Muslims and Christians.

It should be noted that SAMK’s interfaith dialogues were poorly developed, due to the lack of preparation of traditional organizations to accept growing religious diversity in the country. However, recent years have seen an increasing dynamics of interaction between SAMK and other religious organizations. This year marks the second year that SAMK has invited representatives of different confessions and international organizations operating in Kyrgyzstan to Iftar celebrations, demonstrating a high level of tolerance within SAMK’s senior management.

The Interfaith Council’s institutionalization and systemization of interfaith dialogue became a valuable development of interfaith relations. This Council unites religious
leaders of the main confessions of Kyrgyzstan including Islam, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Judaism, and Buddhism. It is a platform for intercultural and interfaith dialogue aiming to stabilize religious harmony. Within the Interfaith Council’s framework, religious leaders initiated the Code of Ethics for Missionary Activity. This organization also implemented a number of humanitarian projects targeting socially vulnerable population groups in order to resolve interfaith issues. Leaders of other confessions now recognize that the SAMK has a leading role in interfaith dialogue.

Interactions with government authorities

A close study of the SAMK Charter and activities has shown openness for cooperation with government authorities in implementing common tasks. The most active cooperation occurs with the Tenth Department of the Chief Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Committee for National Security in preventing religious extremism.

In recent years, the country’s media identified a number of discrepancies in relations between the State Commission for Religious Affairs and the SAMK. Interviewers also noted that, before 2010, the two cooperated effectively. Most experts believe that Hajj arrangements and establishment of institutions responsible for Hajj were issues between the two. Additionally, in 2011, there was open opposition between the Director of SCRA and the Muftiyat. The media widely reported on and discussed the situation, significantly discrediting both of institutions in the eyes of the public. Mutual distrust towards these two institutions still persists.

The previous analysis has shown that SAMK is being politicized. There is no universe perception of these processes among the members of the Muslim Ummah. A number of unofficial religious leaders are concerned by the state-religion convergence, as well as by the increasing influence of government bodies over the Muftiyat. They criticize the Muftiyat’s loss in position and status, its pandering to those in power, and its lack of investment in public interests. The most productive government-spiritual administration cooperation is seen at the local and district levels, and there is a degree of circumspection between the central authority and spiritual administration.

Interactions with non-traditional, radical religious groups

According to unofficial data, there are about 1,000 Shiites in Kyrgyzstan. Until recently, a public Islamic culture foundation, “Kausar,” operated in Bishkek. Currently, there is one Shi’ite mosque that is under official SAMK jurisdiction. Shi’ism is mainly taught by migrant workers, foreign students, visitors from Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, a range of Arabic countries, and Azerbaijan. Shi’ism in Kyrgyzstan is mainly represented by shiites-imamates and ismailis. There is weak interaction with shiites at local and national levels due to a lack of open conflict and practical need. Nevertheless, the official spiritual administration is concerned by the activities of the Aga-Khan Foundation and the construction of the University of Central Asia in Naryn, considering them as a possible expansion of Shi’ism in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, experts emphasize that the Aga-Khan Foundation has no religious objectives, especially as to the spread of Shi’ism in Central Asia, and pursues exclusively political and economic goals.

Ahmadis have operated in Kyrgyzstan since the beginning of 2000 and have reached about 1,000 followers. The process of registering the Ahmadiyya community has been
suspended for the moment. The Ahmadiyya community is not a radical movement; however, from the Sunni majority viewpoint and that of the official spiritual administration, this organization is destructive due to its potential to divide believers on theological and inter-confessional grounds. The SAMK refuses to conduct dialogue with this community, and opposes to its operation in Kyrgyzstan.

Quranists represent a new movement in Islam, recognizing the Quran as the only divine revelation and rejecting Sunnah and other sources. There is a great number of quranists in Kazakhstan. According to the information provided by the Muftiyat, quranist activities were registered in the Nookat District of the Osh Region. According to the SAMK and theologians, this community’s ideology is destructive and carries a direct threat to Islam in Kyrgyzstan. The SAMK also refuses to conduct dialogues with quranists, and oppose their activities in Kyrgyzstan. Some experts are of the opinion that quranist and ahmadis activities are tool used for the promotion of Western interests in Kyrgyzstan.

*Interactions with radical groups*

Currently, Kyrgyz courts prohibit the activities of Al-Qaeda, Taliban, East Turkestan Islamic Movement, Kurdistan People's Congress, East Turkestan Independence Movement, Hizb Ut-Tahrir, Egyptian Islamic Jihad (Islamic Jihad Union), Islamic Movement of Turkestan (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan), Zhajshul-Makhdi, Dzhund-Al-Halifat, Ansarulloh and At-Takfir-Val-Hidzhra, considering them radical and terrorist organizations. Of them, Hizb Ut-Tahrir and Jihadi-Takfirists are most active in Kyrgyzstan.

Experts, representatives of law enforcement authorities, and spiritual leaders note that an open dialogue with these organizations is undesirable. One of the functional responsibilities of law enforcement authorities is to tackle radical movements. The SAMK may engage in preventative measures through enlightenment, disclosing the ideological groundlessness of extremism, or by rehabilitating former radical members. Open dialogue between radical groups and official spiritual leaders presents risks of discrediting spiritual leaders and can potentially change participants’ religious preferences.

*Social activities*

The SAMK charter provides for assistance to children’s and nursing homes, and similar vulnerable groups such as the elderly, orphans, and the poor through financial and material support, including clothing and food. The SAMK also distributes financial aid among education institutions using Fitrana funds and organizes Ramadhan Iftars.

The Department for Women, until recently part of the SAMK, has displayed the most dynamic social activities. This department organized courses for women, social and charitable activities, visited and provided volunteers to hospitals and children’s homes, etc. Additionally, the Muftiyat actively cooperates in implementing various social and charitable programs with international organizations as USAID, Eurasia Foundation, Search for Common Ground, and others.

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Many Muslim NGOs such as Adep-Bashaty, Mutakkalim, Sumayyah, Dil Myurok, Waqf Al Islami, Sunnot, Assalam, and World Assembly of Muslim Youth conduct effective socio-humanitarian activities.

Studying the Muslim community’s social activities\(^8\) emphasizes that all legal organizations provide assistance to those in need without divisions across ethnic or confessional grounds. Various Muslim NGOs, as opposed to official mosques or Islamic educational institutions, are characterized as being most active in providing humanitarian, social, and charitable assistance. Based on the results of studying Salafi jamaats’ social activities, we can conclude that these groups do not go beyond intra-community participation in social processes. For example, Tablighi jamaat has no social program, though it acts as a rehabilitation center as a social stabilizer for different vulnerable social groups such as addicts, alcoholics, and former prisoners.\(^9\)

**Main problems and risks**

A key challenge, including structural subdivisions, related to the SAMK’s engagement as a dialogue platform is a lack of practice, skills, and experienced leaders of interfaith dialogue.

The SAMK, government authorities, local authorities, civil society institutions, and a number of experts understand the importance of interfaith dialogue in strengthening the potential to counteract violent extremism. However, the absence of a practice understanding of the process, as well as the underestimation of the importance of quality over quantity in interfaith cooperation may become a serious obstacle to Muslim Ummah integration. Accordingly, information and education campaigns require significant investments. At the same time, the lack of practice in interfaith dialogue may decelerate the integration process, but can also be an advantage allowing for effective integration which will reduce effects of previous negative practices.

In order to consolidate Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim Ummah, the SAMK must be represented by all genders, jamaats, ethnicities, and age groups.

Analysis of the SAMK’s composition indicated a variety of age groups, yet there are gender and ethnic imbalances. Interviewers emphasized an unfolding and increasing tendency of reduced ethnic representation in the Muftiyat, and the devolvement of the Department for Women. The latter is a serious failure of gender division within Islam. Additionally, the number of women in radical organizations has gradually increased, and interviewers expressed their concern over one jamaat’s dominance in the entire SAMK infrastructure.

Mosque imams and Friday khutbas’ potential to prevent extremism and counteract radicalization remains untapped. As people who directly work with the population, imams can exert a more powerful influence over public consciousness than the Muftiyat. Normally, imams are aware of the current situation, local problems and challenges, and have the skill set required to act as mediators. Furthermore, despite the public’s nominal religiousness, a significant number of men attend Friday namaz, making Friday khutba a unique resource. Imams who are informed about radical groups’ program documents,

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\(^9\) Ibid.
recruitment methods, and rhetoric may provide explanations through sermons in order to present arguments against radicalization.

The contents of Friday sermons should also include elements of tolerance, mutual respect, and interfaith and inter-ethnic tolerance, based on the Quran, Sunnah, and Islamic principles.

The weak management of the SAMK is also a significant issue. The SAMK lacks an effective administration and personnel policy, which has led to disruptions within the organization, and failures to implement recent reforms in addition to insubordination of various imams have created internal communication problems and ineffective financial management.

The SAMK also receives external pressure on appointing religious positions from groups lobbying for specific interests, resulting in the SAMK’s decreased potential to integrate the Muslim Ummah and as an effective tool in countering violent extremism.

The quality of spiritual personnel and ministers’ trainings leaves much to be desired. The low level of theological knowledge, especially of tolerance principles, mutual respect, and respect for diversity presented in the Quran and Sunnah has resulted in a high level of religious intolerance at interfaith and sectarian levels, distrust towards the Muftiyat among individual believers and the public, and weak counteraction to radical organizations.

Another important issue includes a deficiency of Islamic intelligence within the government, which orients itself on external projects rather than on national interests. All jamaats, movements, and groups present in the country narrowly define their interests on protecting the rights of their jamaat without considering the rights of all social groups. Ideological and legal contradictions between particular groups and jamaats have led to intolerance and opposition among believers, further exacerbated by third parties.

Additionally, there are situations in which the only working language is Kyrgyz. For the most part, the personnel are recruited on ethnic grounds; imams who are not Kyrgyz are shifted to secondary positions. When a less educated, but Kyrgyz speaking imam is appointed, the mosque attendance decreases drastically; the Muftiyat loses its authority and discontent among believers rises. Kyrgyz imams are at times required to read the khutbas in Kyrgyz, and mosque websites are also in Kyrgyz, resulting in other ethnic groups as well as Kyrgyz people who are not fluent in Kyrgyz to remain outside the sphere of influence.

According to the National Commission on the State Language, less than two thirds of the population amounting to 5.5 million people is fluent in Kyrgyz. People able to freely speak Kyrgyz are rare among ethnic minorities and in Bishkek; even highly educated ethnic Kyrgyz of the older generation are barely able to speak Kyrgyz. Russian continues to be the preferred language used by over 75 percent of the population. In Kyrgyzstan’s south, many people also speak Uzbek.

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As of 2013, According to the National Statistics Committee, as of 2013, 1, 105, 000 non-ethnic Kyrgyz citizens living in Kyrgyzstan can be categorized as Muslims, including Azerbaijanis (0.3 %), Dungans (1.1 %), Kazakhs (0.6 %), Tajiks (0.9 %), Tartars (0.5 %), Turks (0.7 %), Turkmens (0.1 %), Uzbek (14.4 %), Uighurs (0.9 % ), and a number of Caucasians. In general, Kyrgyz language is not native for 20 percent of the population and only a tenth are able to speak Kyrgyz.11

Though the SAMK has been active in interacting with mass media and television, the SAMK's channels of communicating with the media are underdeveloped. Mass media in Kyrgyzstan is the main tool for shaping the public opinion. The Muftiyat’s website provides a sufficient amount of information on SAMK activities; however, 40 percent of the website is passive with no important information on Friday khutbas topics, which could be posted in both Kyrgyz and Russian, and a lack of information on the Muftiyat, mufti, fatwa, and halal industry activities. Information on Islamic education institutions is also absent. A Questions and Answers section is included despite the lack of an online consultancy, and all significant information is given in Kyrgyz, excluding anyone speaking other languages and significantly reducing listenership.

In order to reform the SAMK, the audience should not be limited to Kyrgyz speakers. It is important to influence other ethnic groups living in the country, and as Islam is a supranational religion, sermons should be available in languages spoken by the people. As a human resources department is available to implement this reform, much depends on the administration's political will to improve.

Alternative information on SAMK activities found in mass media and information agencies is largely negative due to occasional financial and personnel scandals and criticism of inability to perform functions. Information on SAMK’s constructive work, initiatives, reforms, and charitable activities is poorly presented. This, in turn, adds to the mistrust and suspicion.

Conclusions and recommendations:

The study of the Muftiyat as an institute of the Muslim community and its potential for interfaith dialog in Kyrgyzstan has resulted in the following conclusions:

1. The SAMK is the only acceptable platform to consolidate Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim Ummah. This conclusion is based on the following:

   1. The SAMK is the largest Muslim organization in Kyrgyzstan, unifying within its structure all Islamic religious organizations, centers, foundations, institutions, and establishments.
   2. The organization has a legal platform and official government support.
   3. The SAMK has infrastructure at every level of the country (national, regional, district, and local).
   4. The organization possesses authoritative human resources; there are 8,000 people directly involved in the Muftiyat and its structural subdivisions, and jamaats employ at least 200 people.
   5. The SAMK has internal tools and mechanisms necessary to shape attitudes and opinions on certain issue through Friday khutbas (sermons), widespread system

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11 National Program on the Development of the State Language and Enhancing the Language Policy.
of long- and short-term Islamic education, individual work in the field, access to governmental authorities at national and local levels, etc.

II. The following problems should be resolved to increase the Muftiyat’s potential as a dialogue platform:

1. The Muslim community, once popular, is now on the decline due to an increase in confessional communities based on ethnicity and people converting to Christianity in which they find closer relations among the congregation and the ability to participate in the church and social ministries. People are also converting to online communities such as radical Salafism. These processes show that our society is willing to find a community that provides a clear identity, has comprehensible goals, protects followers from the rest of the world, avoids congregational and administrative pressure, and retains their individuality and anonymity.

2. The SAMK does not represent Kyrgyzstan’s diverse Muslim community in terms of administrative authorities or structural subdivisions. There is no proportional representation of Muslim movements and ethnic groups in the Muftiyat and there is no equal gender and district representation.

3. There is a high level of intolerance and mutual mistrust among representatives of different religious jamaats and other groups in the SAMK.

4. The SAMK’s authority level is low, and there are high levels of mistrust among potential participants to an interfaith dialogue, the population, and ordinary believers.

5. Muftiyat personnel are poorly trained.

The analysis held shows that the reason for the SAMK’s inefficiency and failure to use its potential is related to the quality of spiritual leaders comprising SAMK personnel. The main challenge of consolidation the Muslim Ummah is a human factor.

III. The current stage of the interfaith dialogue implies a conscious attitude, conceptual development, and institutionalization.

Presently, all three conditions are not met. All actors of the interfaith dialogue should understand a viable and practical necessity of such an activity. It is necessary to find “common denominators” such as most urgent and common problems. The format of the dialogue and its institutionalization must be determined.

A number of psychological principles should be observed in order to hold a constructive interfaith dialogue that would help find solutions satisfying and consolidating all parties.

- Principle of equal safety: not inflicting harm to partners.
- Principle of decentric orientation: seeking optimal solutions and not harming a case.
- Principle of adequacy of relevant material: not inflicting harm by intentional or non-intentional misinterpretations of ideas; high culture of perception and proper use of ideas.

The SAMK’s highest-priority challenge is to create favorable conditions for believers to observe religious canons in compliance with the regulation of Sunni Islam (Maturidía and Hanafi Madhhab).
One of the main goals is to strengthen relations among Muslim communities of different ethnic groups based on religious knowledge, common beliefs, and freedom from extremism and radicalism. Main spheres of SAMK activity are the dissemination of knowledge on Islam and counteracting radical ideological movements impersonating Islam.

**Recommendations**

**Problem #1**
Enhance religious leaders’ mediation skills, knowledge of Islamic tolerance and dialogue principles, and successful international interfaith dialogue practices in Islamic countries and countries with a Muslim majority.

**Problem #2**
- Ensure the participation of the following representatives of Islamic diversity in decision-making process and SAMK operations: jamaats, ethnic groups, gender and district representatives, as well as different age groups.

**Problem #3**
- Pay special attention to the quality of trainings for mosque imams reading khutbas. They should be good speakers, having a high-level of knowledge of religious movements, and should pay attention to radical organizations’ rhetoric and arguments used during recruitment processes in order to present counter-arguments in sermons.

**Problem #4**
Ensure transparency of accounting, SAMK activity, and Hajj arrangements through the website.
Develop the Muftiyat’s public relations strategy in order to enhance the Muftiyat’s image in the eyes of the population and believers, and restore trust.
Enhance information sharing in media on Muftiyat activities, reforms, and social and charitable projects.

**Problem # 5**
Enhance the SAMK’s development strategy, including a stage-by-stage implementation of objectives and clear positioning.
Develop a system of incentives (material and non-material) for personnel, and hold corporate seminars and trainings.
Develop a sequential personnel policy.
Enhance the Department for Women’s operations, increase its potential, and hold trainings on extremism prevention as analysis indicates that active recruitment into radical organizations is often conducted by women towards other women.

**Problems # 6, 7**
Organize a systematic advanced training for SAMK personnel on religious and state-confessional issues, with an emphasis on the local level.

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12 Recommendations are based on problems described on page 13 of the analysis.

13 One of the interviewers representing local level in SAMK’s infrastructure noticed that local imams and workers of madrasas are barely aware of the of rule-making activity regulating the religious sphere. In particular, he noted that workers at the local level are not aware of the state concept on the religious sphere, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, draft laws such as the law “On Religious Education”, etc. It was suggested to hold training on state-confessional relations and interaction with law enforcement authorities.
Organize interfaith and interethnic summer schools and courses for different age groups in Russian and Kyrgyz languages, including general themes such as Kyrgyzstan’s history, principles of tolerance, etc.

Problem #8, 9
Translate the SAMK website into Russian and Uzbek languages, and broaden the content, add Halal-certification, terms, required documents, services rendered by SAMK and district mosques, etc. In addition, make it possible to ask questions online for better interaction of believers.

Use official languages in addition to state languages for better communication.

Generally, integrating the Muslim community and establishing the SAMK as a dialogue platform should be conducted systematically and gradually in every structural subdivision including the Council of Ulemas and the Muftiyat with its administrative bodies at national, district, and local levels. Establishing the Interfaith Council as the sole counter extremist measure may lead to declaratively and the absence of any practical activities. It is recommended to implement this program in a number of stages with each stage lasting for several years.

According to Al Imran, “Responsibility of the titular ethnic group under the law, with other ethnicities having equal rights, should be incomparably higher. The only way to put statesmanship into Kyrgyz people minds is to act for the interests of the whole multinational state and to be a warrant of peace and harmony; this is what the Quran calls to do: There should be a group of people among you that will call to do good, command what is approved and prohibit what is reprehensible. It is them who will succeed.”

Training Modules

The SAMK is not just an ideological institute mandated to develop and preserve the nation’s moral spirit, but also includes over 2,500 religious institutions. Thus, the Muftiyat should possess more than mere theological knowledge; the senior management should have excellent governing skills, be able to interact with other workers, and represent the Muftiyat in an external environment at state, local, and international levels. To enhance the Muftiyat’s activities, trainings should be split into two directions: the first is the advanced training of personnel in religious and secular education and the formation of Islam-based tolerance; and the second is improving the effectiveness of the organization’s management and personnel.

- Organizing a seminar on the development and strengthening of a corporative culture and a sense of belonging to the Muslim community with common objectives and holding a facilitating training on interfaith dialogue and tolerance principles in Islam to reduce tensions between the Muftiyat workers adhering to various Muslim movements.
- Holding a seminar for the managers of departments, deputies muftis on effective personnel management, GR communication, representation skills, working with the media and diplomatic protocol.
- Training for all structural subdivisions on Muslim ethical behavior.

14 From the interview with K. Malikov.
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- Training for religious leaders on interactions with representatives of radical movements (argumentation and counter argumentation, rehabilitation), conflict management.
- Training for religious leaders on fund raising for satisfying the needs and the development of a particular organization.
- Training for Muslim women on prevention of violent extremism.
- Speechmaking classes for imams reading Friday khutbas.

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Interaction Mechanisms of State Structures and Islamic Organizations in Preventing Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic
Introduction

Experience of post-Soviet Central Asian states on interaction of state authorities and religious organizations in fighting extremism

As the utmost form of intolerance, extremism is the adherence to radical views and methods and the negation of compromise and dialogue, striving to achieve a set goals by any means, including aggression and violence. As a set of complex radical ideological settings and theoretical views, extremism is becoming a constant in current public life, destabilizing social and political spheres. As the negation of religious values and moral-ethic principles traditional for the public, religious extremism advocates for intolerance towards representatives of other religions or religious groups and creates a real threat against stability and social order. By refusing to accept the secular nature of the state and political system, certain antisocial religious sects are aggravating socio-political relations. Extremism concerns almost all states and directly influences national and international security in the present-day world. States must take extremism into account as a factor of public security when detailing internal and foreign policy.

Extremism and terrorism are arising as new challenges for Central Asian states, which have simultaneously been addressing with building statehood, political legitimacy, economic independence, and national integration since the 1990s. Within the frames of national opportunities and interests, each state is striving to respond to these challenges at the legislative and managerial levels.

The Kyrgyz government admits extremism to be a major threat against stability and law enforcement in comparison with drug trafficking, arms trade, and corruption. Legislation has been passed at the national level, including the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic On Counteraction of Extremist Activity on August 17, 2005 under № 150. Special state structures designated to address formation, coordination, and realization of state policy to counteract extremism has been established. Additionally, bilateral and multilateral agreements have been signed, and relevant international mechanisms agreed upon. There is a strong need to discuss reasons and forms of extremism in not the political community, but also in the scientific sphere.

The analysis indicates that researchers usually see this subject in a political context, while researches covering social, philosophical and psychological aspects of extremism are rare.

This research attempts to study the mutual relations between the Kyrgyz government and Muslim organizations as these organizations play a major role in counteracting extremism. Based on this objective, the study is tasked to understand the main methods, forms, and mechanisms of state structure and Muslim organization interactions in preventing violent extremism. Objectivity concepts, system-based structural analysis, quantitative methods, including content analysis of documents, and supervision were used during the pursuance of this research.

Recommendations on improving state-Muslim organization relations in the interest of solving issues are provided in the conclusion of the document.

Since the mid-1990s, significant extremist challenges have increased in the Central Asian region, with politically motivated Islamic groups playing a major role. In addition to a growth in Islamization, Islamic organizations that did not conceal their political aims appeared.
The activities of parties and movements like the Islamic Rebirth Party (IRP), Adolat movement, Islamic party of Uzbekistan, Hisb-ut Tahrir, and Islam lashkarlari (Islam's solders) forced Central Asian states to strengthen their religious policies, creating special state structures and developing regulatory legal acts, programs, and plans.

In Uzbekistan, Islamic movements declared to the creation of a theocratic state and establishment of Islamic “orders” to be their main objective. These groups held meetings, gatherings, and demonstrations, imposing Shariah law on citizens. The leaders of these movements created public messages of democracy and appealed to values of freedom of conscious; at that time, few people understood that these organizations’ public messages were little more than the first steps of political Islam in Central Asia.\(^\text{15}\)

After the Namangan events on December 8, 1991, as an ultimatum, the president, I. Karimov, declared an Islamic state and began to repress religious parties and movements. I. Karimov’s speech became catch phrases, including “we are not ready for democracy,” “any meeting in our country becomes a massacre,” and “better to have one hundred people arrested than thousands killed.”

In 1992, the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established, one of the first in the region. However, unlike neighboring Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan still has no law on countering extremism. It is also currently difficult to find references to activities of state bodies and legislative acts addressing extremism. In the Regulations of the Committee for Religious Affairs and in the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On terrorism counteraction (2000), the term “extremism” does not appear. There is a high possibility that state bodies and religious organizations do not cooperate or interact to counter extremist activities because dissidence is prohibited.

Under Article 28 of the Law On freedom of conscience and religious organizations (1991), the role of state bodies is limited to “strengthening mutual understanding and tolerance between religious organizations of different confessions of faith inside the Republic of Uzbekistan and abroad.”

Tajikistan’s civil war led to a societal split, leading to the manipulation of Islam for state power and major depression, the effects of which are still felt today. Tajikistan has become a unique example of peaceful Islam-secular coexistence; however, despite Article 4 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan On counteraction of extremism (2009), which states that the state must cooperate with individuals and legal entities in countering extremism, state-religious organization cooperation remain unprescribed in legislation. Tajikistan’s laws On freedom of conscience and religious organizations (2009), Single concept on counteraction with terrorism and extremism (2006), and Regulations of the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (2005) highlight the significance of countering extremism. Additionally, none of Tajikistan’s laws address state-religious organization cooperation in terms of security.

For many years, Turkmenistan has been the most closed country of the region, forming a unique version of Islam. In Turkmenistan, the supreme mufti is also the Deputy Chairman of Gengesh (Council) for religious affairs under the President of Turkmenia. All imams of mosques are appointed personally by the President, resulting

\(^\text{15}\) N. Kurbanova. Islam in social and political life of Kyrgyzstan. B., 2009. - P. 110
in full dependence of religious institutions on the President. Article 5 of the Law of Turkmenistan *On freedom of confession of faith and religious organizations* (2003) states that the Government “does not allow manifestation of religious or other fanaticism and extremism, actions aimed at contradistinction and aggravation of relations, starting-up hostility between different religious organizations.” The Gengesh for religious affairs “provides interaction and cooperation of state bodies with religious organizations.” There are no regulatory legal mechanisms in Turkmenistan in which state bodies and religious organizations would interact.

In **Kazakhstan**, state development is initially characterized by complete economic reforms, which provide foreign financial investments and relative public welfare. However, Kazakhstan has recently also faced radicalization and extremism, resulting in amendments of the applicable Law *On freedom of confession of faith* to better serve the prevention of extremism.

Major Kazakh legislative documents specify legal and organizational foundations of countering extremism including the law *On extremism counteraction* (2005) which emphasizes state bodies’ interaction with foreign authorities and international organizations rather than religious organizations in order to prevent, detect, and suppress extremism. A similar approach is present in the "State program on counteraction of religious extremism and terrorism in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2013-2017" (2013). Established in 2011, the State Agency for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the most active state structure of Central Asian state which interacts with religious organizations. As Kazakhstan’s central executive body providing “state management in the sphere of ... interaction with religious associations” (Regulations of the Agency for religious affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2011) and coordinating activities of “local executive bodies of regions, cities of republican significance, and capital on the issues of religious activity and interaction with religious associations” (Article 4:5. of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan *On religious activity and religious associations*, 2011), the authorized body on religion interacts with religious organizations against extremism and terrorism, and with the Spiritual Association of Muslims of Kazakhstan. For example, the Agreement on interaction between the Agency and Spiritual Association of Muslims of Kazakhstan on cooperating in public awareness efforts among the population to prevent the spread of religious extremism was signed in January, 2014 in Almaty city. The Council on relations with religious associations under the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2000) also functions in Kazakhstan and works to counter radicalism. The Head of the Council on relations with religious associations is also the Chairman of the Agency for religious affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The conducted research leads us to the following conclusions:

- In the majority of Central Asian states, there are no legislative and managerial mechanisms regulating state-religious organization interactions on countering extremism;
- In practice, religious and public organizations act as government partners or instruments in addressing extremism, supporting state policy and acting as a support system for the government, such as the Council on religious affairs, Sunni and Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in Turkmenistan, Spiritual Associations of Muslims of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan.

**State and religious organizations’ legal framework of cooperation on countering extremism in Kyrgyzstan**
Government-religious organization interaction on preventing extremism is not envisaged in the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic *On freedom of confession of faith and religious organizations* as of December 31, 2008 under 282. The Law specifies that “mutual relations of the Government and religious organizations are regulated by the law considering their influence on formation of spiritual, cultural, state and national traditions” and “Government contributes to establishing relations of mutual tolerance and respect between the citizens exercising religion and not exercising religion, between religious organizations of different confessions, as well as between their followers; does not allow religious radicalism and extremism, actions aimed at contradistinction and aggravation of relations, starting-up religious hostility” (Article 5).

The Law *On extremist activity counteraction* has existed in the Kyrgyz Republic since 2005. Under this law, Kyrgyz state bodies are mandated to counter extremism. The Law envisages the “cooperation of the state with public associations or religious organizations, other organizations in counteraction of extremist activity” (Article 2).

Legal regulation of the religious sphere was already envisaged in the old “Concept of state policy in the religious sphere of the Kyrgyz Republic” (2006) under № 324. This Concept reflects an “aggregate of official views on the condition, objectives, principles and major tasks in the sphere of relations of state bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic with religious associations acting in the Kyrgyz Republic. Elaboration and counteraction of manifestations of religious extremism, fundamentalism and destructive sects of religions” were noted. Additionally, it did not regulate specific mechanisms and methods of institutes mutually cooperating on preventing extremism.

In another important document, the “National strategy of sustainable development of KR”, reflecting general vision of the future of Kyrgyzstan for the period of 2013-2017 (Presidential Decree as of January 21, 2013 under № 11), there is an entire allocated section on “Optimization of state and religious and inter confessional mutual relations” covering the conditions and perspectives of state policy on state and confessional and inter confessional relations (Clause 3.2). It states that the “activity of state bodies on suppression of extremism manifestations shall be aimed against some religious associations and individuals, adherents of extreme forms of interpretation of doctrines coming into collision with the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, denying democratic norms and rules accepted in the society, human rights and freedoms.” It additionally emphasizes the significance of the state and religious and public institution interaction in order to strengthen inter-religious consent and tolerance, elaborating on effective forms and methods of countering religious extremism. The strategy is based on fundamental principles such as government and religious organizations’ responsibility and transparency in building constructive cooperation and increase in efficient interaction of state bodies and religious organizations.

The Strategy also references the “Concept of national security of the Kyrgyz Republic,” (2012) with an objective of “joint counteraction of the Government and religious community to radical religious sects.” Unfortunately, review of the Concept of national security reveals no conceptual vision of developing state-confessional relations aimed at countering radicalism and extremism. The Concept merely states the necessity of strengthening government interaction “with traditional religions when exercising the right of citizens for freedom of belief.”

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16 The new Concept of religious policy in Kyrgyzstan was discussed and approved in May 2014.
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Decisions of the Defense Council of the Kyrgyz Republic on state policy in the religious sphere (as of February 3, 2014) are the most profound and informative in comparison with other analyzed regulatory legal acts on the religious sphere. Undoubtedly, the provisions in the Decisions of the Defense Council (cl. 19) are advisory in nature and aimed at strengthening the “trust of Muslim people of the country in managing body of the Islamic religion, normalization of the existing situation, creation of required preconditions for operation efficiency increase” of the Spiritual Association of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SAMK).

In improving the reformation processes, the SAMK recommends:
- regulating the election system of ulemas and the mufti;
- conducting attestations and other forms of qualification examinations for mosque imams and religious figures with the participation of state representatives, and creating a system of financial rewards according to results;
- appointing mosque imams and imam-khatibs after corresponding inspections made by law enforcement bodies on membership to extremist and destructive organizations;
- conducting systematic canonical work on unveiling extremist doctrines of fundamentalist movements and sects;
- developing and approving bilateral plans on the prevention of religious extremism and non-admission of conflict on religious ground jointly with the authorized government representatives by the mayors of Bishkek and Osh;
- restoring the applicability of the 2009 regulation in the SAMK Charter, according to which appointments of religious organizations’ heads should be coordinated with local authorities in order to avoid appointing persons with extremist ideologies to mosque imams and district imam-habits.
- appointing mosque imams, imam-khatibs, kazis, members of the Council of ulemas, and mufti only from adherents of Hanafi Madhhab, which is the traditional Islam in Kyrgyzstan.

The above decisions of the Defense Council indicate that the Government intends to actively control the SAMK, participate in managing Muslims, and cooperate with the Muslim clergy in order to prevent extremism. The Government expressed its position on the SAMK’s managerial flaws, and presented a doctrinal approach on theological issues. The decisions made on the “participation of representatives of state bodies in conducting attestation of imams, appointment of spiritual ministers after corresponding coordination with state bodies, conducting work on unveiling of extremist ideas, development of plans on prevention of religious extremism jointly with state bodies,” also undoubtedly concern state security. However, government attempts to “appoint” and “elect” spiritual ministers “only from the number of adherents of traditional Hanafi Madhhab” indicates a new stage in Kyrgyzstan’s state-religious organization interaction towards supporting and utilizing doctrinal differences of Islamic law in mutual relations with Islamic organizations, including with the purposes of countering extremism.

Administrative and legal aspects of state - Islamic organizations cooperation in countering extremist activities using the State Commission and SAMK example

The State Commission for religious affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic (hereinafter referred to as the “State Commission”) plays an important role in countering extremism. Regulations on the State Commission approved by the December 18, 2009 Presidential under N 601 describes the State Commission as the “central body conducting work on
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

formation and realization of state policy in the religious sphere and coordinating the activity of state bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic in the sphere of religions.” One of the major tasks of the State Commission is coordinating and guiding religious organizations’ activities in partnering with state bodies and international organizations in addressing societal problems.

Currently, preventive measures on interaction between state bodies on non-admission of extremism, implementation of interactions, and exchange of information with international organizations in preventing and countering extremism and terrorism are being implemented. In practice, however, there is no interaction between authorized bodies and religious organization on countering extremism. There is a lack of partnerships with Muslim organizations in preventing violence due to limited financial, material, and human resources. Specific interactions have yet to be found despite declarative statements. In the early 2000s, two previously mentioned parties made an effort to form a common stance regarding extremist organizations, specifically against Hisb-ut Tahrir. The SAMK issued a special fatwa against Hisb-ut Tahrir activities, and a fatwa regulating mass media. The fatwa entitled the SAMK to control print and other publications of which most were by joint state-Muslim organization activities.

In May 2003, the State Commission and SAMK signed an agreement on cooperating against extremism, creating an expert group mandated to reveal extremist slogans in publications by specific Islamic parties which were banned in 2003 by the Kyrgyz Supreme Court. A conclusion on extremist literature was then prepared. Additionally, the SAMK issued a fatwa on “non-admission of religion politicization.”

The State Commission’s later efforts to control the Muftiyat’s activities in preventing extremism, interfering in the process of appointing central mosque imams, and attempting to control mosque construction provoked discontentment in clergy representatives and negatively affected progress on mutual relations among organizations. Currently, disagreements between the State Commission and the SAMK are a source of mutual distrust between the parties despite each party remaining within their respective legal frameworks.

Additionally, mutual distrust stemming from managerial issues between the State Commission and the SAMK has created unfavorable conditions for joint cooperation on countering extremist activities. For example, a disagreement between the two parties on the right to organize the haj and ‘umrah to Saudi Arabia became a serious issue that prevented constructive dialogue. The disagreement was further blighted by corruption scandals. Disagreements on organizing haj rendered combating extremism less important. Further discussions on paying taxes for haj also crippled joint cooperation on social and state security.

The state’s interference in addressing personnel issues, including the election of mufti, kazis, and members of the Council of Ulemas also prevented the formation of a single government and SAMK position on extremism.

The SAMK is mandated to enlighten Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim ummah on issues of Islam and to form Muslims’ world view. However, contrary to state body representatives addressing extremism and terrorism, the Muslim clergy always tries to avoid using terms that may confuse their constituents, hindering their interaction in preventing extremism.
The majority of clergy believe that extremism should only be countered by state security and intelligence agencies. This approach may negatively influence the results of combating extremist activities. Additionally, certain parts of the clergy sympathize with extremist and terrorist organizations, considering them to be “defenders of Islam” or “freedom fighters.” As implacability and intolerance against religious extremism are not currently fully formed among representatives of Muslim clergies, currently, the Muslim clergy does not share a common vision of combating extremism.

Main Conclusions, Recommendations, and Improvements of the National Anti-Extremism Policy

Analysis of the legislative framework for anti-extremism activity indicates a lack of clear policy related to anti-extremism cooperation with Islamic organizations. There are no specific state-confessional mechanisms of anti-extremism interrelationships. There are no developed step-by-step activities for cooperation, including methods, by which procedure, and by what means anti-extremism should be achieved. These legal flaws hinder closer relations between parties and do not facilitate cooperation. Therefore, anti-extremism relations between public authorities and the Islamic organizations are of a declarative and non-systemic nature.

Public authorities require the assistance of Muslim organizations on countering extremism. Muslim organizations’ capacity to prevent extremism remains untapped by the state. Public authorities and Muslim organizations do not present a united front in countering extremism, raising doubts as to the ability of Islamic and state bodies to cooperate closely. In order to optimize state anti-extremist policy cooperation with Muslim organizations, we propose developing a special Program for Countering Religious Extremism involving all concerned parties. The Program must comprise of the following areas and activities:

- improving anti-extremism regulatory and legal framework;
- increasing state opportunities in administering cooperation processes;
- functional analysis of civil-law relations (regulated by law) between public authorities and religious/Islamic organizations associated with anti-extremism;
- developing specific forms, methods, mechanisms, and areas of cooperation between public authorities and Muslim organizations related to countering religious extremism;
- developing principal ideological areas of anti-extremism strategy;
- specifying public authorities’ competencies and functional obligations in cooperation with Islamic organizations;
- developing measures strengthening the SAMK’s financial and human resources as one of the key organizations dealing with countering extremism;
- developing mechanisms to prevent inter-religious and intra-religious cleavages and conflicts;
- creating conditions to attract local, national, and public bodies and organizations (The Aksakal Courts, Ayil Keneshes, etc.) to prevent extremism;
- developing measures to eliminate the consequences of extremist activities;
- facilitating measures to provide information to the public concerning religious organizations and associations’ activities;
- insuring continuous monitoring of printed and electronic media including internet resources to detect materials promulgating extremist ideas;
- organizing workshops (trainings), round tables, and other public activities related to extremism prevention involving Muslim community representatives;
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- developing measures to prevent marginalization and radicalization of unregistered Islamic organizations and movements; and,
- developing and implementing specific programs aimed at training specialists of Islam and scientific workers (Muslim theologians, etc.).

Addressing the Issue of Mutual Distrust

The public authorities’ relation with Muslim organizations in counter extremism has engendered numerous questions and few answers, and requires significant improvements.

Mutual distrust remains a key issue in cooperation. Despite the Muslim clergy’s initial optimism of Kyrgyzstan’s Islamic development, public authority actions illustrate its disapproval of the multiplicity of Islamic organizations, groups, and movements. State bodies’ analytical material expresses concern over the increase in Islamic bodies and organizations.

Many public officers are still not ready to cooperate with Islamic organizations and clergy representatives, and some are concerned over the active dynamics of Kyrgyzstan’s Islamic development.

Additionally, mutual distrust is facilitated by not only public authority and Muslim organizations’ dissonance in specific public and religious issues, but also by these parties’ unwillingness to offer needed concessions; this further hinders constructive relationship building. Public authorities ignore the SAMK and other Muslim organizations’ opinions, and have postponed adopting the Draft Law on Theological Education which has already passed its second reading by the Jogorku Kenesh. The two parties are also polarized in their positions on the “Tablighi Jaamat” activity in Kyrgyzstan.

In order to solve these issues and build mutual trust, the government must reconsider its attitude towards Muslim organizations and begin to trust Muslim organizations as cooperative partners.

Constructive anti-extremism cooperation efforts can include restoring the practice of the State Committee and SAMK conducting joint theological examinations.

In order to create a platform for dialogue and cooperation, we propose developing the draft Declaration/Agreement on the Principles and Areas of Government – Muslim Organizations Relations. The Declaration should aim to have the parties officially recognize the following key principles:

- transparency and legitimacy of carried out activities;
- refuse to propagate hatred and violence;
- Muslim organizations refuse to participate in political processes;
- rejection of religious strife and extremism;
- willingness to mutual understanding, trust, cooperate, etc.

Common Anti-Extremism Positions

The number of Islamic organizations wishing to register with the authorized State Agency for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic increases year by year. Though some receive official registration, many are rejected. In addition to unregistered Muslim
organizations, many organizations and movements do not express interest in receiving official government approval and continue to operate illegally. Due to their underground nature, it is difficult to establish a clear role for these organizations. There are few answers to questions such as, "what measures may be taken to prevent marginalization of "rejected" and non-registered Islamic organizations? What are the consequences of national policy oriented towards supporting traditional Islamic organizations and those related to national development? Does the national policy on “hanafism” lead to radicalization or deterioration of partnerships between “non-traditional” Islamic organizations and the government?" Even some Muslim organizations considered to be “new” by the government have been operational for over twenty years; therefore, the government must develop a sound policy to be applied to these organizations taking into account Kyrgyzstan’s history and context.

We propose establishing the Advisory Board of Muslim Communities of Kyrgyzstan under the auspices of the SAMK, which can become the platform for intra-confessional dialogue of Muslim communities. For example, attracting Muslim diaspora representatives to cooperate with the official clergy would constitute a constructive approach. The Advisory Board of the Muslim Communities of Kyrgyzstan may become the intermediary and coordinating body between public authorities and Islamic organizations including those which are unregistered. The Board may develop a common position of Islamic organizations covering a broad range of issues, from issues of mutual trust to joint anti-extremism.

The Anti-Extremist Role of Islamic Organizations

Extremist organizations’ activities in Kyrgyzstan have, to a greater degree, a Muslim religious nature and are based on separate provisions of Islamic doctrines, presenting a real challenge the Islamic organizations, including the SAMK.

Islamic organizations should specify their position concerning religious extremism. Declarative measures such as adopted “fatwa” (2002) and condemning extremism in favor of the government are insufficient in dissipating extremism, and does not facilitate security. Therefore, countering extremism should become not only the government’s function, but also that of all Islamic organizations, including the SAMK. The Muslim clergy must understand that extremism primarily exists within Islam and among Muslims.

Kyrgyzstan’s Islamic organizations must not only specify their position concerning extremism, but also should organize Kyrgyz Muslims' active participation in anti-extremist governmental policy.

In this regard, we propose establishing the Department for Cooperation with Public Authorities under the SAMK, mandated to carry out activities in the following areas:

- organizing SAMK activities in building relations with public authorities, not only in the field of countering extremism, but also fields including theological education, construction of religious bodies, organization of hajj, etc.);
- coordinating Islamic organizations’ relationships with public authorities;
- developing specific proposals for public authorities related to anti-extremism cooperation;
- attracting qualified human resources with theological and secular education and specific work experience in secular, non-government organizations to develop mechanisms to solve problems associated with Islamic organizations;
developing special plans and programs to implement governmental policy in religion, etc.

The Issue of Ideological Counterpropaganda

Extremist organizations in Kyrgyzstan disseminate pro-extremist information prepared by extremist ideological theologians with content derived from the Alcoran and Sunnah. Ideological counterpropaganda, which evaluates the scientific and Alcoranic inadequacy of extremist ideology, is considered an efficient method of countering this process. Unfortunately, currently, Kyrgyzstan has no national research organizations engaged in systematically preventing violence in inter-confessional and intra-confessional relationships, while newly established research institutes are preoccupied with solving organizational, financial, and human resources issues. Among them, is the Research Institute of Islamic Studies (RIIS) founded and established by a group of scientific researchers, experts, and law enforcement officers, and currently requires intensive comprehensive support and development. Accordingly, we propose establishing a scientific and research division under the Islamic University of Kyrgyzstan, which will deal with the following areas:

- revealing essence, principles, and structure of Islam;
- disseminating reliable information about Islamic organizations, movements, and groups;
- ensuring theoretical and methodological support for relevant state agencies, Islamic organizations, and citizens dealing with processes in the Islamic sphere;
- carrying out scientific and analytical research to understand reasons and conditions of disseminating extremism into society;
- developing measures to improve Islamic organizations’ activities;
- organizing training and advanced training for both spiritual, public and local authority employees that cooperate with religious organizations;
- developing principal concepts and contents of sermons, as well as preparing training modules and aids;
- disseminating information aimed at revealing the negative aspects of extremism;
- creating an atmosphere intolerable of violent actions in society founded on religious grounds; and,
- conducting scientific and research activities to prevent extremism, etc.

Preventing Extremism through Islamic Education

At low levels of socio-economic wellbeing and in discrediting secular authorities, laws, and power, some members of the Muslim community believe that Islam is the ideological basis for solutions for socio-economic and political problems in Kyrgyzstan. As a result, the process of Islamization can gradually transform into radicalization of Muslims and the politicization of Muslim organizations. To address this pressing issue, the Kyrgyz government must reconsider its national policy for preventing radicalism in Kyrgyzstan.

The government’s efforts to introduce lessons on religious history in schools has done little to dissuade the population’s radicalization as there is a significant level of intolerance towards Muslim jamaats and movements rather than towards other religions. The results of a questionnaire conducted by Search for Common Ground and entitled, “Islam and Youth” indicated that there is a growing environment of protest.
against the existing political regime among youth. Therefore, society must develop a
perception of Islam as a spiritual and moral religion, rather than a radical political
ideology. The government and Islamic organizations must conduct activities creating
positive images of the Islam, while public authorities disseminate information on Islam
as a peaceful and nonpolitical religion.

In order to prevent extremism in the next generation, it is necessary to introduce
advanced curricula on Islam and Islamic movements and groups in general education
institutions.

In this context, we propose the Islamic University of Kyrgyzstan, the SAMK, the Ministry
of Education, and the State Committee to develop an Islamic curriculum to be
introduced to general education institutions. The content should include information
on Islamic views on policy, governmental administration, violence, patriotism,
democracy, human rights, etc. Under this curriculum, SAMK staff and administrative
resources may be used during studies. Local imams, on the condition of their support
and requalification, may contribute to implementing the curriculum in schools.
Additionally, Islamic University graduates and theological faculties (for example, the
Theological Faculty of the OshSU has educated theologists since 1994) may be
involved.

Practical Recommendations to Strengthen Relationships between Public
Authorities and Islamic Organizations (Training Modules)

Currently, under the Defense Council’s decisions, the newly appointed SAMK
leadership is demonstrating efforts to develop working relations with the public
authorities. However, the SAMK’s human resources, managerial, and financial problems
do not allow the SAMK to be on equal interrelations footing with the government.

An uncertainty and inaccuracy strategy in addition to a lack of clear cooperation
mechanisms with Islamic organizations have resulted in an inefficient national policy on
countering extremism. Insufficient awareness on extremism and inadequate training of
the public authority representatives are serious barriers. Previously organized trainings
involved participants representing both religious organizations and public authorities
jointly, affecting training efficiency due to varying degrees of participants’ knowledge
and skill level. This practice shows the necessity of carrying out a preliminary training
separately for each group, with a subsequent joint training.

To solve this issue, at the initial stage, we propose organizing a three-stage
arrangement focused on disseminating general informational and creating space for
cooperation between public authorities and Islamic organizations.

Initially, it is necessary to organize educational trainings for public authority
representatives dealing with religious matters. In the course of organizing the advanced
training for SCRA KR employees in 2013, it became obvious that there was a low level of
information awareness of employees in terms of religious organizations, movements,
and groups, as well as of processes existing in the religious sphere. Therefore, trainings
should be oriented towards informational awareness of public officials concerning
Kyrgyzstan’s religious situation.

Organized trainings should cover the following subjects:

- History of religions, religious movements, and groups;
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- Structure and functions of religions;
- Interconnection of religion, policy, education, and economy;
- Fundamentals of Islam and Islamic movements;
- Problems of radicalism in Islam;
- Religious movements and groups in the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Structural and managerial peculiarities and specific features of religious organizations in Kyrgyzstan;
- Extremist and terrorist organizations in Kyrgyzstan, etc.

As a result of attending the trainings, participants will receive practical information on real situations in the religious sphere, study and digest specific features of religious organizations and movements, as well as gain skills during trainings that can be used during cooperation with religious organizations and clergy in countering extremism.

The second stage can include educational trainings for representatives of religious organizations and the clergy. The study showed the clergy’s insufficient awareness on regulatory and legal basics as well as a lack of awareness of national policy and state administration system; this can hinder integration of the members of religious organizations into civil society and the country’s socio-political life.

The trainings organized for the representatives of religious organizations and clergy will provide them with the information about the religious sphere’s regulatory and legal base as well as about the public authorities implementing religious policy.

For this purpose, we propose the following subjects for trainings:

- History of religions in Kyrgyzstan;
- Governmental and confessional relationships in the Kyrgyz Republic;
- International practice of cooperation between government and religion;
- Models of governmental and confessional relationships;
- Regulatory and legal acts applied to the religious sphere;
- Anti-extremism legislation and practice;
- Public authorities’ dedicated to implement the national religious policy, etc.

At the third stage, we propose a joint training/workshop for clergy representatives and specialized public authorities aimed at cooperatively developing systems and mechanisms of interaction, as well as creating a platform for improving and strengthening interrelations between the parties.

Participants may specify the following areas of the joint activity:

- developing the Program for Countering Religious Extremism;
- developing the Declaration on Principles and Areas of Cooperation between the Government and Islamic Organizations;
- initiating establishment of the Advisory Board for Muslim Communities of Kyrgyzstan;
- initiating establishment of the Division for Cooperation with Public Authorities under the SAMK;
- initiating establishment of the Scientific and Research Center under the Islamic University of Kyrgyzstan;
- developing the Islam Curriculum and advancing a proposal for its introduction in general education institutions.
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Deputy Mufti  
Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan  
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Teaching Pluralism in Conflict Resolution through Central Asian Religious Traditions
Background, Theoretical, and Methodological Foundations

Since the beginning of Kyrgyzstan’s independence, state and government leaders have contributed to forming liberal policies regarding religion, and created favorable conditions for the development and prosperity of religious movements which also stipulated strengthening internal and external activities within the Muslim community. As a result, various Islamic doctrines and practices have appeared in our country.

As religious activities grow in Kyrgyzstan, the potential for problems grows as well. Many potentially harmful religious doctrines and sects have appeared, concerning all religious confessions in Kyrgyzstan. As a result, internal disagreements within the population and disagreements among representatives of the Tengriism movement are increasing day by day. Strained relations among representatives of various confessions at times grow into serious conflicts, especially in cases of the burial of people who change faiths.

One of the major tasks today in providing security is the development of intra-confessional tolerance. It is necessary to thoroughly explain different faiths to the population to counteract the spread of radicalism and growing extremism.

Religion itself has great potential to prevent and solve conflicts. Throughout the centuries, religion has become a part of everyday life and traditions of Kyrgyz society. Conflicts can be solved using, studying, and bringing to the population doctrines of tolerant pluralism based on texts of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), as well as using the peacekeeping capacity of Central Asian traditional religious dogma and practices.

This research is based on studying the Ayats of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), examples from Islamic history, as well as understanding of traditional and non-traditional religions.

We assume that the information collected from Ayats of the Holy Quran and Hadiths of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) can be very useful in solving conflicts in Muslim society and preventing the development of extremist ideas among youth.

The texts of the Holy Quran in Arabic, and Russian and Kyrgyz translations, as well as collections of the Hadiths of imams Bukhari, Muslim, etc. were used to implement the study’s objectives.

Opinion surveys of local Muslim scientists, as well as that of participants of the seminar, “On mutual relations between the State and religion” organized by Search for Common Ground were used to understand differences between traditional and non-traditional religions. The survey was conducted using direct questions and more in-depth interviews. The respondents to the survey were:

- Participants and trainers of the seminar coming from five countries
- Members of the local Council of Ulemas
- Rector of the Kyrgyz Islamic University
The Present-day Religious Situation in Kyrgyzstan

After collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan developed uniquely and greatly differed from other Central Asian countries. The main difference included a more democratic form of state governing, which reflected on all aspects of state policy, including in the religious sphere; no one state compares with Kyrgyzstan in freedom of religion, and as a result, a large number of different confessions and religious practices actively exist at present in our country.

Many local and international analysts note positive points of this approach to religious issues because, for the last 20 years, the state has not been seen as an enemy for any one religious movement. These confessions exist peacefully, and until now, Kyrgyzstan has managed to avoid serious conflicts on religious grounds among representatives of confessions and movements, and between religious and secular parts of the population.

However, more and more experts are voicing concerns over the absence of a clear vision and a specific religious state policy which can result conflicts and destabilization in the country. In the context of increasing religious extremism and events taking place globally and in neighboring countries, the Kyrgyz government is becoming more concerned by the existing state of religious affairs and is attempting to formulate a new policy. However, due to absence of a strong scientific and research base which would strengthen policy formation, both the government and experts still have many questions.

A method of forming state policy on religion is discourse on traditional and non-traditional religions in Kyrgyzstan. Traditional religions include Islam of Hanafi Madhhab and Orthodox Christianity as the most optimal forms of religious practice, which has existed in the region for a long time, whereas other religious influences are alien and accordingly, potentially dangerous for our region.

The term “traditional religion” and more specifically, “traditional Islam” must be analyzed in the context of modern Kyrgyzstan, as well the potential traditional Islam possesses in peacekeeping and conflict resolution among confessions and movements, in inter-ethnic relations, and everyday issues. However, before proceeding to discussions, it is necessary to understand the meaning of traditional Islam.

What can be understood under traditional Islam? In Islamic teachings, the notion of “traditional Islam” does not exist. Islam is universal, and the Islamic teaching is commonly irrespective of the geographic location of practitioners. It is based on the principle of monotheism and pursuit of examples from Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), which remain unchanged in any part of the globe. All developed Muslim states adhere to this point. At the seminar-training held recently in Bishkek city participated by specialists from different countries, this point was expressed by nearly all participants, including famous scientists such as G.A. Hizriyev and Akhmad Rashid.

However, there is a difference between Islam as a doctrine and Islam as an actual life practice. While Islam was spreading throughout the world, adaptation of a universal doctrine to specific local contexts, including peculiarities of climate, culture, social life of communities, their economic activity, and political organization was taking place. As a consequence, Islamic practice and various doctrinal elements were frequently transformed. When Islam was adapted to local cultures, its historic development further
dramatically differed among one culture to another, leading to even more differences globally. Finally, after 13 centuries of global Islamic history, we can observe an enormous diversity among Islamic practices and doctrines formed as a result of adaptation to local peculiarities and further centuries-long historical development.

Consequently, when we consider Islam not just as a universal category, but as a true-life reality, we can consider traditional Islam a result of the adaptation of Islamic doctrine to specific peculiarities Muslim communities in a definite region and its further centuries-long development. Traditional Islam – as opposed to universal Islam – defines not so much ideology, but rather a real practice closely bound with other aspects of local culture and living.

From this point of view, traditional Islam can be conceived not only as a natural product of regions’ historical development, but as a religion most acceptable and adapted to local peculiarities. Consequently, traditional Islam has maximum potential in the constructive development of certain communities, as well as in solving various internal conflicts. Being a natural product of historical development, it does not contradict local tradition and culture, but can suggest more successful and well perceived ways of solving conflicts.

However, in present day Kyrgyzstan, there are many wrong understandings of the meaning of traditional Islam, which can result in undesirable effects. The Rector of the Kyrgyz Islamic University Abdushukur azhy Narmatov believes that we would benefit from refraining to use the term “traditional Islam” because it leads to the misunderstanding that only Hanafi Madhhab is considered traditional Islam. According to the opinion of former-Mufti Chubak azhy Zhuilov, “traditional Islam” is just a term which has become popular among contemporary journalists who believe traditional Islam is Islam left by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). But traditional Islam does not mean that there is a tradition inside Islam, because tradition is subordinated to religion, not vice versa.

Accordingly, we shall be very careful in using the term “traditional Islam.” It is very important to understand that misinterpreting the term can aggravate the situation and create conflicts in Kyrgyzstan’s modern religious community. To understand the meaning of traditional Islam in Kyrgyzstan, we must understand its historical tradition.

The History of Traditional Islam in Central Asia

Central Asia is a unique geographic region with many millennial cultures. Such geographic peculiarities as centrality of location, partial remoteness from other regions by such natural elements as the Pamir-Alay ridge, strong connectivity inside the region, etc. led to the formation of Central Asia as a powerful and historical area at a global level different from many other regions of the world. One of the most important historical elements of the region is the Great Silk Road, which served throughout almost two thousand years as the main channel of exchange of goods, ideas, and socio-cultural practices both inside the region and in connection with the external world. The Silk Road also played a great role in spreading religions. There exist many historical sources proving that the Silk Road in Central Asia allowed for the spread of ideas and practices of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and pre-Orthodox Christianity. Particularly, due to Central Asia’s conjunctively by these channels, Islam amassed as the region’s main
religion within a short period of time – approximately one hundred years in 7-8 century C.E.

Throughout the last 13 centuries, Islam in Central Asia has been developing more or less homogeneously, without many deviations from the main ideological basis of Hanafi Madhhab and Maturidi Aqidah. Large Central Asian cities such as Bukhara, Khiva, and Samarkand were not only the centers of trade and science, but also the centers of the Islamic knowledge, which supported and constantly strengthened this Islamic school. Madrassas were in almost all cities and village settlements. For centuries, teaching in madrassas remained under the Hanafi Madhhab. Suhrawardiyah, for example the Naqshbandi sufi order, played an active role in spreading Islam and the influence of Hanafi Madhhab. Sufis and dervishes brought and support the spread of ideas and practice of Islam to nomadic tribes of Central Asia, including the Kyrgyz and Kazakh. Sufi practice was simplified and more focused on dhikr and sincerity, rather than on deep Islamic knowledge. However, the main doctrinal basis differed little from that which was practiced by settled peoples.

Through this historical frame, we can see that almost the entire region of Central Asia developed based on a Hanafi Madhhab. Islam of the Hanafi interpretation was the most powerful consolidating factor, bringing together different peoples and ethnos of Central Asia with their very diverse cultures and ways of life.

As Islam developed in Central Asia, it became a part of the culture and traditions, and as there existed a common religious base, it also served as a bond for many traditions of peoples, which initially greatly differed from one another. Current Islamic practices and traditions, which became a part of everyday life and traditions, serve as a multiplier for Central Asian people.

Throughout many centuries, Islam was the main consolidating and peace making factor, which helped our peoples avoid and solve conflicts. As there were few differences within Central Asian Islam, it played a significant role in strengthening peace making potentials and aided the region in avoiding serious conflicts which, in the Middle East where Islam is far more diverse, remains rampant.

It is necessary to note that Central Asia has also become the source of the spread of Islam towards the Indian peninsula and for Turkish speaking peoples of the Ottoman Empire. Babur and his army brought Hanafi Madhhab Islam to India and over a period of four centuries, Central Asia served as a base to spread Islam among the entire Muslim population of India, with the exception of South-Western regions, which retained Arab influence. A similar development can be seen in Turkish Islam; with routes in Central Asia, Turkish Islam different little from Hanafi traditions practiced in Central Asia. Consequently, Turkish and Indian Islamic practices are very close to traditional Central Asian Islam, and can be conceived not so much as the arrival of new ideas and practices, but rather as the return of old ones.

However, influences from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Syria do indeed constitute threats to stability in Central Asia. Islamic practices and schools from these states significantly differ from traditional Hanafi Madhhab and these differences, which frequently become great contradictions, have the potential to create a split inside the Muslim community. Movements such as Salafism, for example, ignore local Muslim scientists and
governments, relying only on “fatwas” from Saudi Arabia, frequently of a political nature and which are almost not bound to local realities.

This historical review resulted in two conclusions. First, for many centuries, traditional Islam in the form of Hanafi Madhhab has served as a consolidating factor for numerous and very different peoples of Central Asia. And today, it retains its powerful peace making potential. Second, not all external Islamic influences coming to Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union contradict the region’s traditional Islam. Influences coming from the Indian peninsula and Turkey actually originated in Central Asia and do are not very different, whereas Saudi Arabian, Iranian, and Syrian influences do contain many differences from traditional Central Asian Islam and potentially possess a strong potential for destruction and conflict.

Conclusions

General conclusions that can be made from these sections include:

- The term “traditional Islam” is now becoming popular in Kyrgyzstan; however, there are many misunderstandings of the meaning of the term.
- In Islam itself, there is not such understanding because Islam is universal.
- Traditional Islam can be understood as a product of centuries-long adaptation of Islamic doctrine to specific conditions of a given geographic region.
- Historically, in Kyrgyzstan and in Central Asia as a whole, for many years, the main religious doctrine has been and is Hanafi Madhhab.
- Hanafi Madhhab contradicts less local religious, cultures, and social and political traditions. It has always served as a consolidating factor for numerous peoples of Central Asia and now possesses a great peace making potential.
- Not all external Islamic influences coming to Kyrgyzstan today contradict traditional Islam; influences from the Indian peninsula and Turkey originated from our region and are not very different, whereas influences of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Syria are very different and possess a strong destructive potential.
- Traditional Islam should not be considered the only right Islam in our region. Rather, it can be seen as a peace making religious practice, which respectfully relates to all other religious movements and can play a leading role in consolidating their representatives.

Search and Analysis of Original Sources of Holy Texts (Quran, Hadiths, and Adats) on Prevention of Conflicts and Compatibility of Religious and Secular Values and Principles in Developing Tolerance, Diversity, and Peace

Sources of Islamic world view

Islam is a religion of peace, and as such, possesses an enormous reserve of principles, doctrines, and historical examples preaching peace and tolerance. Islam helps its followers avoid and solve conflicts at all levels of social organization, from interstate to interfamilial. The Islamic doctrines are the Holy Quran, sirach (life story), and Sunna (practice) of the Prophet (PBUH), and numerous examples of the Prophet’s life stories written by followers of the Prophet (PBUH). Centuries-long Islamic history is also a source of multiple examples of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence.
There are numerous direct instructions, stories from the life of prophets, as well as life and allegoric examples of human tolerance and mutual respect in the Holy Quran. These ayats are directed to people and possess huge potential in peace making. The Holy Quran is considered to include words from Islam’s concept of the divine, a holy source which has special meaning in the life of believers. It states indisputable truths and enforces specific religious knowledge.

The life of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and his Sunna are genial examples of tolerance and respect for people. They help us better understand the Holy Quran and apply it in everyday life. Difficulties which the Prophet (PBUH) encountered were unique to that of other prophets; however, due to his extraordinary tolerance, he overcame these difficulties with dignity, attracted a large number of followers, and made friends with his most bitter enemies.

Life stories of the followers of the Prophet (PBUH), whom the Prophet (PBUH) taught directly and who experienced many hardships with the Prophet (PBUH), are also an invaluable source of knowledge and inspiration for Muslims globally. They personify the best examples of following the teaching of the Prophet (PBUH) and Islam, and give us numerous stories from which we can learn tolerance, philanthropy, and respect.

Leading Muslim scientists played a significant role in preserving and spreading Muslim knowledge throughout 13 centuries. They helped to preserve Islamic doctrine from aggressive extremist influence, and lead the ummah through peace and love, rejecting hate and aggression.

Ultimately, the stories of ordinary Muslims, from governors to merchants, given as a form of authentic historical descriptions, legends, and examples are also a powerful source of knowledge from which modern Muslim communities can draw inspirations to peacefully coexistence.

Islamic doctrine and tolerance

Islamic doctrine possesses potential to spread ideas and practices of tolerance. Islam promises rewards or punishment in life after death as opposed to secular laws which are limited by the physical realm. The Holy Quran includes that, “Faithful, men and women, who acted righteously, — we will for sure bestow by wonderful life and reward for better of everything they did. (16:97). For many believers, the Holy Quran includes much stronger motivation than secular laws; leveraging this belief, principles of tolerance found in the Holy Quran should be taught to the public and can play a major role in establishing a peacefully society where people value commonalities and respect differences.

Islam is based on the principle of a common origin of all people in the world and the unity and fellowship of all Muslims irrespective of their racial and ethnic background, socio-economic status, or cultural and historical traditions. The Islamic worldview includes principles of love, goodwill, and sympathy towards all people with the understanding that tolerance helps people become contributory members of society who achieve noble goals which do not infringe on the rights and goals of other people. Islamic doctrine helps people avoid discord, conflict, and misunderstanding, instead building respect for one’s self by respecting others. Living according to Islamic principles and actively integrating them into daily life allow people to truly feel and value
friendship, solidarity, and fellowship. Elements of hatred and envy which lead to conflict were never included in the basis of Islam; Islamic principles of tolerance help the Muslim community avoid divisions and conflicts both within the community and with representatives of other religious communities. Islam’s major principles of tolerance include principles of diversity, common origin, human dignity, treatment of representatives of other religions, and methods of persuasion.

**Principles of diversity**

Islam welcomes diversity and uniqueness of social and cultural peculiarities of all peoples of the world. The Holy Quran celebrates diversity through, “Oh, People! Truly, we created you from a man and a woman and made you peoples and tribes for you to recognize each other, and the most respected in front of Allah among you is the most god-fearing. Truly, Allah is Wise, Knowing” (Quran, 49:13). The Holy Quran emphasizes a similar “godlikeness” among people, rather than focusing on their physical differences. Islam also understands language diversity in, “Among His bodings — creation of heavens and Earth, and difference of your languages and colors. Truly, in this — bodings for those who possess knowledge” (Quran, 30:22).

Accepting Islam as a religion must be done freely. Enforcement cannot be part of Islam as, “Say: The Truth is from your God. Who wants, let believe, and who does not want, let not believe. We prepared for unrighteous men Fire, the walls of which will surround them from all sides. If they begin to ask about help, they will be helped by water similar to liquid metal (or oil residue), which burns the face. Vile drink and nasty dwelling” (Quran 18: 29). Islam allows each individual an opportunity to choose a level of intellect and understanding, stating in the Holy Quran, “If your God wanted, then everybody living in the Earth without exception would come to believe. And you, would you oblige people to believe?” (Quran, 10:99), and “If Allah wanted, he would direct all unbelievers to the right way. That is why, do not be one of ignoramus” (Quran, 6:35). In Islam, the will of the concept of the divine lies on the basis of religious diversity.

Religious diversity concerns not only inter-confessional, but also intra-confessional differences. The Holy Quran is not an absolute directive as it includes numerous ayats which are less direct and more open to interpretation, leading to differences within Muslim communities and creating the basis for diversity of religious practice and determination of human success. The main understanding of religious diversity is to establish motivation to retain a god-fearing life, following directions from the concept of the divine, refraining from sinning, preserving good relations with the surrounding community, implementing civil and family obligations, etc.

Therefore, diversity is the fundamental principle of creation. All differences among people have meanings; consequently, this principle teaches people to be tolerant to all kinds of diversity.

**Common human origin and the importance of Muslim fellowship**

In numerous ayats, the Holy Quran tells the story of human origin from the first man Adam and the first woman Eva. This version of human origin is almost universal among all main monotheistic world religions. The Holy Quran states that, “Oh people! Be afraid of your God, who created you from one soul and created a pair for him from it, and settled many men and women originated from them both. Be afraid of Allah, by name of
whom you ask each other, and be afraid to break blood ties. Truly, Allah oversees you (Quran, 4:1). Is with many other monotheistic religions, the ayats address people as the children of Adam.

In addition to considering all of humankind as one family, Islam also establishes the ummah, a world Muslim community which the Prophet (PBUH) described as a single body of which if one part aches, the entire body aches.

Accordingly, all Muslims are brothers and sisters, addressing each other as such, and serving to consolidate the Muslim community. The Holy Quran states that “This is because believers are brothers” (Quran, 49:10); “... and you have become brothers by His mercy” (Quran, 3:103). The Prophet (PBUH) said, “Oh, acceptings! Listen to my words, think over them and keep these words in your memory. Truly, your God is One, as your great-grandparent is one. All you were originated from Adam, and Adam was made from clay. A Muslim is brother for a Muslim, and all Muslims are brothers for each other. All believers are brothers for each other, they all have the same rights and the same obligations. So take from your brother everything he gives you of his own will. Nobody stands in front of Allah above the other, unless in righteousness. And the best and high-pitched before Allah is that one from you who is the most god-fearing. There is no superiority before Allah neither of the Arab to the Persian, neither of the Persian to the Arab, neither of those, whose skin are yellow, neither of those, whose skin are black. Your superiority is only in godlikeness.”

**Human dignity**

Islam’s concept of the divine created the entire world, including insects, plants, animal world, angels and djinns, and to finish his creations he created a man as his satrap over all his creations, stating, “And your God said to angels, "I will place a satrap on the Earth.” They asked, “Will You place on the Earth that person who will commit sins and spill blood, whereas we glorify You by praise and bless You?” Allah answered, “Truly, I know what you do not know” (Quran, 2:30). Undoubtedly, the man is the best creation of all creations of Allah, “Undoubtedly, We bestowed honor to the sons of Adam and by Our will they moved by land and sea, We endowed them with benefits and gave them decisive superiority over other creatures” (Quran, 17:70); “...We created a man in the splendiferous appearance” (Quran, 95:4). According to Islam, the concept of the divine provided people with choice, and if people follow the correct path, they will rise in status above angels; however, if they follow insignificant passions, they will be lowered below animals.

Each individual has this choice, and to the end of each individual’s life, has the opportunity to believe, improve, and repent. Due to this principle, no one person has the right to offend, accuse, or harm another individual, irrespective of background and belief. Contrarily, through gracious attitude, sympathy, and goodwill, Muslims can repair their relations with the world around. Numerous ayats and hadiths repeatedly state the importance of strengthening and supporting relations with the surrounding community and correcting the peoples’ character. Islam prohibits speaking badly about other people, even after their death. Muslims believe that during the times of the Prophet (PBUH) only one of ten people converted through persuasion, whereas 9 of 10 converted to Islam when experiencing the Prophet’s (PBUH) and his followers’ good behavior and attitude towards others.
Once, a funeral procession passed by the Prophet (PBUH), and he stood up in respect. The Prophet’s (PBUH) followers protested because the deceased was Jewish. The Prophet (PBUH) asked, “Is not it a soul?” This hadith illustrates the Prophet’s (PBUH) benevolent attitude and respect towards all people, regardless of their religious belief.

Relations with representatives of other confessions

Islam does not prohibit, but rather welcomes positive relations between Muslims and believers of other faiths. Moreover, Islam prohibits injustice to all people, irrespective of their religious views so long as they do not harm Muslim communities. The Holy Quran states that, “Allah does not prohibit you to be kind and just to those, who did not fight against you because of faith and did not chase you from your houses, as Allah loves just people. Allah prohibits you to make friends only with those who fought against you because of faith and chased you from your houses and stipulated your banishment. Thus, those who make friends with them are truly fasiq” (Quran, 60:8-9)."

The belief that adherents of a different faith do not deserve respect is misinformed and devious. The history of Islam is full of examples of coexistence among representatives of a whole range of confessions. The Holy Quran and counsels of the Prophet (PBUH) clearly define justice as the main criterion of mutual relations. The Prophet (PBUH) said: “That person who oppressed an adherent of a different faith or defied his rights, or laid on him anything that was above his forces, or took from him something without his entente cordiale, then I will argue against that person as an accuser on the Doomsday.”

The history of early Islam includes numerous examples of various agreements signed between Muslims and adherents of a different faith. Such agreements were based on the principles of mutual respect and compromise and played an important positive role in supporting respect, and where possible, finding compromise.

Islamic methods of persuasion

Again, religion cannot be forced upon people; an individual can only convert of his/her own will. The task of all Prophets throughout the centuries was to deliver a message and to attempt to persuade people of its truth, through miracles, logic, and examples. Delivering the message of Islam is the obligation of all Muslims, and should be conducted exactly as was by the Prophet (PBUH): not through force, but rather through gentle persuasion and improved self-behavior.

Accordingly, a peaceful and constructive dialogue should be the basis of communication with unbeliever. The Holy Quran includes, “Call [oh, Mohammed,) to the way of the God by wisdom and kind exhorting and conduct dispute with polytheists by the best means. Truly, your God better knows those who took the wrong turning, and He better knows those who are on the right way” (Quran, 16:125). These disputes should not become a source of anger and conflict, and should be limited; if an individual behaves irrationally, the dispute should be discontinued.

Conclusion

Islamic sources include large amount of information which can be used as evidences of the importance of tolerance within Muslim communities and towards representatives of other confessions. This short review of the ayats and hadiths illustrates that Islam as...
ideology and practice provides a variety of concepts and instruments which can be used to improve inter-and intra-confessional disagreements in any region of the world, including Kyrgyzstan. It is very important to recognize the positive potential of religion itself in prevention and solving conflicts and to use religion to benefit all citizens of our Republic.

Comparative Analysis of Reflections on the Rights of Believers in Islam and in the Kyrgyz Constitution

Kyrgyz Constitution and Laws

Currently, religious legislation remains one of the most complicated and unsolved issues. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic is one of the most advanced and liberal among post-Soviet states. Article 32 of the Kyrgyz Constitution states:

1. Each person shall be guaranteed freedom of conscience and faith.
2. Each person shall be entitled to acknowledge individually or jointly with others any religion or not to acknowledge any.
3. Each person shall be entitled to freely choose and have religious or other convictions.
4. Nobody can be forced to express his/her religious or other convictions or refuse from them.

However, religious laws are more complicated. Currently, there is no single opinion among experts concerning two main laws: 1) the already approved Law on freedom of faith, and 2) Law on religious education which is in the process of discussion.

The majority of state representatives consider these laws to be appropriate and acceptable for the current situation in Kyrgyzstan. They believe that some restrictions on freedom and strengthening of governmental powers on control of religion are necessary to provide security in our Republic.

However, many rights advocates consider these laws to be anti-constitutional and significantly restricting the constitutional right of believers. Rights advocate Dmitry Kabak believes that these laws do not pass any of the three legal examinations: human rights, anticorruption, and legal examination of the perceptibility of laws to conflicts. He believes that these laws create preferences for certain religions and discriminate others, as well as create a potential for conflict between representatives of different confessions and sects.

Kyrgyz Constitution and concept of traditional religions

Rights advocates have questioned the “constitutionality” of the concepts of traditional religions proposed by the country’s leaders. From their point of view, preferential treatment of traditional religions is anti-constitutional and violates the rights of followers of non-traditional religions as, according to the Constitution, representatives of all religious confessions are equal.

This position is quite reasonable. Indeed, the law is the law, and has no right to discriminate against the population of our country based on their beliefs, unless these convictions present a security threat for the population and state.
It is necessary to consider the issue of traditional religions’ constitutionality very carefully and sensitively. In order to avoid conflict and preservation the Constitution, the term “traditional religion” should not be reflected in the legislative acts of our Republic, but rather remain an element of public discourse with its potential of solving religious conflicts and create a more favorable climate of inter-confessional relations in the country.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

This research has considered the potential of religion in providing security and prevention/solving conflicts on religious, ethnic, and social grounds. It has illustrated that:

1. Islam as a doctrine and practice can play a significant role in the creation and preservation of peace and in prevention/solving of conflicts between the religious and secular community, among representatives of different confessions, and among representatives of different sects within confessions.
2. Traditional Islam is a complicated concept. It possesses a great positive potential, but can be misinterpreted to be anti-constitutional.

3. Traditional Islam is not the only version of Islam, as Islam as a religion and doctrine is universal. Traditional Islam is a result of centuries-long adaptation of religion to local climate and social, economic, political, and cultural peculiarities of the region. In Kyrgyzstan, traditional Islam can be considered Hanafi Madhhab Islam.

2. Throughout many centuries, Islam consolidated peoples of Central Asia under one religious practice and today, also has a powerful consolidating and peacemaking potential, which can be leveraged.

3. However, this should be done with careful sensitivity. The concept of traditional Islam should only be used as a consolidating force, rather than a separating aspect for representatives of different movements. For this purpose, it is very important to constitutionally preserve this term.

In order to introduce right and positive understanding of the concept of traditional Islam, we suggest conducting an educational campaign for different actors in the interest of mutual relations of religious and secular fields, including representatives of state bodies, imams and other religious leaders, various representatives of the civil sector, and ordinary believers. For this purpose, we suggest organizing a series of seminars/trainings with “The role of religion in safeguarding peace and preventing/solving conflicts in modern Kyrgyz society" as the main theme.

**The following modules and measures can be included:**

- To prevent the spread of radical ideas among youth and women, territorial youth groups of activists should be created and seminars should be conducted for them to teach them methods of preventing and solving conflicts and to explain the sense and signs of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism.
- Conduct seminars for teachers and students of religious educational institutions to explain the principles of pluralism and tolerance, and to be able to sense radicalism, extremism, and terrorism.
- Preparation and publication of a written guidance on behalf of the SAMK on prevention of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism.
• Conduct seminars and trainings for imams of mosques on solving conflicts among different Islamic movements and to develop principles of pluralism under the support of the Islamic public foundation “Yiman” of the Kyrgyz Republic. The results should be included in a published guide on “solving conflicts and developing society by the principles of pluralism” under the SAMK.

• Conduct seminars and trainings for kaziyats and Madrassas workers on prevention of strengthening religious extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic.

• Conduct a conference on peaceful activity of religious organizations, decrease of social public tension, and strengthening mutual respect between representatives of different confessions and the secular population.

• Organize special courses on advanced training for imams on the issues of spreading doctrines of Hanafi Madhhab and prevention of spreading of religious extremism.

• Conduct lectures for children and youth on nurturing spirituality, morality, and patriotism.
Yusur Loma
Former Mufit Adviser of the Kyrgyz Republic,
Chairman of the Inter-Religious Council,
Member of the Public Expert Council under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic

Assessing the Possibilities of Building a Kyrgyz Theological School
Vision and mission of Islamic education

Forming the foundations of Islamic education is crucial not only for believers, but also for those who are concerned with the future of Muslims in Kyrgyzstan. Ultimately, the main purpose of religious educational institution is to strengthen the spiritual and moral foundations of society by preparing highly qualified Muslim leaders as experts in various fields of Islamic and secular sciences.

Democratization has led not only to the implementation of principles of freedom of speech, press, and assembly, but also removed the de facto ban on the freedom of conscience. The spontaneous revival of religious consciousness has begun.

The problem of current ideology and culture is the backbone of the nation’s social consciousness and structure. This problem is now firmly associated with the revival of religion as an ideology.

Independence of former Soviet republics began a rapid development of Islam. An integral part of this complex and ambiguous process in Kyrgyzstan was the creation and legalization of Islamic educational institutions, which did not exist officially until 1991.

Analysis of the current state of the system of religious education in Kyrgyzstan

Independence introduced changes in the system of religious institutions in Kyrgyzstan, and the new law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" proclaimed and secured freedom of religion. Religious groups became increasingly socially attractive for a large part of the population. The Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Kyrgyzstan was created and established regional structures. Today, there are 2,346 mosques, 55 madrassahs, 7 institutes, and one university in Kyrgyzstan which employ 438 teachers and train 4,565 students (see Table 1 and 2). (Note: Data from state authorities on region vary).

Number of Islamic educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions and cities</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Institutes</th>
<th>Madrassahs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Osh region</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalal-Abad region</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batken region</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chui region</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talas region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naryn region</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issyk-Kul region</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osh city</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Growing Islamic educational institutions are not always of excellent quality. The majority of the population, especially youth, believes these institutes are traps and ignore their spiritual value.
Today, there are various religious traditions, schools, and teaching methods in the Muslim world. The need for a separate theological school is felt acutely, because over 80 percent of the population adheres to Islam; additionally, the main criterion for the development of Islam in the country is the quality of religious education and theology. The future of Islamic education in our country is reliant on the creation of a clear educational system providing multi-stage education, definition of its purpose and objectives, including strategy or vision. The priority is to create an Islamic education that responds to Kyrgyzstan as a secular state, its socio-economic level, mentality, traditions, spirituality, psychological and ideological status, and the needs and requirements of modern society.

Today, the lack of qualification for teachers in existing training institutions affects the quality of teaching and the qualification of graduates with poor knowledge.

These institutes present methodological issues in interpreting the content of Islamic teachings. We cannot strengthen a clear understanding of the essence of Islam and its moral and ethical principles without specifying the basic concepts of Islamic revival.

Religious education intrinsically creates human memory and dogmatic thinking that paves the way for fanatical and extremist sentiments. Critical thinking and creative development can be introduced to the curricula of madrasahs and Islamic universities, and can contribute to general cultural development, expanding worldviews and developing logical, creative, and independent thinking. By introducing secular subjects in these institutions, it would become possible to oppose disadvantages of Islamic education content. Essential topics could include history of philosophy, logic, concept of modern natural science, country studies, and state building. These topics could be made mandatory for higher religious educational institutions in the interest of countering extremist dogma.

This issue should be key to developing standards for religious education. It is necessary to establish religious curricula based on classical Islamic education to meet current challenges, rather than replace secular education which also has many disadvantages.

Understanding teachings of the Hanafiyyah school must be a dominant aspect of educational context. Other secular subjects should be taught in higher educational
institutes in the interest of obtaining a secular profession which can prepare Muslim intellectuals.

It is necessary to study science under people who have dedicated themselves to the service of religion and the study of its essence. The educational process must be built on dialogue, clash of opinions, discussions, debates, etc. A religious dogma does not allow for alternative solutions, as all decisions are predetermined by the Quran and Sunnah.

The newly developed curricula of many madrassahs have specified the introduction of secular subjects, which usually fail due to lack of adequate and systematic funding. As a one-sided model of education takes effect in madrassahs, taking into account that many of these students have not had secondary education or have studied at night school, learning is largely nominal. Upon graduation, these individuals will begin to teach young people the basics of Islam according to their understanding. Therefore, legal and financial support of madrassahs and the increased quality of curricula on both religious and secular subjects is important now more than ever. Otherwise, the state will spend huge amounts of funds attempting to control the activities of extremists wishing to destroy social order. Currently, it is only necessary to provide partial funding for secular subjects.

Religious education should have the following objectives:
1. Carry out targeted training of spiritual cadres, including teachers, and to not attempt to force all Muslims to become imams.
2. Form Muslim intellectuals through training in religious and secular higher education institutions.
3. Develop spiritual enlightenment through various forms of educational institutions.

**Strengths and weaknesses of Islamization**

In the course of the studies conducted, we have tried to identify the strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats, which we present below.

**Strengths:**
- growing role of Islam in society;
- growing interest of young people in Islam;
- introduction of the majority of the population to Islam;
- implementation of the freedom of religion in Kyrgyzstan;
- desire of the state to observe the harmonious relationship between secular and religious structures;
- awareness and understanding of the need to jointly counter the existing threat of religious radicalism, fundamentalism, and extremism;
- support for the development of Islam by international organizations, foundations, and centers; and,
- joint participation of public and religious figures in reforming religious education.

**Weaknesses:**
- prevalence of quantitative indicators over qualitative in the process of Islamization of the country;
- financial and logistical problems, and lack of a permanent source of funding;
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- lack of a unified system of Islam education and training programs on basic religious subjects;
- lack of common approaches to structuring the different levels of the educational process;
- lack of common standards in Islamic education, including standards for secondary and higher education;
- lack of correlation of religious and secular components in the content of education;
- low level of qualification of the teaching staff and teachings;
- lack of an integrated system of training teachers;
- lack of training centers that should develop education programs, educational and scientific literature, guidelines, requirements for intermediate exam testing, etc.; and,
- lack of training and methodological support for educational institutions, including the lack of new textbooks.

Problems with the necessary legal and regulatory framework

- lack of cooperation between public universities and Islamic educational institutions;
- lack of a clear strategic plan for the development of Islamic education in Kyrgyzstan; and,
- problems employing graduates of Islamic educational institutions and a lack of recognition by the state of their diplomas in the context of a high demand for religious education.

Opportunities

- activation of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (Muftiyat) to solve problems within Islamic education;
- harmonizing curricula, programs, training manuals, legal documents of Islamic educational institutions;
- adaptation of secular subjects in Islamic educational institutions;
- development of a system of Islamic education, uniform standards of teaching programs in Islamic educational institutions;
- modernization of primary, secondary, and higher religious education, which should change not only the form but also the content of Islamic education;
- creation of a training and methodological center to identify and develop training programs, educational and scientific literature, guidelines, requirements for intermediate exam testing, etc. with the involvement of both secular and Islamic scholars;
- possibility of introducing general education courses, technical and some economic specialties;
- recognition of Islamic education by Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, obtaining a license for the provision of secondary education with the issuance of state-recognized certificates, secondary vocational and higher education diplomas;
- solution of the staffing problem using graduates of theological faculties and those who received religious education abroad;
- expansion of training courses and seminars by Muftiyat to improve the qualification of teachers of Islamic educational institutions, with the involvement of secular experts;
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- development of a strategic plan for the development of Islamic education, and its implementation with monitoring the achievement of goals and objectives and making adjustments;
- use of multiple funding sources: private donations, international aid, payment of tuition fees, commercial additional courses and organization of income-generating activities, as well as an equal distribution of the financial resources available through the establishment of an Islamic financial education fund;
- promotion of the development of Islamic education by the state;
- conclusion of the agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan for interim measures in support of Islamic education during the period of reform and development.

Threats
- operation of various radical and destructive movements in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- distorted information about Islam and the lack of civilized promotion of religious knowledge;
- distorted belief of official religious leaders of the need to introduce secular subjects into the learning process;
- lack of recognition of diplomas and subsequent employment;
- strengthening the gap between secular and religious intellectuals, which in the future may affect the emergence of two ideological and political communities in one national state: believers and laity;
- activation of proselytism (change of belief);
- poverty of the population and low social development;
- curricula of many madrassahs have provided secular subjects, which usually fail due to the lack of adequate and systematic funding.

The study revealed that Kyrgyzstan has a peculiar model of Islamic education. In 2009, with support from the Eurasia Foundation, the Muftiyat attempted reformation, creating a standard curriculum and system of Islamic education. However, due to a lack of financial and intellectual capacities, all recommendations on reforming Islamic education remained mere benevolent intentions.

Below is given the adjusted system of Islamic education.

First: primary religious education, including the basics of Islam. There are no initial courses ensuring basic religious education of students. Purpose: to learn the basics of Islam and the basic duties of a Muslim.

Second: secondary religious education with a component of receiving a working specialty provided by madrassahs, and basic religious education of students. Primary duration of training - 2 to 3 years. Purpose: to prepare students to continue their studies in secondary vocational and higher education institutions or to perform the duties of junior religious personnel in mosques (orderlies of ritual service, muezzins, assistants to imam-khatibs, etc).

Third: secondary vocational religious education with a component of management, provided by secondary daily (madrassahs) colleges; basic religious education of students - primary or secondary. Training period - 3 to 4 years. Purpose: to prepare students to continue their studies in higher education institutions, or to perform the...
duties of medium-level staff in the mosques, teachers of the basics of Islam and secondary madrassahs, as well as managers.

**Fourth**: higher religious education provided by Islamic educational institutions as full-time, evening, and part-time education; basic religious education of students - secondary or preparatory department of the higher education institution. Duration of training – 4 to 5 years. Purpose: to prepare senior religious servants, employees of spiritual boards, teachers of religious educational institutions, scientific leaders.

**Fifth**: secular higher education with the Islamic component provided by Islamic universities (non-state educational institutions) established by Spiritual Administration of Muslims; form of education – full-time, evening, and part-time; basic education of students - complete secondary general + secondary religious. Duration of bachelors’ training - 4 years, specialists - 5 years. Purpose: to prepare universal specialists in the field of Islamic jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, history, pedagogy, etc., having at the same time the necessary level of religious knowledge.

**Sixth in the long term**: post-graduate education – master, Ph.D., doctoral courses provided by universities; full-time or evening-time education. Duration of training - 2-3 years. Purpose: to prepare specialists capable of conducting teaching and scientific research.

This is a classical system, which we have revised for religious education. However, there are significant problems in the implementation and executing the system in obtaining certain secular and spiritual professions.

**Practical suggestions and recommendations**

There is a strong need to develop and implement the program in order to develop Islam, in the implementation of which the power structures, religious institutions, and non-governmental organizations should take joint participation.

In this context, a series of measures requiring joint efforts are offered to optimize state-religious relations:

- Align regulatory framework of religion with the current Constitution, and further improve it by developing a clear public policy regarding religious institutions and defining internal and external cooperation.
- Take into account the advice of experts, representatives of religious, human rights organizations, international organizations when adopting the final bill on religious education.
- Recommend the Ministry of Education and Science conduct certification under the simplified system (scheme) for those wishing to voluntarily obtain licenses.
- Support and assist the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan in developing a stable and sustainable Islamic educational system.
- Recommend the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan conduct widespread inventory of religious educational institutions, as well as certify teachers, and organize permanent training courses for currently working mudarris.
- Modernize the existing system of Islamic education. Adopt and develop a multi-stage structure of religious education and ensure cooperation between all stages of educational institutions.
• Create or establish information, training, and methodological centers at one of the Islamic higher education institutions, under the auspices of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, for the development and definition of the volume of training programs for each stage, educational and scientific literature, guidelines, requirements for intermediate exam testing, etc. with the involvement of both secular and Islamic scholars in the field of education, using the most modern educational technologies of general pedagogy, but in contrast to the secular religious studies program and reflecting the essence of religion.

• Create a unified educational space in Kyrgyzstan, and possibly in Central Asia.

• Raise the educational level of teachers and assist in training specialists that meet modern requirements, with deep scientific knowledge of religion and secular sciences.

• Guarantee to those wishing to study in religious educational institutes prospects of obtaining not narrow confessional, but multidisciplinary education, including knowledge of religion and secular sciences, language studies, and development of a broad outlook, which would make it possible to hold both spiritual and secular positions.

• Include complementary religious and secular subjects in universal and optimal curricula; innovative activities in religious education can lead to the creation of new ideas in secular subjects.

Suggestions and recommendations for representatives of religious education

• Introduction of secular subjects into religious institutions by providing staff and funding;

• Provision of teachers with methodology, tools, and literature for teaching;

• Provision of financial assistance to pay for utilities and to improve the learning environment and residence of students;

• Introduction of religious subjects into secondary schools as optional or additional classes;

• Conduct outreach training in various religious movements and sects concerning the unacceptability of the Hanafiyah.

• Training of economists, clerks and managers in the religious sphere;

• Conduct certification and verification of specialists trained in foreign countries;

• Monitoring and analysis of the labor market in the religious sphere;

• Development by Muftiyat of requirements for keeping records in religious educational institutions; provide teaching material and forms for maintenance of the materials;

• Determination of the place and role of religious specialist, their competence, scope, and position of employment;

• Introduction of distance learning in religious educational institutions;

• Introduction of a system of parallel obtaining of religious education and specialty (seamstress, carpenter, etc.);

• Provision by the state of financial aid for teachers of religious educational institutions, etc.

Topics

• Extremism and radicalism - training for imams and mudarrises (teachers).

• Modern Muslim woman and Islam - their influence in the community.

• Internal Islamic movements, their differences, and conditions of coexistence.
• Improving the capacity of Muftiyat and imams: State building in the Kyrgyz Republic (including laws and acts in the sphere of religion and extremism).
• Youth and Islam: what attracts them and what do they reject?
• Innovative methods and features of learning Islamic subjects and their application in Islamic educational institutions.

Conclusion

In Kyrgyzstan, there are necessary conditions for the creation of functional Islamic school. Conditions include required cooperation and assistance in adjusting direction, as well as in modernizing and harmonizing programs, raising the capacity of teachers, and training both spiritual cadres and mudarrises at various intellectual levels.
Frontbek kyzy Jamal
Head of Mutakallim Public Association of Progressive Women

The Role of Imams in Preventing Conflict
Institute of imams and conflict prevention: theory and practice

Lack of religious knowledge and rampant stereotypes and prejudices against Islamic teachings among some public officials at all levels have led to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the hadiths (Sunnah) and ayats (verses) of the Quran.

Diversity of opinions is natural, and was even present among the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). A large part was due to differences in their individual abilities to reason, as is clear from the various interpretations of the ayats of the Quran and hadiths. When reliable or more accurate information became available, the companions immediately corrected their misinformed opinions and decisions; it is because of this willingness to diverge from wrong decisions that contrary fatwas should not be considered absolute differences. The Holy Quran includes that "If the judge takes all reasonable actions and makes correct fatwa, he gets a double reward, but if he takes all reasonable actions and makes a mistake, he still gets one reward." On the basis of this hadith, the companions are considered free from the guilt of contradicting fatwas.

A field study involving 60 respondents was conducted. 40 people were interviewed using a questionnaire, and 20 people, mainly regional imams, participated in three focus group discussions. 10 in-depth interviews were conducted.

As leaders of religious communities, imams and kazis from various regions were selected for the focus group discussions. Experts included 10 religious leaders, kazis, imam-khatibs, and directors of madrassahs. Many experts emphasized the significance of the role of imams, informal religious leaders, and "atynchy" in preventing different kinds of conflicts:

1. Interethnic - religious leaders teach Muslims in their regions that there are no ethnic divisions in Islam because all people are Muslims and among Muslims, there should not be hatred. For example, imams played an important role in restoring interethnic peace during the 2010 Osh events.

2. Interfaith - disputes and clashes between Muslims and representatives of Protestant Christian organizations when burying a dead Christian in the local cemetery, where used by Muslims;

3. Family matters of marriage, divorce, and polygamy remain the most relevant in the regions. Imams try to give an explanation for everything. But issues of polygamy, early marriage, and bride kidnapping are most difficult issues;

4. Social - sometimes heads of local authorities call imams of Friday mosques to explain the important social problems to the population, including rotating outages, payment for utility services, return of bank loans, etc.;

5. Border conflicts between the communities of neighboring countries in the Fergana Valley - Imams act as mediators between the warring parties. In some cases, imams act as guarantors in the agreement for the distribution of water between neighboring villages located between states.

17 Fatwa (Fetwa) – decision often taken by ordinary Muslims as a guide to execution
18 Narrated by Abdullah Ibn 'Amr Ibn Al As "Sahih Al-Bukhari" and "Sahih Muslim"
19 Imam-khatibs - leaders of Muslim communities at the district level
20 Muslim woman leader of her community who is noted for knowledge of Islam
As a result of interviews with religious leaders of the Islamic communities, it is clear that imams contribute to and have a positive influence on conflict resolution. As noted by U. Sarybaev, kazi of Osh city, "In the early days of the events of June we met with representatives of both ethnic groups, buried and read "janaza" regardless whether they were Uzbek or Kyrgyz." Another religious leader, T. Mamytov noted that, "the impact of kazi and imam on the local community is large; it can be seen in the construction of a mosque in the city of Osh by joint efforts the community gathered around a million dollars and finished the construction of Suleiman Too mosque." Imams help in mobilizing Muslims during volunteer clean-ups, helping the poor, orphans, etc.

To the question, "In the opinion of imams, what programs and activities would benefit peacebuilding?" most of the imams said:

- Conduct seminars and training sessions for imams to improve skills and capacity;
- Organize a regular column on central TV on Islamic peacebuilding and air TV shows with religious leaders’ participation;
- Publish booklets on peacemaking with ayats and hadiths in Arabic with translation, which imams could use in their khutbah and in conflict situations;
- Create videos about peace, unity, and charity in accordance with modern conditions and on the basis of Islamic teaching;
- Build a relationship with local authorities by creating appropriate conditions for imams as the main function of imams in conflict prevention is to adequately explain the situation.

To the question, "What is the role of the imam in the community?" imams answered as follows:

- Calls for strengthening and maintaining relationships for love and compassion for each other and for peace and harmony among the people;
- Encourages people to be patient, sincere, and forgiving. A commonly used slogan is, "Allah forgives forgivers;"
- Explains situations where the Muslim community meets such as Friday prayers, burials, and during wedding ceremonies;
- Organizes lectures and discussions on Islamic morality and ethical behavior among high school and university students during conflict situations through an agreement with the administration of educational institutions;
- Tries to work out peaceful, amicable ways of conflict resolution through meetings with elders and other respected people.

The image of the imam according to Islamic Shariah and practice in Kyrgyzstan

An Imam is a leader, an individual who leads prayers, a spiritual person who runs mosques, responsible for order in the mosque, delivers sermons for people, teaches Shariah and Arabic language, and can teach Quran and the history of the Prophet (PBUH), Aqidah, etc.

The Quran commands, "We made them leaders who guided other people by Our command and We sent them revelations to do good deeds, establish Salah and pay Zakah. To Us Alone did they serve" (Surah “Al-Anbiya”, 21/73).
There are two types of imams: the **ruler** of the Islamic state and the **leader** of prayer. In Kyrgyzstan, the Imam is the leader of prayer.

Candidates for Imamhood must meet a number of requirements:
- Be a Muslim
- Be of sound mind
- Reach adulthood
- Be a male
- Be in a state of ritual purity
- Do not follow another imam
- Be physically healthy
- Have outstanding articulation skills.

Imams should have distinct enunciation and clearly articulate sounds in "tajwid." For example, a person suffering from a speech impediment is not allowed to lead namaz. A strong candidate understands the full conditions and requirements of namaz. If multiple candidates have equal qualifications, the following criteria should be taken into account:

- An imam is obliged to avoid prohibited acts and gross errors, and must know by heart as many ayats of the Quran as required for the validity of a service. A strong candidate should know all the provisions of "fiqh" (law) concerning namaz.
- The candidate must have good kuryaat (reading tajwid) skills, because the Prophet (PBUH) commanded, "Who knows the book of Allah better than any other, he will be the imam of the jamaat. If they read equally well, the imam is the one who knows the Sunnah" (Zaylai "Nasbur Rayah", 2/24).
- Preference is given to the most pious. Signs of piety include avoiding that which is "haram" (forbidden), "makruh" (not permitted), and all that can be questioned. A pious individual carefully observes "fards" (obligatory), "wajibs" (desires), the Sunnah, and mustahabbs. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "If you want your prayers were accepted by Allah, let the scholars be imams, because they are messengers between Allah and you." This hadith is also given in the book of Tabarani "Mujam" and imam Hakim. However, the latter stated, "Let the best of you be an imam" (Zaylai, "Nasbur Rayah", 2/26).
- Seniority. They will contribute to an increase in the jamaat, as the Prophet (PBUH) said to Ibn Abu Mulaike (radi allahu anhu), "Let the eldest of you be the imam!" (Bukhari, "Azan", 17, 18, 49, 140; "Jihad", 34; "Adab", 27; Muslim, "Masajid" 292, 293: Ibn Majah, "Ikama", 46).
- Good-tempered and able to find a common language with the people. If candidates are equal, preference is given to the individual having a pleasant appearance. This criterion is explained by the fact that a person who constantly conducts nightly prayers has a bright face and noble appearance.
- Good genealogy, a pleasant voice, as well as neat and clean dress.

The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan holds an annual certification of imam-khatibs and imams. Two commissions are established in the SAMK:
- The first commission is headed by deputy mufti Mr. Eratov Ravshan aji, who coordinates southern Kyrgyzstan (Osh region, Osh city, Jalal-Abad region, Jalal-Abad city, Batken region, Batken city).
• The second commission is headed by deputy mufti Rakiev Zamir kary, who coordinates northern Kyrgyzstan (Chui region, Naryn region, Yssyk-Kul region, Talas region and Bishkek city).

Region kazes are engaged in every logistic to conduct examinations.

**Key questions for the certification of imam-khatibs:**
1. Aqidah
2. Namaz
3. Orozo
4. Hajj
5. Zakat
6. Nikah
7. Talaq
8. From the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
9. Tajwid
10. Reading Quran and memorizing at least 5 "pairs"
11. Knowledge of Arabic language
12. Knowledge of at least 5 "pairs" of tafsir

**Questions for imams where juma namaz is read:**
1. Aqidah
2. Namaz
3. Orozo
4. Hajj
5. Zakat
6. Nikah
7. Talaq
8. From the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
9. Tajwid
10. Reading Quran and memorizing at least 1 "pair"

**Questions for imams:**
1. Aqidah
2. Namaz
3. Ait namaz
4. Janaza namaz
5. Orozo
6. Know at least 10 surahs from the Quran

Imam-khatibs are appointed by kazi subject to the consent of Azreti mufti. Imams, where juma namaz is read, are appointed by imam-khatib subject to the consent of kazi, and imams of mosques are appointed by imam-khatib who informs the kazi.

SAMK resources are huge due to the fact that except for central office staff, no one receives a salary, making it very difficult to control imams and madrassahs at the district and village levels. Islamic educational institution graduates do not wish to work at villages and small towns, as there is neither salary nor prospects for the growth of young specialists, so at this level, there is a lack of educated imams. At the same time, knowledge is the main value of Muslim upbringing and education. The special place taken by knowledge and the process of gaining knowledge is largely determined by
Basic principles used in peacebuilding reflected in the Quran

1. **Recognizing diversity in the Quran**

   "O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" (Quran, 49:13).

   The Quran states that differences in religion, philosophy, and ideology are natural to man and mankind as a whole.

   "And if Allah willed, He could have made them [of] one religion, but He admits whom He wills into His mercy. And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper" (Quran, 42:8).

   Moreover, Islam has never oppressed religious sentiments or practices of the Jews and Christians. The Quran says:

   "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best" (Quran, 16:125).

2. **Tolerance in culture**

   "And if your Lord had willed, He could have made mankind one community; but they will not cease to differ. Except whom your Lord has given mercy, and for that He created them" (Quran, 11:118-119).

   "But the denominations from among them differed [and separated], so woe to those who have wronged from the punishment of a painful Day" (Quran, 43:65).

   Islam does not destroy culture or pursue a policy of assimilation, but is rather enriched by them so long as cultural characteristics do not contradict Islam’s basics. Even if they do, Islam did not seek to immediately pull them up by the roots, but rather, gradually eliminate them from the life of new Muslims, replacing them with Islamic traditions. This is evidenced by simultaneous unity and diversity of the culture of Muslim nations in different continents.

   In resolving conflicts, imam needs to be an example of large-mindedness and tolerance, and resolve situations of conflict based on patience, an important quality for every Muslim.

3. **Religious tolerance in solving problems is especially important for imams**

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Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

“In the sight of Allah, the religion is Islam. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the verses of Allah, then indeed, Allah is swift in [taking] account” (Quran, 3:19).

Allah Almighty says, referring to his Messenger:

“And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then, would you compel the people in order that they become believers?” (Quran, 10:99).

Another ayat clearly states the principle:

"There shall be no compulsion in religion” (Quran, 2:256).

And this principle is valid from the time of Nuh (Noah), the teacher of all the messengers:

"He said: “O my Lord have you people have you considered: if I should be upon clear evidence from my Lord while He has given me mercy from Himself but it has been made unapparent to you, should we force it upon you while you are averse to it?” (Quran, 11:28).

Again, the Quran states and confirms the coexistence of different civilizations, religions, peoples, and cultures, and does not encourage them to be destroyed. Islam requires to treat them with patience and to enrich dialogue and mutual understanding, but reminds us that there can only be one true religion, and Muslims should try to peacefully spread Islam throughout the world.

The Quran encourages people of the Scripture to embrace Islam, but forbids forcing them to do so. The Quran states:

"For you is your religion, and for me is my religion” (Quran, 109:6).

In conclusion, the Prophet (PBUH) stated, "I witness that all men are brothers" (Ahmad bin Hanbal from Zaid bin Arqam).

4. **Ideological foundations of tolerance in the Quran**

Islam proclaims the nobility of human nature in general, regardless of creed, nationality or skin color.

Thus the Quran states:

"And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.” (17: 70; Kul.)

Such provisions secure the right to respect and care for everyone.
Pluralism is reflected in the Quran. Islam teaches that diversity in general, and the difference of opinion in particular, is a reality and phenomenon of the concept of the divine.

Ethnic diversity is also included in the Quran,

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" (Quran, 49:13).

8. In addition to linguistic diversity,

"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge" (Quran, 30:22).

9. The Quran states that differences in religion, philosophy, and ideology are natural to man and mankind as a whole.

"And if Allah willed, He could have made them [of] one religion, but He admits whom He wills into His mercy. And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper" (Quran, 42:8).

10. It is required to be tolerant to unbelievers, and accept diversity as a reality. At the same time, the Quran states the impossibility of the existence of one religion:

"And had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed - all of them entirely. Then, would you compel the people in order that they become believers? (10: 99; Kul.)

11. Islam is indicative of the absence of compulsion in religion. Followers of Islam are not authorized to collect from non-believers or those of other faiths.

"There shall be no compulsion in religion" (Quran, 2:256)

And say: "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve" (18:29; Kul.)

12. Moreover, responsibility to society in general does not cover inner feelings and beliefs.

Prerogative to judge it retained by the Creator, and left until the Day of Redemption.

Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which you used to differ. (22:69; Kul.)

The Quran states and confirms the coexistence of different civilizations, religions, peoples, and cultures, and does not encourage them to be destroyed. Islam requires to treat them with patience, promote dialogue and mutual enrichment, but reminds us that there can only be one religion. Quran encourages people of the Scripture to embrace
Islam, but forbids forcing them to do so. The Quran states, "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion" (Quran 109:6).

1.4. Islam enjoins justice and calls for the nobility of character

1.8. Allah is Acquainted with what you do. (5:8; Kul).

Imams should act as tolerant mediators, and should not be one-sided, fanatically condemning or taking the position of conflicting parties, which may lead to an exacerbation of the conflict. Imams must decide issues wisely and peacefully, based on Shariah and verses from the Quran as the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated, "Never make decisions in anger."

5. The Quran and Sunnah oppose fanaticism

The Sunnah is the key to moderation. One of the most important functions of the Sunnah is to keep Muslims from extremes, excesses, and errors, the roots of which may be misinterpretations of the Holy Quran.

"Wavering between them, [belonging] neither to the believers nor to the disbelievers. And whoever Allah leaves astray - never will you find for him a way" (surah 4 "Women", verse 143).

This means that only moderate Muslims who avoid extremes are fair and treated as witnesses. Elsewhere, it is emphasized that a Muslim should avoid excesses even in matters of religion, worship, and service:

"Do not commit excess in your religion" (surah 4 "Women", verse 171).

In a hadith, it is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated, "Beware of excess because excess did ruined your predecessors."

This is due to the fact that if a person shows excessive zeal in one thing, he inevitably misses something else. In this regard, Muslims should combine service to Allah with performance family matters and other social responsibilities. The sunnah is rich in hadiths about how the Prophet (PBUH) explained to the people the malignancy of excess and extravagance in dress, food, entertainment and even in the worship of Allah and in the call for good works.

Moreover, Islam does not promote the oppression of religious sentiments or practices Jewish and Christian communities. The Quran says:

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best" (Quran, 16:125).
If a Muslim runs to extremes, and forgets his duties, if he tries to independently interpret the Quran, justifying his actions, and fanatically follows these principles, then he has stepped away from the Sunnah and strayed from the straight path.

The modern world is pluralistic, multi-religious, and syncretic; there are no mono-religious or mono-national countries in the world.

Contemporary processes of globalization have led to an unprecedented concentration of various religious groups in the same area, which is characteristic of the former socialist republics. This fact has never been clearly assessed, and a number of researchers consider a destructive element crushing society. At the same time, we must recognize that religious diversity in Kyrgyzstan is an already established fact; the country’s peace and prosperity depends on that which is emphasized, the either constructive or destructive potential of religion.

Implementing positive potential is possible only if public religious consciousness is aimed at creating dialogue rather than confrontation and destruction. One solution society’s religious and social problems is to increase the level of knowledge among imams.

Education in addition to correct social, economic, and political planning plays an important role in addressing crime and extremism. Rule of law and delivery of justice is required so that there is no room to promote debauchery, violence, and murder. It is necessary to fight tyranny and corruption, and stop the uncontrolled spread of arms and explosives. There must be common efforts to raise the general morality and strengthen family institutions. In order to achieve inter-religious and inter-ethnic peace, we must not only declare equal rights for each religion and ethnicity, but actually provide them. Criminal law should be used as a means of achieving social security and not as a tool to intimidate the people or implement violence and revenge. Without providing these conditions, society will only get worse.

It is necessary to jointly develop a system that would work both for the benefit of Muslims and for society around them. Scientists from the Islamic world must cooperate with spiritual leaders and public figures to develop an optimal formula within Islam and the state that helps to strengthen our country and improve society. We, as citizens of a great country, should make every effort to cooperate as the Quran state, "And cooperate in goodness and piety and do not cooperate in sin and transgression".

This will not only spread and teach the culture of dialogue, but also enhance religious enlightenment. Meanwhile it is rather difficult to change beliefs and influence the will of a person, we can and should convey true facts about religion. Though graduates of higher theological institutions do not wish to work in villages and districts, many imams act as mediators in conflicts both at the local and jamaat levels and inform the common people about the correct interpretation of hadiths and verses. And many imams know that the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, but do not know how to apply such freedoms in daily life when defending their rights. The Constitution reflects the following rights and obligations of religion and freedom of conscience:

1. Article 7. 1. No religion in the Kyrgyz Republic may be established as a state or obligatory.
2. Religion and all cults are separated from the state.
3. Religious organizations and religious workers are prohibited to interfere with the activities of public authorities.
4. Article 32. 1. Everyone is guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion.
5. Everyone has the right to profess, individually or jointly with others, any religion or no religion.
6. Everyone has the right to freely choose and have religious and other beliefs.
7. No one shall be forced to express his/her religious or other beliefs or to deny them.

There are international legal instruments guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religious rights:
- International standards on freedom of conscience and religion
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1968).
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981).
- Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting 1989 of representatives of the OSCE participating states and others.

**Recommendations**
- Introduce special training in madrassahs, institutes, and universities, and hold jamaats for peacebuilding in Islam.
- Conduct trainings on the ideas of tolerance in Islam.
- Attract wide print, electronic media, and advertising agencies for the promotion of the principles of Islam on tolerance and peacebuilding.
- Publish handouts on peacemaking.
- Develop methods to attract a large number of leaders including imams, leaders of women "atyncha," and local communities to prevent conflicts.
- Organize and hold a forum for the exchange of information and experience with the participation of other organizations in conflict prevention.
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Assessing the Role of Imams in Conflict Resolution
Assessing the Abilities of Public Workers and Imams in Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Regional and district state administrations have advisers on religious affairs as staff members. The duties of the adviser include monitoring the religious situation in their area and active participation in religious activities. In addition, they must ensure interactions between religious leaders (muftis, kazis, and district imams-khatibs) and official administrative leaders. The Order of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic issued in January 2014 assigned staff for religious affairs in Bishkek and Osh administrations.

Kyrgyzstan’s independence brought various conflicts over religious beliefs due to an absence in other Christian religious denominations such as Catholic, Protestant, etc., except the Russian Orthodox in the Soviet Union. Strengthened missionary work revived proselytizing, resulting in divisions among communities and families. For example, problems arise with the burial of people who once were Muslims and then convert to another faith as there were only Muslim cemeteries in areas where Muslims lived. According to Islamic practices, followers of a different faith can be buried in a Muslim cemetery and no Islamic prayers are allowed. These phenomena appeared recently, and there have yet to be mechanisms or methods to resolve this issue. This problem cannot be solved by Muftiat and must be addressed at the state level since it is the state which allocates land for cemeteries.

Currently, it will not be easy for the state to solve this problem because it cannot allocate land in the village for a cemetery just for 1-2 people of a different faith. The way to solve this issue is to provide land for a cemetery in each religious area, allowing each religious community to bury their own dead and avoiding conflicts.

The second problem is finding a person who will read funeral prayers for those who have converted to different religions as most imams will not agree to hold such prayers. Another problem is that the missionaries who converted people to their faiths (Baptists, Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and others) do not think about such things such as the lack of a person who would read at funeral prayers and the lack of cemeteries. In many cases, relatives of the deceased (parents, sisters, brothers) are Muslims, feel ashamed, and attempt to hold an Islamic funeral. But neither a local imam nor the people will agree to this. Recently, there was a case was in Kurshab village of Uzgen district involving a deceased woman who had converted. The imam refused to read at her funeral; as she did not have children, her closest relatives and neighbors told the imam that she had reconverted to Islam before her death. It was only after this that the imam, with their testimony, read the funeral prayer, and she was buried in a Muslim cemetery.

Additionally, there are many cases when people who have converted to a different faith ruin relations with parents, close relatives, people around them, and even move to another location. In our society, such people are considered aliens, as Islam was rooted in Kyrgyzstan many years ago and rituals, customs, traditions, and culture based on Islam are a constant in the nation. However, this issue can be resolved through adequate explanation of Islam, as a religion, teaching that religion should not be forced upon anyone and that all people must accept faith voluntarily. Therefore, no one has the right to demand anyone to accept or renounce another faith.

During the Soviet era, religious education was not possible. After independence, the people in our country now have the right to religious education. However, due to the
lack of religious schools and specialized subjects in schools and universities, various problems arise. The most effective way to solve this problem is through increasing religious literacy by introducing religious subjects in schools and universities.

Since 2005, a number of groups actively misinterpreting Islam have appeared. The most prominent of them are Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Salafi, and Akramiya. The increasing number of such groups creates controversy and leads to disruptive relations among people. This situation, in turn, leads to conflict, making it necessary to solve this problem at the state level. In order to prevent the influence of extremist organizations with radical views, heads of administrations must cooperate with religious leaders in holding meetings, round tables, and spreading adequate explanations.

Organizations with extremist radical views are particularly active in southern Kyrgyzstan. Gradually, these organizations are beginning to move to northern regions (Naryn, Talas, Chui, and Issyk-Kul regions). Extremists and radical organizations enter southern Kyrgyzstan through its borders with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Hizb-ut-Tahrir is the most active organization, has operated since 2005, and now mostly operates in secret as it was banned years ago. President instructed all heads of administrations to hold meetings organized by the regional and district administrations with heads of universities, institutes, secondary schools, colleges, aïyl okmotu, religious ministers, teachers of Islamic higher education institutions, and others. These meetings served as outreach activities to convey the message that extremist radical organizations do not comply with the basic principles of Islam and that Islam that is always against extremism and radicalism.

It is believed that the majority of believers live in the Osh region of southern Kyrgyzstan, the heads of administrations of Nookat, Uzgen, Aravan, and Kara-Suu districts in cooperation with the Southern Branch of the State Commission for Religious Affairs and district imam khatibs gave people a wealth of information.

On February 3, 2014, Defense Council held a regular meeting chaired by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Almazbek Atambayev during which the participants discussed public policy on religion. During the meeting, the President stated that as an agenda item, religion is of special significance for the future of the nation. He stated that, “after 70 years of atheism, our country has all the conditions for religious freedom. But while striving for freedom, people in power stopped paying attention to the sphere of religion because they themselves were far from religion and did not understand it. Currently, this negative effect can be clearly seen among Muslims, especially among the Kyrgyz people.” The President placed partial blame on former officials.

The President discussed the importance of preserving national values by stating that individual Muslims confuse the Arab culture with that of Bangladesh and Pakistan, ignoring popular culture and the national dress, and imposing foreign customs, traditions, and clothes. According to the Kyrgyz Constitution, religion is separated from the state; religious groups and spiritual ministers cannot interfere in the work of state bodies. However, authorities have the right to interfere in the religious sphere and in the work of the clergy. In some Muslim countries, politicians use religion for their own purposes having turned it into a political weapon. The President drew examples from Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria. The cause of disagreement, confrontation, and clashes between Muslims in these countries is political interests. Therefore, to preserve

Search For Common Ground in Kyrgyz Republic | 74, Erkindik Blvd, Bishkek
state unity and integrity, religion cannot be used for political purposes. The President also criticized the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SAMK). He cited frequent financial scandals and stated that the SAMK is unconcerned with religious affairs, having turned itself into a commercial center. If the state does not take control of the religious institutional processes, especially between Muslims, other forces can take advantage of the disarray and jeopardize the unity of the people and the country's future. The President recalled that the Constitution reads that, “The state is obliged to take all necessary measures to protect national security and public order.” As we noted earlier, the Kyrgyz Republic is a secular state with a Constitution adopted in 1991 that states that religion does not interfere with the state and the state does not interfere with religion. The President made changes to the law taking into account the position of religion in a country, and the fact that for many years, the Muftiat had severe problems and intrigues on pilgrimage. He made an official statement that the government will intervene in religious affairs to solve all relevant issues and problems.

In dealing with cases on religion, the President established a working group of state and spiritual officials tasked with developing public policy on religion 2014-2020. The working group had to develop an original structure and to introduce it to civil servants, religious leaders, and experts to discuss and collect opinions, ideas, and suggestions. On April 15, 2014, the Defense Council presented the concept for discussion. This discussion was attended by Deputy Mufti of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan Ravshan aji Eratov, Deputy Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in Osh region Baiysh Yusupov, kazi for Osh region Ubaidulla aji Sarybayev, kazi for Osh region Niyazaly aji Aripov, representatives of the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, and various experts who discussed new opinions and made suggestions. Similar working group meetings will be held in other regions.

Established in 2014 under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Yiman Foundation was mandated to develop religious culture. Iskender Ormonov was appointed the Head of the Foundation.

The President noted that it was possible to find a model of interaction of state bodies and religious organizations without limiting the freedoms and rights of citizens, to ensure their safety, and to prevent the emergence of conflicts on religious grounds. This indicated that assigning responsibility for solution to various religious and differences in religious matters to imams is misguided as imams will be unable to address these issues themselves.

To achieve this task, the state in cooperation with the spiritual ministers should disseminate explanations, train modern experts on religion, produce religious books, provide material support to religious leaders, and organize courses to enhance their knowledge.

Assessing the Role of Imams in Conflict Resolution

Imams enjoy special respect in society. Along with elders, they are honored guests at fests and funerals. Imams are tasked to read the Quran and give their blessings. They call on people to build friendship and mutual assistance and promptly reconcile those in conflict.
The Quran states that, “Had your Lord willed, he would have made mankind one community [of believers]. However, they do not cease to engage in controversy. (Surah "Hud", verse 118).

“O people! We created you from one man and one woman - Adam and Havva - and by reproducing you, created a lot of different peoples and tribes so that you know each other and cooperate with each other. Truly, to Allah, the most worthy and honorable of you in this world and the next is the most pious. Allah encompasses all things with His knowledge. Nothing can be hidden from him.” (Surah “Al-Hujurat”, verse 13).

As stated, Islam’s concept of the divine, if willing, would have made all people one nationality with a single ummah; however, people were divided according to nationality. This was done not to make them conflict with one another, but rather to establish a close relationship and cooperate with each other.

Kyrgyzstan is a multi-ethnic state. The most numerous ethnic group is Kyrgyz, followed by Uzbeks. Kyrgyz and Uzbek people have historically worked closely together and have had intermarried. Relations between the two groups remain amicable and their lives often intertwine. However, in 2010 in Osh, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks were involved in a violent event. During this conflict, spiritual leaders played an important role in resolving and preventing further clashes. Kyrgyz and Uzbeks were reconciled through these religious leaders and imams who traveled to Osh in order to better educate and direct the conflicting ethnic groups, managing to end the violence. In order to strengthen relations between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek people, the kaziyat of Osh chose an Uzbek to serve as the imam of a Kyrgyz populated area with a Kyrgyz deputy. This served as a basis able to bring conflicting ethnic groups closer together.

Recent increases in the number of religious political groups have led to discontent among Muslims. The President ordered his district and regional representatives to pay strict attention to religious affairs and work with spiritual leaders. Local authority representatives in cooperation with religious leaders organized meetings and roundtables in all of Kyrgyzstan’s regions in order to identify methods to fight against extremism and terrorism. However, during these meetings, state authorities did not pay adequate attention to imams, making it difficult to truly grasp the roots of issues. Imams should be trained, their duties and responsibilities clearly determined, and wages provided; this must be addressed at the state level.

Main factors and mechanisms to resolve and prevent religious conflicts

1. Improved education of imams

The majority of imams in Kyrgyzstan have neither special religious education nor diplomas. At the same time, offering higher education to all imams of mosques is difficult, but it can be done gradually. Advanced training should now be offered to those who now work as imams. Previously, Muftiyat, kaziyats and theology departments organized short courses for imams which led to good results. Such courses should be organized on an ongoing basis.

Conferences, seminars, and roundtables should be organized in cooperation with active imams which would bring greater, more effective results if organized by the Muftiyat and...
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

state authorities. It is impractical to delegate all issues to imams as imams cannot address all socio-economic, political, and religious issues; imams must work with authorities in preventing conflicts.

2. Publishing religious literature in the Kyrgyz language

In order to eliminate religious illiteracy, religious literature for intellectuals and the greater public must be published in Kyrgyz as current religious literature in Kyrgyz is insufficient. It is also important to establish an Islamic Research Institute which will prepare religious literature with the help of experts. Religious literature must be prepared by actual experts as it is dangerous to supply the public with false information on Islam as people who have not received religious education will not be able to distinguish between real and fake information, resulting in disagreements and conflicts. In order to prevent such disputes and differences, books, research, and educational material based on the values of the Hanafi school should be issued. Should the Islamic Research Institute be established, it will conduct research on Islamic sciences and prepare high-level scientific work.

Conclusion

Kyrgyzstan is the only state among Central Asian countries that follows democratic principles, especially concerning religion. The Kyrgyz Constitution states that every citizen has the right to freedom of religion. After independence, the state failed to fully ensure political, social, economic stability, negatively impacting religion. As previously stated, the word “secular” in the Constitution was used to separate state and religion, and the SAMK used to conduct its activities independently. When first established, the state provided no support to the SAMK which created many problems. The recent growing religious issues have drawn the attention of ordinary citizens and high-level government officials. In order to resolve these religious problems and legally introduce state-religion relations, the President established a working group consisting of experts tasked with developing public policy on religion for 2014-2020. The state should pay attention to not only economic development, but also moral and spiritual development. If there is no friendship, peace and unity, economic development will not matter. As 80 percent of the population is Muslim, the SAMK plays a significant role in moral and spiritual development. It is necessary to reform and properly organize the Muftiyat, improve education of religious leaders, and publish high-quality religious literature. This will help avoid the increase in the number of religious movements and communities as well as differences and conflicts between different religions. The state’s attention to religious matters is an important factor in strengthening the integrity and unity of the nation as a whole.
Problems within the Interaction between Law-Enforcement Authorities and Religious Organizations in Countering Religious Extremism: National and Public Security
Peculiarities of social institutions’ interactions with religious communities in security and countering religious extremism

The object of the research is to disclose the procedural issues of law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations in countering religious extremism and to establish research proposals on improving legal assurances in this cooperation.

The following tasks have been implemented in order to achieve this purpose:

- to analyze the current state of law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations in countering religious extremism acts, settlement of religious conflicts, and provision of public and national security;
- to reveal the main problems in assurance of law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations in countering religious extremism and provision of public and national security;
- to establish action-oriented recommendations on improving and assuring interactions with religious organizations, and to guarantee their realization.

In practicing counter-extremist operations, law enforcement authorities had been working with religious organizations as well as settling inter-confessional conflicts. The research developed special inquiry forms and questionnaires to be completed by law enforcement agents, religious organization representatives, and religious experts. Additionally, participants were interviewed and polled.

The research 1) drew on the “Interaction Concept of Law Enforcement Authorities and Religious Associations” project, and 2) developed a resource book of religious terms and definitions for law enforcement officers.22

Currently, threats against national and public security have expanded evidenced by growing extremist acts in various spheres of public life which serve to further destabilize the nation’s socio-economic environment and undermines Kyrgyzstan’s image to the international community. Though state-legal social reforms implemented since the 1990s have had positive effects, they have also aided in engendering religious extremism.

Subsequently, state-social institution interaction requires careful research and analysis, leading to early solutions relevant to Kyrgyzstan’s participation in inter-cultural and inter-confessional integration.

Today, religious organizations have greater influence over social life, and the wide confessional expansion in Kyrgyzstan is evidence of a much higher degree of religious freedom. However, increasing numbers of religious organizations has led to radicalization of inter-confessional relations and destabilization of the nation’s religious environment as a whole. Weak state policy on religious freedom remains distinct and to some degree, allows for a rise in extremism. High-ranking officials acknowledge that religious extremism has become one of the main factors undermining stability and security in individual nations and the world as a whole.

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22 The resource book is developed in collaboration with the Director of IARC “Religion, Right and Politics” of K. Malikov, specialists of the State Commission for religion and the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SDMK).
Despite the 2005 adoption of the law on countering extremist activity, experts emphasize that the full danger of religious extremism in Kyrgyz society is remains unrealized. Principles and practical mechanisms on countering extremism have yet to be elaborated upon.

One of the most important methods of countering extremism is state-religious organization collaboration in addition to working with other social institutions and the greater population. This method also remains insufficiently elaborated upon, especially in law enforcement bodies’ interactions with religious associations. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen law enforcement authorities’ cooperation with religious organizations in special legal policies and normative consolidations.

Law enforcement bodies' cooperation with religious institutions should be based on the Kyrgyz Constitution in addition to relevant laws, statues, and regulations, as well as contracts and agreements of cooperation and mutual assistance.

This research highlights the necessity to develop and implement a reasonable method of interaction between law enforcement authorities and religious organizations in the interest of countering extremism and assuring public and national security.

**Peculiarities of state institutions’ interaction with the religious community in security and countering the religious extremism**

Preventing religious extremism can be extremely efficient if traditional religious organizations are allowed to assist in parallel with state bodies. Orientation towards religious organizations will allow for the rejection of extremist movements from religious communities. As an example, in August 2003 in Saudi Arabia, the Council of Supreme Muslim Clergymen of Saudi Arabia issued a religious decree (“fatwa”) against terrorism. This fatwa denied the acceptance of jihad which was being widely used by extremists in various countries to justify their violent actions. Similar to explosions and murders, subversions are classified in the fatwa as “virulent crimes contradicting shariah laws,” and individuals who attempt to mask their terrorist acts as acts of sacred war are identified as “ignorant people having lost the right way.”

In the course of overcome Hizb ut-Tahrir’s influence, theologians and other religious figures developed helpful explanations. In an example from Jordan, where Hizb ut-Tahrir was established, and in Libya and Turkey where extremists often traveled to in order to expand on their ideology, the explanations of theologians resulted in the nation refusing to support the Islamic party. During that time, Hizb ut-Tahrir began disappearing from these states due to the population realizing the radical nature of the party’s goals and rejecting their destructive ideas.

Therefore, we believe that explanations on the activities of traditional confessions among the population and creating a universal inter-confessional system of tolerance and inter-religious dialogue should be priorities necessary in enhancing unity among Kyrgyzstan’s various ethnic and religious groups. These explanations and dialogues will also help avoid the promotion and expansion of religious extremism.

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23 In this case, the traditional religions are the religions, historically existing in our society for many centuries, having great authority and influence.
Including traditional confessions into activities preventing extremism creates conditions favorable for inter-confessional interactions and increases their level of education. This will also aid in strengthening theological and legal literature which currently is being conducted by foreign authors promoting extremist ideas.

Inter-religious strife can appear from subversive literature and the publications of destructive sects which contain direct or hidden calls to a violent change in the constitution. Often, these publications come from within Kyrgyzstan. Previously, extremist literature came into Kyrgyzstan from Uzbekistan and from non-Soviet countries; today, extremist material is published in the Kyrgyz language.

For example, in April 2009, law enforcement officers discovered a secret printing press in Osh, and withdrawn 1,000 copies of a book entitled, “System of Islam” written in the Kyrgyz language, blanks of a running issue of “al-Za’il” magazine, computers, and printing equipment.

Translations from Arabic and Uzbek into Kyrgyz is often done at a professional level; consequently, members of Hizb at-Tahrir who speak Kyrgyz will most likely also have an educational background in philosophy and theology. Therefore, expertise of a number of religious organizations and literature from abroad published in the country requires public support. The Chief of the Directorate of Internal Affairs of Osh city K. Joldosheva currently suspects that religious literature is sold in many areas of Osh city due to the Muslim Spiritual Authority’s control of book sales. 24

The policy of militant atheism and secularism during the Soviet era and the absence of clear government policy on cooperation with traditional religious instructions during the first few years of democratic reform have led to extremist organizations intruding on Kyrgyz territory. The government has tasked “government authorities for the formation of national policy on the religious sphere.” To this end, relevant public authorities are mandated to control and observe state legislation on religious organizations and citizens, and to take preventive measures against anti-constitutional activities under the guise of religion.

Extremist acts are especially distinct within one confession, among its different sects which accuse one another of lacking faith, apostasy, propagate exclusiveness, predominance of a religious group, or contrary, inferiority of another. Therefore, traditional religious organizations and their representatives usually suffer first from religious extremism.

Review of the current situation on law enforcement – religious community cooperation

Researchers conducted interviews and selective polling of representatives of law enforcement authorities, religious figures, and religious experts in order to reveal particularities of law enforcement authorities’ cooperation with religious communities. The poll worked to determine the essentials of law enforcement authorities’ cooperation with religious organizations through respondents’ answers; reveal main issues preventing effective interaction; and determine interests in cooperation. This allowed the research to select an optimal model and mechanism of interaction between the two

24 Coordination meeting at the Major’s Office in Osh city on 15th April, 2014

Search For Common Ground in Kyrgyz Republic | 74, Erkindik Blvd, Bishkek
groups. A total of 65 people were interviewed via polling and was conducted in Bishkek, Osh city, Chui, and Osh regions.

As the most basic form of support and cooperation between the two parties, the majority of respondents (52%) believed that preventative cooperation through working groups and conferences was the most valuable; 30% stated that attaining and rending methodological assistance and exchange of information was essential; 15% indicated that implementation of social programs and joint planning was essential; and 5% indicated that prevention of religious extremist groups and violations of laws were most essential.

The first step to forming law enforcement cooperation with religious organizations involves the Ministry of Internal Affairs which, in 2009, joined the Department of Internal Affairs with religious organizations. Consolidating the Department of Internal Affairs and religious organizations allows for the structures of various faiths to establish joint solutions for preventing violent extremism. It also consolidates against corruption, drug addiction, alcoholism, and juvenile delinquency.

Under this consolidation, the Mobile and Analytical Centers (MAC) was established on sites of previous ethnic-religious conflicts, with one MAC conducting preventative activities on the site under order MIA №382 dated 17 December 2010. MAC widely involved public and religious figures including the IARC represented by Director K. Mailkov, PF “Adep Bashaty,” and representatives of SDMK and ROC. Joint preventive activities’ high effectiveness is reliant on organizations’ abundant opportunities to monitor the current ethno-religious situation, effective response to various crises, and prevent possible confrontations. Additionally, law enforcement authorities have had positive experiences with NGOs specializing in religion.

In collaboration with the Mayor’s Office in Bishkek, MIA and Religion, Rights, and Politics, an analytical center, gave a series of special lectures for secondary school dropouts on preventing extremist and radical ideology as well as various violations of the law by youth on the basis of Islam. The course piloted a number of activates including the Directorate of Internal Affairs involving religious experts and NGOs in organizing a number of seminars and lectures on religion and religious topics such as, “Countering religious extremism and fundamentalism,” “Essence of traditional Islam,” and “Prevention of international conflicts.” Heads of village councils, imams of mosques, and local DIA inspectors took part in the seminars and lectures.

Further preventative activities were conducted by the DIA and religious organizations. Over 50,000 copies of special booklets entitled, “Islam against Radicalism and Extremism,” “Caution,” and “Hizb-ut-Tahrir is misbelief” were prepared in Kyrgyz, Russian, and Uzbek languages, and disseminated among the population in order to raise public awareness of the malignance of religious extremism.

As exemplified, law enforcement authorities can be open to association with traditional religious institutions and vice versa. Emphasis must be placed on the State Commission as a special government authority tasked to establish state policy on religion and to strengthen state authorities’ cooperation with religious organizations.
The results of the poll indicated that 32.9% of respondents believed that religious authorities' passivity in initiating cooperation was the main cause of a lack of law enforcement – religious organization interaction. Additionally, it was emphasized that local state administrations do not intervene in religious organizations’ activities in many regions, negatively impacting personal, social, and state security.

Extremism prevention strategy centers on a well-rounded public awareness of confessional diversity, the necessity of consolidating society in the interest of social development, and public knowledge of the consequences of religious intolerance, genocide, and other crimes generated by religious extremism.

In August 2009, the Osh regional state administration held a meeting bringing forward factors influencing radicalization of the religious community in Osh and Osh region. Imams of mosques, law enforcement authority representatives, legal officials, and journalists took part in this discussion. Discussion participants noticed that the region’s population is poorly informed on religious associations’ activities, and know little about various religious doctrines including that of Islam. Much pretense was expressed towards Muslim clergymen, many of whom have never completed secondary education. The Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan faced a series of problems:

• Lack of educated and independent religious Islamic figures who are able to conduct awareness-raising training among the population on in-depth religious knowledge;
• Insufficient number of religious scientists/theologians and philosophers who are able to interpret Islam’s various movements and strongly convince believers;
• Poor scientific base for preparing qualified spiritual figures and preachers on sites;
• Active participation of numerous Islamic organizations and independent missionaries having significant influence on forming religious consciousness when local religious leaders are inactive;
• Significant financial assistance received by extremists from Muslim countries opening wide opportunities to implement various programs.

These and the other problems regarding religious extremism cannot be solved without taking measures on improving the population’s level of education in general and on religious study including history, culture, and tradition specifically. It is important to explain that extremist ideology has nothing in common with true religious doctrines and ideals.

Mutual cooperation between security bodies and religious figures has yielded positive results in raising public awareness on extremist ideology prevention and actively citizen refusal of participating in destructive groups. In March 2013, national security bodies carried out preventative measures and identified six members of “jihad hole” in Kara-Balta city.

Later, the six identified members participated in a regional meeting, admitted their mistakes, and called on citizens to stand up against radicals. In early 2012 in Nookat Osh region, seven active members disengaged from REO Hizb ut-Tahrir after the Directorate of Internal Affairs and the local clergy conducted lasting preventative measures.
Joint activities of the Directorate of Internal Affairs and religious organizations have worked to prevent religious and inter-ethnic conflicts, especially as a result of timely public awareness. An example includes the former secretary of Bishkek Diocesan administration’s appeal in November 2010 to protopriest I. Dronov regarding stealing church property from the Russian Orthodox Church in Chui region. In his appeal, protopriest I. Dronov stated that crimes directed against the Russian Orthodox Church could nurture provocative acts against the Russian-speaking population. However, upon preliminary review and analysis of the committed crimes, it was established that they were committed due to envy, and did not bear ethno-religious motives against ethnic minorities.

**Results of study of factors preventing effective law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations**

During the study, 20% of respondents indicated that they noticed a considerably high degree of law enforcement interaction with religious organizations in the region. 34% of respondents noted this interaction as satisfactory, and 28% as good.

Results of the study revealed new ways to develop cooperation between law enforcement authorities and religious communities, which meet the modern requirements; although a rather big share of respondents (40%) are satisfied with the existing interaction mechanisms. Forming new mechanisms of interaction can be considered a main factor in anti-extremist activity development addressing existing problems and conditions.

Analysis of the research results revealed a lack of consciousness and understanding of 38% of participants of the dialogue who were unaware of the importance of cooperation. As a clarification, research indicates that representatives of religious communities who believe that state authorities should have sole control over countering religious extremism express the least interest in cooperation.

Also, one of the main problems indicated by 19% of participants preventing active cooperation is mutual distrust between state authorities and religious organizations. 14% of respondents mentioned that alienation of religious figures from law enforcement officers was due to the incorrect understanding of the term “secular state” as attempts to keep a certain distance between the two parties due to fear of violation constitutional principles. The research revealed that when heads of the Directorate of Internal Affairs distance themselves from the clergy, they tend to take passive positions in interacting with religious organizations.

An imbalance of mutual relationships between law enforcement authorities and religious organizations also prevents positive cooperation. Law enforcement bodies’ priorities towards religious organizations are limited by tasks to counter religious extremism and prevent destabilization. However, initiating dialogue with each other can allow the two parties the change the balance of the relationship for mutual benefits. In this situation, security officials aspire to expand their control over religious organizations, according to the opinion of 73% of respondents, while religious organizations wish to increase their rights under the Constitution, as opined by 12% of respondents.

The study has shown that there are many factors preventing the successful cooperation. This makes it difficult to find adequate models and mechanisms for such
cooperation. At the same time, the results of the study help identify the existing problems in the interaction between the law enforcement agencies and religious organizations, and can be used as a basis for sound recommendations. Such recommendations advocate for a more close and active interaction.

We suggest the Model Concept of law enforcement – religious organization interaction in order to develop these institutions (see Appendix). The Model will allow for participants to conduct coordinated activities, leading to successful results. It should be noted that stage-by-stage, adequate institutionalization of interaction mechanisms will help balance state-religion relationships, resolve conflicting interests, and find coordinated solutions to counter destructive acts.

Relations between law enforcement authorities and religious organizations are determined by measuring disinterest or cooperation. If cooperation prevails, extremism prevention activities will improve; if disinterest is greater than cooperation, anti-extremism activities will decrease, and threats against the country will increase.

Results of the research indicate that the general space for law enforcement – religious organization interaction requires active formation in which the following tendencies are noted:

- **significantly strengthening the role and increase the scale of religious community representatives’ participation in prevention of religious extremism.** In April 2003 in Bishkek, an II kurultai (meeting) of Muslims in Kyrgyzstan was held on countering extremist and terrorist acts. Under the recommendations of the State Agency for Religions, a decision was made on de-politicizing Islam as a special SDMK fatwa recognized by all imams of mosques during the regular Meeting of Ulemas on 11 October 2003 on not involving the spiritual clergy into political activities and to reject radical ideas among clergymen.

- **Expanding opportunities to achieve consensus between law enforcement bodies and religious organizations.** In 2003, the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims declared a fatwa against Hizb ut-Tahrir as an unIslamic organization propagating false doctrines. Additionally, the SDMK department of fatwas undertook a similar decision on the Akhmadia organization.

- **Increasing the number, diversity, and quality of law enforcement – religious institution interaction mechanisms in parallel with transparency issues of participating partners.** In order to address public awareness after the June 2010 events in collaboration with SDMK leaders and local government representatives, preventative activities were organized. The tenth MD of the MIA collaborated with Mady Karasui district and the Osh branch office for a public forum promoting international tolerance on 4 June 2011, under the slogan, “international consent is a happy family” in the Mady Kara-Sui region. 40 families residing in the region were invited to the event, and religious figures were actively involved in the meeting which called for the population to live in peace in concord under Islamic principles. The role of the family was also discussed in developing the young generation in the spirit of international tolerance.

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25 At that time the State Agency for Religions under the Government of KR was functioning in the Republic
Article 1 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic directly establishes the state’s basic principles, norms, and religious relations. The Constitution also attempts to balance interest of developments of state – religious relations, and grants citizens the right to religion, to consider religion, and allows religious institutions to influence the state and its political context in working through complex struggles with extremism.

The law “On countering the extremist activity” passed in 2005 served as a decisive step in countering religious extremism. Under this law, state collaboration with religious organizations is the basic principle in countering extremist activities. Timely prevention of illegal extremist activities depends on close and active interaction.

Legislative acts regulating law enforcement activities established norms to interact with religious organizations and other associations. For example, under Article 4 of the law “About the internal affairs bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic”, internal bodies must fulfill tasks charged on interaction with social institutions, including religious organizations. Article 7 of the law “About the national security bodies” determines relations between national security bodies and religious organizations.

Currently, Kyrgyz society’s questionable religious state requires the development of relations between state institutions and religious organizations through a modern regulatory framework in order to determine a more precise and mutually beneficial relationship. The law №282 “On the freedom of religion and religious organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic” adopted on 31 December 2008 serves as the basic normative regulatory act of state – religion relations.

Practice shows that developed and implemented programs including multi-agency plans for countering religious extremism activates state – religion relations. Programs include the “Multi-agency plan for countering extremism, activity of the destructive religious movements, and prevention of terrorism to 2012-2013” approved by Governmental decree №247-p, 23 August 2012. Religious organizations represented by the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Orthodox were involved in realization of its articles. On a legal basis, law enforcement interaction with religious organizations in countering extremism is vital to national security.

Consequently, these laws and regulations should be included in the development of law enforcement interaction with religious organizations in order to counter violent extremism. An adequate legal framework organizing close interaction of law enforcement authorities will result in collaborative activities in countering religious extremism.

Results and conclusions law enforcement – religious organization interaction

The research summarizes the following conclusions:

- Cooperation between law enforcement bodies and religious organizations does not contradict international law no domestic legislation.
- This interaction on countering religious extremism can take two basic forms:
  - direct collaborative activity;

26 The Law is signed on the 17th of August, 2005 №150
27 The Law is signed on the 11th of January, 1994 №1360-XII
28 The Law is signed on the 11th of January, 1994 №1362-XII
29 Approved by the Presidential Decree of KR dated June 9, 2012 of PD № 120
• information exchange.
  ✓ The nation’s multiple confessions are not hindrances to cooperation. Traditional religions including Islam and Orthodoxy will always find common ground with one another as they are the spiritual core of nations living peacefully for many centuries and have common interests.
  ✓ Civil society participation including religious organizations and associations in countering religious extremism is a characteristic of a constitutional state. This participation does not violate secular state principles, and allows for the right to freedom of religion.

Opportunities granted by religious and traditions must be leveraged to form moral principles within security forces – religious organization interactions. This will also allow the state to create a powerful ideological and policy tool in countering religious extremism, and in turn, religious organizations will mobilize and partner with the state against extremist values.

Currently, law enforcement activities preventing religious extremism should be ideological, awareness raising work directed towards public realization of international and patriotic ideas and explanations of the destructive influence of religious extremism in society. Awareness raising also forms public opinion on religious extremists’ activities and personalities. Therefore, it is necessary to systematically organize speeches by clergy representatives and conduct roundtables with state representatives and broadcast these discussions. Joint citizen appointments must be conducted, in addition to meetings in labor collectives, higher educational institutes, and religious establishments.

Additionally, law enforcement officials must be invited to discussions with believers and religious students. These meetings will strengthen relationships between law enforcement officers and believers, and law enforcement officials will be able to disseminate information on self-defense against destructive organizations and crimes, and how to collaborate with law enforcement authorities. Resource material should be developed for religious organizations to aid in raising the capacity of believers in law and defense.

A method of successful interaction can include collaborative work between local clergy and local police inspectors. Spiritual leaders have immense opportunities in rendering assistance to inspectors in work with the population, and in not only consulting officers, but also in practical assistance. In these cases, extremists run the risk of not only falling under the acute control of inspectors, but also the wider social net of religious organization representatives.

Currently, 977 local police inspectors are assigned to 2,115 mosques, 132 namazkans, and 65 madrasahs under the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ orders. 1,442 police officers are assigned to former prisoners convicted of committing religious extremist crimes.

Institutional mechanisms of law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations are recommended the following directions:
  ➢ Creating different mechanisms to inform the population on extremist activities, and ways to escape their influence by hosting relevant information, guidance notes, handbooks, reference books, etc. on websites and by other means.
Organizing a permanent interaction between law enforcement and religious organizations including coordinating meetings, commissions, working groups, etc.

Developing a project model concept “On the interaction of the law-enforcement agencies and religious organizations” (See Appendix).

Religious organization representatives participate in forming law enforcement activities on countering religious extremism.

Developing and conducting joint programs and plans to prevent religious extremism and radicalization of larger society.

Jointly developing and discussing normative regulatory act drafts in countering religious extremism.

Systematically disseminate informative and consultative support, as well as joint planning and holding conferences and seminars on real-life problems of countering violent extremism.

Identifying other forms of interaction that are not illegal or banned under current legislation, and developing and introducing new methods of cooperation through experts, consultations, coordinating councils, etc.

The research indicates that forming and developing institutional mechanisms of law enforcement and religious community interaction will, in the long term, increase the efficiency of counter extremist activates, support religious well-being, and create conditions to better use religious organizations’ potential in countering destructive ideology as a whole.

Appendix

CONCEPT

law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations

Introduction

Building a democratic state is impossible given currently existing socio-political and religious lack of confidence, strife, and absence of civil accord. The government’s basic task is to establish a stable inter-religious environment, and secure socio-political stability for social well-being.

On 3 September 2014, Kyrgyzstan’s President Atambaev A.Sh attended a Defense Council meeting, and emphasized the necessity of creating a unique model of government authority – religious organization interaction in providing security and preventing religious conflicts without infringing on citizens’ rights and freedoms.
National – religious organization relations are currently developing, and will require legislative confirmation of their cooperation in addition to further developments and improvements. Transitioning to such a new, qualitative level is vital to strengthening fundamental Kyrgyz national identity, Constitution, in providing harmonious social relations, and to protect national interests.

Today’s traditional religions\(^{30}\) are more actively involved in public-political life, bringing significant changes in national and legal relations. Kyrgyzstan’s period of restoring principles of freedom and confession allowed the population to significantly change its religious views.

The Kyrgyz Constitution prevents the government from intervening on religious activities, but does not prohibit intervention in various forms on matters of mutual interest as both the state and traditional religious suffer from religious extremism. Religious extremism should be considered a struggle with religion, but rather with people and organizations masking harmful activities as religion, and hurting the state, society, and religion itself.

Under laws and regulations, Kyrgyz law enforcement authorities perform tasks including those in collaboration with social associations, including religious organizations. Collaborative work should be conducted within the frames of enhancing legal structures in society, preventing crimes, detecting violated rights and freedoms of religion, ideologically opposing religious extremism, and preventing international conflicts with traditional religious groups’ positive resources. The process for law enforcement – religious organization interaction is built on each relevant organizations’ contribution to the Kyrgyz culture, influence on modern society, and scale of support by Kyrgyz citizens.

Recently, historically present religious organizations including Muslims of the hanafite doctrine and Orthodox Christians became permanent participants of various events preventing legal violations focusing on countering religious extremism and of other assistance to law enforcement authorities. Religious organization representatives at times took active participation, and cooperated with law enforcement authorities on site in order to prevent religious extremism.

**Concept Participants**

Concept participants include Kyrgyz law enforcement authorities, religious organizations within Kyrgyz territory, State Commission for religions in Kyrgyzstan, other state institutions, NGOs, scientific associations, institutions, and research centers.

**Main directions of law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations**

Interaction between law enforcement authorities and religious organizations assumes cooperation under the following directions:

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\(^{30}\) In this case, the traditional religions are religions historically existing in our society for many centuries, having great authority and influence.
− preventing illegal activity by religious, ethno-cultural, national associations of extremists, pseudo-religious centers, and various destructive groups;
− collaborating in order to administer justice and law, and protect public morality, rights, and freedoms;
− collaboratively raise awareness on preventing legal violations among the population;
− spiritually and morally support law enforcement officers and cooperate in their training on the spirit of tolerance.

Good morals, religious tolerance, loving neighbors, and other commandments are emphasized as spiritual morals.

**Goals of the Concept of law enforcement authorities’ interaction with religious organizations**

Consolidating law enforcement authorities and religious organizations must involve various confessional structures to collaborate on countering religious extremism, corruption, drug addiction, alcoholism, growth in the homeless population, and legal violation by minors, etc.

The Concept will promote strengthening social stability, decreasing the crime rate, and solving problems in the administration of justice and law. The Concept affirms traditional religions including Islam and Orthodox Christianity’s historical role based on mutual respect and tolerance and maintenance of peace and stability in society.

Law enforcement – religious organization interactions are also conducted in order to ideologically oppose destructive, external religious influences to the nation’s specific existing cultural and religious life.

**Tasks of the Concept of law enforcement - religious organization interaction**

achieving the goal will result in the following tasks:
− Based on national and foreign experience, analyze developments on law enforcement – religious organization issues
− reveal the meaning, essence, and content law enforcement - religious organization interaction;
− establish basic directions and forms of law enforcement - religious organization interaction on administering justice, countering extremist acts, and rendering assistance in training and re-training of law enforcement officers;
− summarize and analyze law enforcement – traditional religious organization (Islam and Orthodoxy) cooperation practices in providing the rights and security of religious citizens;
− develop preventative opportunities for religious organizations to participate in enforcement actions against illegal acts by youth

**Legal fundamentals law enforcement - religious organization interaction**

The legal fundamentals of law enforcement - religious organization interaction present specific aspects of national and religious relations as law enforcement authorities are entities of national - religious relations.
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Concept's legal framework comprises the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, laws of the Kyrgyz Republic including “About internal affairs bodies,” “About national security bodies,” “On countering extremist activity,” “On countering terrorism,” “About freedom of confession and religious organizations in Kyrgyz Republic,” and other legal acts of government authorities, departmental publications, scientific and practical conference material, expert evaluations and recommendations, and monitoring the religious environment.

**Basic principles for organizing law enforcement - religious organizations interaction**

Law enforcement - religious organization interaction is built on the principles of:
- legitimacy;
- equal representation;
- general national responsibility for preserving social stability and security;
- mutual interest;
- professional ethics;
- secularism;
- transparency;
- confidence and social responsibility;
- unity in elaborating on party decisions and obligations
- publicity;
- consolidating efforts of civil society institutions, and their active participation in forming and realizing effective social policy.

**Forms of law enforcement - religious organization interaction**

Law enforcement - religious organization relations should include:
- performing a compulsory plan provided by the relevant administrative document (joint program, plan of events, etc.);
- offering the administration of justice and law, protection of public morality, rights, and freedoms, countering religious extremism, morally supporting, training, and educating law enforcement authorities;
- including a special subject reflecting the main aspects of the interaction in working with the public and reflecting positive foreign interaction practices in education programs, training, and retraining of law enforcement officers;
- disseminating existing interaction experiences on training and moral education, information and awareness raising among officers’ families, and organizing religious customs during ceremonies and funerals;
- conducting special courses, seminars, and lectures for security officers on religion for further training and work with believers in order to disclose information on destructive religious ideologies;
- developing resource books, recommendations, and reference books for law enforcement officers;
- organizing collaborative roundtables and conferences, giving lectures, publishing scientific articles, and conducting press conferences.

**Organizational provision for realizing the Concept**
The Concept will be realized in accordance with the interaction program between relevant law enforcement authorities and religious organizations for a definite term.

The Program Coordinator will be the relevant law enforcement authority.

Progress on the realization of the Concept will be discussed during law enforcement officer meetings, coordination meetings, during public appointment and councils, and relevant working meetings.

**Financial provision for realizing the Concept**

Financial provision for realization of the Concept will include the state budget, funding from international organizations, and the other sources not forbidden by law.

**Conclusion**

Realizing the Concept will promote development of national and religious relations, public activity, and will work to consolidate efforts of the executive bodies, local self-governments, religious organizations, and the civil sector, including religious followers in order to increase efficiency in countering religious extremism, achieving social stability, protection citizens’ rights and freedoms, and encouraging the stable development of the Kyrgyz national identity.
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

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Strategies for Combating Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic
Introduction

In today’s world, extremism manifests through violent characteristics related to radical religious doctrines. Their underlying causes are simultaneously found in social and political lives of individual states and the international community.

Currently, phenomena threatening both national and international security are religious political radicalism, extremism, and terrorism with pseudo-Islamic slogans. Thus, a range of countries in the Middle East have suffered from radicals and extremists’ destructive influence hiding behind Islam, and have become increasingly dissolution. Religious extremist groups have serious negative impact on Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan.

Strengthening extremist religious ideas and movements to great extent occurs as a radical response to aggravating, unsolved internal social, economic, and political problems inside the state, as well as contradictions and conflicts in international relations. Another reaction to such problems, as events in Ukraine have shown, can be aggressive nationalism and separatism, similar to that which was previously compounded in other states by communist ideas and movements.

As a rule, the population’s remonstrative potential accumulates around socio-economic and political problems existing in the state. Gradually, this potential accumulates into idealistic and fundamentalist religious and religious-political doctrines. In turn, mass movements and political subjects, ranging from legal to terroristic organizations, are formed on the basis of these ideas. Quite often, new organizations opposing official authorities are secretly supported by competing foreign states.

In Central Asia’s difficult environment, we cannot completely exclude the possibility of negative developments within Kyrgyzstan.

Without any doubt, in recent years, all countries of the region, including Kyrgyzstan, have taken active measures to resist extremist ideas and terrorism, solve existing internal socioeconomic problems, and build international and interstate cooperation to combat terrorism.

At the same time, further improving approaches to combating extremism has proven to be challenging.

In the course of this study, the main efforts included the following:

1. Covering essential content of all main radical and extremist Islamic movements and jamaats in Kyrgyzstan, as well as threats to public and state security stemming from these activities.
2. Revealing key parties interested in ideological resistance to radicalism and violent extremism in the Kyrgyz republic. Description of joint positions and interests.
3. Developing proposals on essential directions and methods of ideological resistance to radicalism and violent extremism.

Justification of terms used in this paper will be made before we describe the results of the study. First of all, the term “violent extremism” is not used in legal, regulatory information and analytical documents in Kyrgyzstan because it contains no legal meaning reflecting various approaches.
It would be logical to understand violent extremism as a politically or ideologically motivated illegal activity, accompanied with violent acts towards civilians manifesting as terrorism and including cases of extremism directly related to violence. At the same time, many surveyed experts expressed their opinion on separating extremism into violent and non-violent as unreasonable. This is explained by extremist propaganda aiding other forms of extremism. For example, racial, ethnic, religious, or any other social discord and animosity eventually leads to violence. This approach is present in the Kyrgyz, particularly Article 1 of the Law “On prevention of extremist activity” and in Article 299 of the Kyrgyz Criminal Code.

Therefore, it is important to consider aspect in developing and implementing specific strategies for combating religious extremism to ensure coordination and to effectively achieve common goals.

**Nonconventional movements and jamaats in Kyrgyzstan**

With a steady trend of strengthened public interest in religion and religious political ideas, conventional, moderate confessions in the country are gradually surrendering their positions to various foreign movements and sects, which are potentially destructive. Foreign sects often directly or indirectly undermine public security, establish acute interreligious differences, and distribute radical and extremist ideas.

Religious movements and sects can be considered destructive when containing some elements of inhumane, anti-social, or anti-State ideas in their doctrines and value system. This is regardless of the fact that many of them can formally (or evidently) follow legislation. Extremist movements represent a special threat, which initially appeared in various Muslim countries and spread throughout the world, including to Kyrgyzstan. Islamic extremism is a religious manifestation under strict compliance with rules and norms set out in the Quran and Sunna in everyday life and public practice. Extremists proclaim that their goal is to reinstate in the current lives of Muslims specific institutes and norms of early Islam, contemporary to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the “Rashidun,” including Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. They propose to clear Islam from stratification, and to recover Islam in its “absolute purity.” For extremists, this epoch serves as a source of permanent inspiration. Extremists most often cite outstanding Islamic ideologists such as the founder of Hanabilah Madhhab ibn Hanbal (VIII-IX), Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (XVIII) as substantive material in fighting for the return to “original, genuine Islam” and establishing the “Islamic state.” Adherents to extremism promulgate a fanatic following of religious traditions, reject the secular, and wish to introduce an Islamic form of government atypical to Kyrgyz citizens. Extremist activities divide Muslim communities, radicalize and politicize religious followers’ perception, and establish favorable conditions for recruitment by extremist and terrorist organizations. It should be noted that extremism in any confession under certain circumstances, especially socio-political conditions, can be an ideological basis for religious politicization and the appearance of religious extremism, which turns into terrorism in extreme forms.

However, religious radicalism, extremism, and terrorism are not peculiar to Islam. On the contrary, Islam includes the concept of fair world order (4:135) found within Muslim

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31 Traditional religious trend in the country are Islam of Hanafite Madhhab – legal school and Maturidi Aqidah – direction of dogma, as well as Russian Orthodox Church.
33 This term was first introduced by American Islamic scientist B. Lewis.
34 Surah 4 (Women – An-Nisa): O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.
traditions and established in the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, adopted in 1981 by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

It should be noted that a range of non-Islamic, unconventional religious movements and sects pose a significant threat because their activities lead to physical and mental damage to their adepts and cause active proselytism, leading to irritation among representatives of conventional confessions and public conflicts, and sometimes to illegal commercial activities.

Religious radicalism and extremism to a great extent are political in nature, and are reaction to socio-economic and political problems, as well as artificially imported from abroad. Renown Russian Islamic scientist G. Mirsky stated that, “explanations should not be searched in the religious sphere, but in those historical and social circumstances, which define the life of hundreds and millions of people in the Muslim world particularly, and in the third world in general. Islamic radicalism derives strength from smart injustice suffered by people in Asia, Africa, and in the Middle East, most strongly.”

We will provide generalized information on the most nonconventional Islamic movements and Jamaats acting in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as give their characteristics in relation to their influence on public and state security.

**Hizb ut-Tahrir** (Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami or Islamic Party of Liberation, HTI) is an international religious political organization of Palestinian origin. It was recognized as an extremist organization and prohibited in Kyrgyzstan and in many other countries; in Russia, is referred to as a terrorist organizations and acts legally in some individual states.

According to its statute and program, HTI declares itself a political party striving to recover an Islamic way of living and establish a universal Islamic state (caliphate). It proposes establishing a caliphate in one state and then gradually expanding it by means of jihad. Governments of all Muslim countries and of conventional Islam are characterized as non-Islamic in HTI promotional material. HTI’s political struggle is represented as a fight against those who are unfaithful and imperialists, and to relieve the Ummah (Muslim community) from their rule and influence. It also provides for challenging and resisting governors who, in HTI’s opinion, violate the rules of Islam.

HTI documents state that, “if there is an opportunity to eliminate the governor and the possibility of its elimination prevails, Muslims must raise weapons and fight for his removal from power. If there is no opportunity to fight against the governor, it is necessary to prepare forces and seek for assistance from those, who possess force and power. As soon as the chance appears, it is necessary to topple the governor and fight against him.”

HTI members have frequently been involved in conspiracies and have attempted insurrections in Jordan, Iraq, and Syria. In 1979, over 100 HTI activists were executed by the order of the King of Jordan.

HTI is a well-organized and dangerous organization, attempting to intrude into the government and army, and HTI members are characterized by strong fanaticism.

Leaders and activists of regional structures tend towards radicalization, which, in separate cases, leads to separation of groups with the most extremist views. Cases include Akromiya and Hizb-an-Nusra, which split from HTI’s Fergana branch in Uzbekistan in 1997 and from the Tashkent branch in 1999. According to data collected

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35 Mirsky G. Islamic fundamentalism and international terrorism. // Central Asia and Caucasus.- 2001 - No. 6(18).- p.31.

Security services and law enforcement bodies of various countries possess data indicating secret contacts and coordination of activities among leaders and functionary, separate Hizb ut-Tahrir and a range of international terrorist organizations.

According to Uzbekistan’s official law enforcement data, secret instructions to party members were revealed, emphasizing the necessity of “studying the military potential of the country, performing fighting reconnaissance, scouting military units to study the activity of governmental army.” Extremist characteristics of this organization’s activities were evidenced by plans for its cells to carry out terrorist acts in Moscow and the Moscow region in November 2012. In the course of operative activities, 27 guerilla-fighters were arrested, and ball grenades, trinitrotoluene blocks, and firearms were seized at the places of their residence.

Analysis of HTI activity dynamics in various parts of the world shows that this organization has obtained an especially combatant character after the invasion of American forces of Afghanistan. At the end of 2011, HTI began actively distributing leaflets with statements that the USA and Great Britain “have declared war on Islam,” and calling for armed jihad against the “unfaithful.”

In recent years, several events evidenced Hizb ut-Tahrir adherents’ gradual radicalization in Kyrgyzstan, particularly when various members were arrested with weapons and ammunition. Former members of organizations participating in extremist groups were registered, including a cell of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan eliminated in 2006 in southern Kyrgyzstan. In 2008, an electronic information media, containing detailed information on the number of personnel, armory, and locations of the Kyrgyz armed forces units, and on the armed forces of the countries of the region, were seized from a members of an extremist organization and was detained by the Kyrgyz SCNS. In the same year, mass disorders were initiated by local cells of extremist organizations in Nookat.

Experts have identified three phases in HTI’s strategy:

First: religious propaganda, selection, recruitment of members, entering government authorities.

Second: organization of public actions, calls for and acts of defiance to the government, protests, lockouts, mass destabilizing disorder, resignation of the government and intrusion into power.

Third: seizure of power by means of take-overs, overthrow of the constitutional system, building up a theocratic state based on Shariah.

Under these phases, some manifestations of the second phase took place in Kyrgyzstan. Currently in Kyrgyzstan, HTI is attempting to mainly increase the number of adherents and supporters through propaganda, and educating and fostering its members, typically done during the first phase of religious extremist strategy.

A significant portion of party members is represented by unsettled youth, serving as fertile grounds for propaganda. However, membership is not limited by age, gender, or ethnic origin. HTI pays great attention to obtain supporters among government representatives who will be able to help on site, and protect party cells from government
harassment. Additionally, women are considered most fanatic, effective, and almost punishable propagandists and recruiters.

Thus, this organization is one of the most dangerous religious political movements actively functioning in Kyrgyzstan and in other countries.

**Salafist movement** ("Salafi" meaning “the one, who follows the traditions of the ancestors”) – Aqidah in Islam, but actually represents a framework of religious political ideology, which unites both extremely radical and moderate religious trends, organizations, groups, and separate individuals in their quest for strict observation of Islamic norms and principles which existed during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions. Salafist movement adherents wish for all Muslim activities, beliefs, norms, and rules strained from early Islam. The main Salafist idea is the necessity to return to the source, with simultaneous rejections of human interpretations and “refuse from everything, which was not used by righteous ancestors” (pictures, telecommunications, aviation, etc.). Salafists represent attempts to clean Islam from buildups formed historically. The Salafist movement is unique in that followers consider its doctrine as the only correct interpretation of Islam, and as a rule, is implemented in corresponding organizations’ activities.

Though having some common features, various Salafist movements and groups have quite significant differences. According to researchers' opinion, Sunni Hanabilah or official Wahhabism, which is currently considered Saudi Arabia’s national religion, can be referred to as relatively moderate. At the same time, extreme forms of the Salafist movement serve as most modern “jihadist” terrorist organizations’ ideology, including Al-Qaeda. The political Salafist movement occupies an interim position; for example, as the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology.

In modern contexts, Wahhabism, as the state religion of several Arab states, has become more moderate, stipulated by internal processes and external political influences. Saudi Ulemas fully support government authorities and understand that political activity will divert them from religious practice. They even resist extreme radicals, including jihadists, by rejecting their rules from dogma.

At the same time, Wahhabism’s internal radical potential has not changed in principle, and is most visibly expressed in hidden support for foreign extremist and terroristic groups.

The most spectacular example of political Salafism is the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the doctrine of which is more focused on political power than religious teachings and political pragmatism. The movement is ready to make concessions of democracy to the West in order to establish political “spiritual” power, and does not exclude applying violence to achieve its goals.

The Salafist movement is characterized by two regulations: *on takfir* and *on jihad*. *Takfir* is charging those who did not agree with the Salafites as infidels (kufr). Infidels ultimately obtain an apostate status; that is, people who withdraw from belief, with regard to whom Shariah norms provide an exceptional measure of punishment, including execution or death.

There are various interpretations of jihad. The Salafites themselves interpret it firstly as an armed struggle, and considered carrying out of jihad as every Muslim’s duty.

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38 Ibid, 117.
39 Ahmad ibn Hanbal is considered as one of teachers; Ethem Ruhi Fığlalı, Çağımızda İtikadi İslam Mezhepleri, İstambul 1995, 71.
40 Though it is allowed to kill the apostate after three proposal to repent and return into Islam, Salafists don't follow this rule.
Ultimately, anyone, including Muslims, who does not agree with the Salafites, is declared an unbeliever.

Jihadist groups aim for armed struggle to establish what they believe is a genuine Islamic power in Muslim countries, which, in their opinion, are ruled by apostate regimes, or where non-Muslims hold power over Muslims. All Sunnite jihadists are referred to as Salafites.41

Moderate Muslim theorist consider the term “jihadism” as divided into the greater and smaller, based on one of Hadiths of the Prophet (PBUH). Upon returning from the battle at Bhadr (624), in which Muslims were victorious, the Prophet (PBUH) stated that, “We returned from the smaller jihad to the greater jihad.”

According to moderate Muslim theorists, the smaller jihad is war against enemies, and the greater jihad is the soul’s resistance to trials, coping with damnable characters, features, and behavior, promoting a rise in the human spirit, and training the spirit in generosity.42 Salafites reject such divisions of jihad.

A. Ignatenko stated that “Everything depends on ijtihad, from implementation of interpretation – compliance with the Divine Revelation.”43 As a form of Islamic renovation, extremism is cyclically repeating every hundred years in accordance with Hadith which states, “In the beginning of every century God sends the one who renovates in the community its faith.” In the course of Islamic history, various lists of rejuvenators were invented.44

Jihadist movements, including takfir-jihads, unite organizations and groups commitment to expressed religious extremist ideology and calling for violent activities towards opponents and objectors.

Participants are transnational, conspiratorial, and often use wide networks, implying a significant independence of specific organizations, of which names and numbers are often changing, jamaats, and separate individuals.

Currently, active jihadist movements are registered in almost 80 countries. Commitment to violent religious fanaticism has become a featured characteristic of numerous extremist organizations, acting in separate countries or in whole regions. This was visibly expressed in the Af-Pak region, including the Taliban movement, Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jamiat-ul Ulema-i-Islam, and Central Asia, including regional groups Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan, etc. In Russia, religious extremist representatives pronounce their presence in the Northern Caucasus such as Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria.

It should be noted that Salafites, including Wahhabites and Jihadists, do not call themselves “Salafites,” “Wahhabites,” or any other special terms, indicating themselves as “Genuine Muslims.”

Salafist groups are generally united by features including:

- propaganda of so-called “genuine” Islam, combined with intolerance to other confessions, including Shi’ism, Sufism, and conventional Sunni Madhhabs;
- Humanitarian and charitable activity through religious international funds and non-governmental organizations in various regions of the world for propaganda;
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

- educating and fostering Muslim youth from different countries in the interest of salaphite religious political ideology;
- obtaining adherents and supporters of Salafism among authorities, establishing conditions to change secular states’ constitutional order;
- ideological and often conspiratorial organizational support (for example financing) of armed jihad in various regions of the world.

In recent years, Salafist ideas have increasing been distributed in Kyrgyzstan, particularly among graduates of Saudi and Egyptian religious educational institutions as well as some Russian-speaking educated believers.

Though their activities are mostly limited to religious practice, in perspective, they bear the following threats to national security:

- radicalizing religious political views, splitting and opposing the Muslim community as well as activating separate jihadist groups;
- consolidating and strengthening Salafite groups, forming strangleholds on the nation’s religious and public political situation, inspiring protest sentiments among the population, and destabilizing the situation;
- Intruding radical extremist ideology and mentality into state society, including political order, from Arab countries.

Characteristic even to the moderate Salafites, the fanatic character of religious ideology, categorical rejection of other values, idealization of caliphate-based form of state government, and trends towards radicalization of public and political views, establishes preconditions for various conflicts and rising social confrontation, and serves as a basis for terroristic methods of activity.

Consequently, this category of believers requires permanent and close watch in order to prevent possible radicalization by separate Salafite representatives or jamaats.

In Tajikistan, the Salafist movement was recognized as an extremist movement and was banned through a judicial proceeding.

In 2012, Kyrgyz judicial authorities recognized a takfir jihadist movement of Salafite origin, and organizations entering into it, such as Jaishul Mahdi, Jund al Khilafah (Jund-ul Khilafah), Ansarullah (Ansar Allah), and At-Takfir wal Hijra (At-Takfirwa-l-Hijra) as extremists and terrorists.

**Tablighi Jamaat** is a large, non-politically motivated, extremist religious movement originally from the Indo-Pak region. The movement appeared in India and has been characterized by systematic and active missionary activities, allowing it to spread quickly around the world.

The Tablighists’ main governing body is the Mashfara (Council). The most promising of new adepts and converted people undergo additional training at Tablighi Jamaat headquarters in Raiwand. Supporters are required to perform systematic preaching and must devote 40 days per year, three days per month, two second halves of day per week, and two hours every day for the organization.

Initially, Tablighi Jamaat did not strive for formal representation in local Muslim communities. However, in the two previous decades, the situation has gradually changed, and at present, there are mosques, Islamic centers, and other Tablighist religious institutions.
Uniquely, Tablighist representatives avoid any contacts with the mass media; they also do not release any publication on their sphere of activities, membership, or financing of the organization.

The Deobandi School's religious ideology serves as a basis for Tablighi Jamaat. This school is known for radicalism, namely for rejecting any other forms of confession, including Shi‘ism, as well as any forms of progressive, Western political systems, considering them to be incompatible with Islam. It should be noted that the Deobandi School gave rise to another, more radical religious political movement, the Taliban.

However, unlike the Taliban, Tablighi Jamaat does not pursue political goals; it does not seek to achieve political goals through armed conflict, believing that a change in political order will be a natural consequence.

The movement also does not pursue short term political goals as it does not recognize the state as a legitimate formation under Islam. Instead, it deals with the entire Muslim community, the Ummah, and here its ambitions have a quite political character. The movement's final goal is to establish universal rule of uncompromising Islam.

Additionally, representatives of various religious extremist and terroristic organizations often penetrate into Dawahtists communities and disseminate propaganda, recruit, or engage in other subversive activities.

Under peculiar Tablighists religious ideology and fanaticism, as well as the difficult situation in various regions of Asia, supporters are radicalized, involved in aiding terrorism, and become direct participants in terrorist activities. According to the media and official statements, in a range of states including France, Russia, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines, members of the organization were charged with active involvement in and aid of terrorist activities. A specific case included Talighi Jamaat harboring terrorists, providing them with transportation assistance, using their own good reputation, and disassociating themselves from anti-terrorist agencies. As a result, Tablighi Jamaat activities are prohibited in a range of countries, particularly in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Iran.

The same method of youth recruiting is used in various countries. After joining the Tablighi Jammat cell in a local mosque or Islamic center and making several preaching missions in their own district, the most active neophytes are invited for four months of advanced training in Raiwand (IRP). Upon arrival to Pakistan, some of them are met by representatives of terroristic groups, proposing to undergo military training.

Since the 1960s, after establishment of the Muslim World League, Tablighi Jamaat has been actively supported by Saudi Arabia's clerical community, regardless of the fact that they are extremely intolerance of other Muslim schools. Wahhabits criticize their insufficient knowledge of Islam, leading to authoritative Wahhabit leader under Sheikh Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz recognizing Tablighi Jamaat and recommending that they jointly participate in providing “direction and advice.”

According to experts, regardless of striving to distribute peace, in reality, Tablighi Jamaat, as is other extremist movements, is subject to radicalization. Very often, the first step to religious radicalization of young Muslims is joining Tablighi Jamaat.

In Kyrgyzstan, Dawahtists propaganda and organizational work does not hide, and does not avoid contact with state structures. In addition, due to their ideological attitudes, in the process of campaigning, Dawahtists stand against Hizb ut-Tahrir and jihadists. Also, due to public rejection of Dawahtists, their leaders are engaging in efforts to change clothing requirements to bring them closer to local traditions.
Nurcular (followers of Said Nursi, or Fethullahcilar, followers of Fethullah Gülen) is a mass semi-closed religious movement of Turkish origin, similar to Sufi brotherhoods.

Nurcular fundamental sources do not contain extremist calls. Islam is propagated without mechanical transfer to modern, everyday life, manners, and traditions of Muslims who lived in the past, and without slogans to establish a world Caliphate. At the same, the sources justify the necessity of Shariah state management and resistance to West and western culture pressure.

After Kemal Ataturk’s secular government came to power in Turkey, the founder of movement, Said Nursi was condemned. Later, he and his movement were exculpated, and political elite representatives, especially the military elite, continued to be active opponents of the Nurcular.

After the founder’s death, approximately six identical, structurally independent sects appeared, acting semi-legally using networks, and headed by the founder’s students.

During the early 1970s, Fethullah Gulen became a Nurcular leader. He established powerful network organizations independent from other trends, which was given the name Fethullahcilar, and is characterized by a clear hierarchy, strict discipline, conspiracy, focus on active propaganda, education, and economical activities. However, “old” Nurcular suppose believed that he distorted the teaching of Said Nursi.

Later, F. Gulen was repeatedly pursued by the authorities, and charged with actively “aiming to establish a theocratic state in Turkey.”

Since Prime Minister T. Erdogan came to power in Turkey in 2006, the movement has significantly increased in areas where Muslim and Turkish-speaking peoples live. The movement emphasizes educating youth in official Nurcular educational institutions, establishing covert cells masquerading as genuine Islamic education.

In the course of ideological indoctrination, young peoples’ will is fully subordinated to imams who exercise strict control.

Nurcular’s task is to achieve a dominant position in regions where they are active by forming pro-Turkish and pro-Islamic youth, and further promoting their professional fields.

Because of this, Nurcular is banned in Uzbekistan and Russia.

According to the Turkish mass media, since the mid-1980s, fast growth of Nurcular’s capital has grown quickly, spreading and receiving significant political support in Turkey, and actively striving to expand its influence to other countries. Nurcular controls hundreds of plants and factories, several holding companies, social funds, a network of hyper- and supermarkets, mass media, and educational institutions.

The present Nurcular structure operates in over 65 countries, including Kyrgyzstan. According to data published by the General Headquarters of the Armed forces of Turkey, Nurcular supporters amount to roughly 4 million people. However, the movement is not registered as a religious organization.

Other Islamic sects represented in Kyrgyzstan include Akromiya and Ahmadiya, but because of the local nature of their activity, data on these groups are not provided in this study.

1. Key stakeholder participating in preventing radicalism and violent extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic
Under Kyrgyz laws on "On Countering Extremist Activity" and "On Combating Terrorism," countering terrorism and extremism in the country is the responsibility of all public authorities, including executive, legislative, and judicial bodies, and local authorities, within the limits of their own competence.

Priority measures to prevent extremist activities, including basic principles of combating extremism in the country's legislation and a number of conceptual documents include educational and outreach activities, include state cooperation with public associations, religious and other organizations, as well as citizens in countering extremist activities.

Given these priorities, all authority activities implement subjects countering extremism and terrorism. Security forces not only identify, investigate, and suppress extremist and terrorist activities, but also actively participate in preventive measures. In countering violent extremism, especially terrorism, the State Committee for National Security plays a coordinating role among all ministries and departments. In particular, its functions include:

- monitoring and analysis of manifestations and threats of terrorism and extremism for timely response in accordance with existing authorities;
- coordinating state body activities not only in detecting, but also in preventing terrorist and other extremist activities;
- establishing and maintaining a working relationship with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies;
- developing conceptual positions, programs, and plans to prevent extremism and terrorism;
- developing proposals on improving legislation on countering extremism and terrorism;
- studying and disseminating of experience of the foreign country and organizations of scientific work on combating extremism;
- organizing preventative work to avoid the spread of extremism.

Ultimately, the Ministry of the Interior and the 10th Main Department are involved in the full range of preventive work.

The General Prosecutor's Office performs a significant role in preventing terrorism and extremism as a supervisory authority in compliance with Kyrgyz legislation, including:

- if there is sufficient information and there are no grounds for criminal prosecution, posting an official warning to the leader of the public association or religious organization, the mass media, as well as to others on the unacceptability of the actions containing elements of extremism. In the case of non-compliance of the warning, the person to whom it has been declared may be prosecuted in accordance with an established procedure.
- making a claim in court to ban or suspend the activities of a public association, a religious group, mass media, or other organizations for the implementation of extremist and terrorist activities. The claim is filed in the case of extremist activity resulting in the violation of citizens’ rights and freedoms, causing harm to the health of citizens, environment, public order, public safety, property, legitimate economic interests of individuals and (or) legal persons, society and the state, or poses a real threat of such harm.
All other state and municipal authorities are involved in preventing religious radicalism and extremism under existing regulatory acts including functional authority, interagency and national programs, and Council of Defense and Government decisions.

The State Commission for Religious Affairs is the lead agency regulating the religious sphere; its experts are actively involved in developing and implementing measures to prevent religious extremism, and evaluate materials showing signs of extremism.

The nation’s parliament, the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic, also plays a crucial role in combating religious extremism by developing the necessary legislative framework.

Judicial authorities also play a significant role in preventing religious radicalism and extremism as they detect illegal actions and measure sanctions against persons and activities that show signs of extremism and violence.

Additionally, society itself is interested in interactive participation under the current legislation in combating all forms of extremism.

Among the most influential civil society actors are:

- Spiritual Administration of Muslims and other religious organizations and Jamaats;
- The community of experts, scientists, and teaching staff of educational institutions;
- The media;
- Various non-governmental associations;
- Different categories of socially active citizens, including young people, political parties, professional associations, local community activists, etc.

The Council of Defense, the government, and the president conduct the most high level national preventative activities in accordance with the Kyrgyz Constitution.

However, there is no current, complete consensus among stakeholders on preventative interaction of countering religious extremism.

According to the basic assessment of the "Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in Kyrgyzstan" project, there is no common understanding on the interaction among state structures, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims (SAMK), and informal, unconventional Islamic Jamaats. The report stated that the relationship’s inefficiency is stipulated by fundamental difference in interests of the subjects and the lack of legislative and institutional mechanisms.

**Proposed fields of ideologically countering radicalism and violent extremism**

It is feasible to continue improving stakeholder engagement in ideologically countering radicalism and violent extremism given government authority tasks and civil society capabilities.

Major efforts must be directed to:

1. Strengthening traditional branches of Islam (Hanafi Madhhab of Maturidi ‘Aqidah) and institutions of the official clergy, including the SAMK.
2. Preventing unjustified legalization of non-conventional, radical Islamic movements and Jamaat, considering their direct or indirect support.
3. Establishing a permanent dialogue among different actors countering religious extremism, as well as with risk groups in order to develop common views and approaches to urgent religious problems.

4. Systematic planned, preventative outreach with major groups, including different religious associations, Jamaats on the ground, local communities, educational institutions, professional associations, etc. Involve experts, respected religious leaders, the media, trained government representatives, research and teaching staff, intellectuals, local communities, expatriate communities, etc.

5. Training government staff and civil society representatives on the processes of ideological opposition to extremism by providing knowledge about radical and extremist religious movements and ideas, especially regarding their activities, threats, and consequences.

6. Stimulate scientific research in this field. Develop and publish scientific and popular works, TV broadcasts, and films.

7. Improve religious legislation and implement joint programs and projects of concerned state agencies and civil society on prevention of extremism.

It is important to develop special training programs for the staff of SNSC, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, representatives of local government authorities and communities, mass media, universities, and public figures under the project’s preventive and educational activities. Additionally, it would be appropriate to republish the "Destructive and new religious movements and organizations operating in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic: Normative legal acts in the sphere of regulation of religious activities" (Bishkek, 2013) textbook, prepared by researchers in collaboration with a number of well-known experts.

In addition, the following solutions are recommended:

1. Holding roundtable discussions for experts on religious radicalization with extensive media coverage and publication of the final materials.

2. Building a website on which experts can publish material and organize discussions with all citizens interested in religion.

3. Preparing and publishing special popular literature on religion for the general population.

4. Organizing continuous, focused interaction with the expert community and religious activists on the ground.

Active interaction must be implemented among competent government agencies and concerned foreign and international organizations.
ANNEX

Goals and contents of training on preventing violent extremism for government staff and public stakeholders

Training categories:
1. Islamic religious leaders.
2. youth.
3. women.
4. law enforcement agencies.
5. local authorities.
6. mass media, NGO, and political parties.
7. central government authority.

Goals and content:
1. Promoting all key government and public institutions’ involved participation in preventing religious radicalism and extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic.
2. Delivering adequate information about the religious situation, causes and conditions, and methods of preventing the spread of religious radicalism and extremism to interested parties.
3. Developing, promoting, and implementing practical arrangements for organizing this preventive work in the center and in the field.

Training specifics for various categories:

For Muslim religious leaders

Training should be provided in religious schools in Bishkek for regional and district leaders, then in regions for imams.

Training duration in Bishkek - 2 to 3 days; in the regions – 1-2 days

For youth and women

Due to the broadness of this category, it is important to directly reach their religious and community leaders, including teachers and students of religious and secular educational institutions under the Ministry of Youth Affairs. Permanent groups can be created, and contacts and group leaders can continue interactions.

Training could be conducted in higher education institutions in Bishkek and regional centers.

Training duration –1-2 days

For law enforcement agencies

Separate workshops should be organized in Bishkek and regional centers for central and territorial body employees of the State Committee for National Security, Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Penitentiary Service and for prosecutors.

Training duration – 2-3 days

For local authorities

Training courses should be organized for local administration, council, and institution (universities, schools, hospitals and other agencies) staff, local authorities, and the public.
The trainings can be carried out jointly for different structures in premises provided by regional and district state administrations.

Training duration – 1-2 days

For central government authority

Training should be provided in lecture form by renown experts, holding roundtables and conferences for employees, mostly at the managerial level, of the ministries, parliament, the judiciary, and the mass media, separately.

Training duration – 1-2 days

For mass media, NGO, political parties, and expatriate communities

Trainings can be conducted in Bishkek and regional centers in all adapted rooms, with extensive media coverage.

Training duration – 1 day

Training tools

To increase the effectiveness of interventions, it is important to use tools such as:

1. Modern interactive forms of training, discussions, contests, etc.
2. Training and popular movies on the subject and handouts on specially prepared literature and brochures.
3. Participation of not only spiritual leaders and religious professionals, but also renown social science scholars (history, political science, psychology, philosophy), the elders.
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Psychological and Social Portrait of Extremists and Terrorists
Introduction. Analysis of Kyrgyzstan’s religious situation: The internal and external factors causing radicalization and extremism

Currently, the Department of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic (DIA KR) has registered a total of 1,700 active members of extremist organizations. The vast majority of supporters are members of religious extremist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, amounting to 81.7% of the total number. Among registered extremists, there are supporters that are recognized as terrorists and extremists in neighboring countries, including supporters of Wahhabiya, Salafiya, etc.

The number of extremist and terrorist organizations is growing, their organizational level increasing, interactions among individual radical groups strengthening, and at time, associating their efforts with one another to achieve certain goals. Today, over 40 extremist, terrorist, and separatist organizations are conducting subversive activities in the territories of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO); thirteen of the most dangerous are officially banned in Kyrgyzstan, including takfir jihadist movements Jaishul Mahdi, Jund-ul Khilafah, Ansarulloh, and Al-Takfir wal-Hijra. These radical Salafi movements were recognized as extremist and terrorist organizations on 24 October 2012 under the Pervomaysky district court of Bishkek.

Socio-demographic characteristics of extremists in the Kyrgyz Republic are characterized by the following features:

Participation of women in extremist activities has increased. Women along with men are actively engaged in the promoting radical ideas and creating women's groups. In 2005 proportion of women in commissioning extremist crimes was 1.1%, while in 2013 it increased by 23%.

Today, 7.4% of all identified active members of extremist organizations are women. Among them are a certain amount of women who are relatives of men who have previously been involved in extremist or terrorist activities.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's management discussed introducing positions responsible for developing women's organizations, the so-called Masuli Zanon, as a male already performing pilot functioning in Uzbekistan. His duty is to coordinate and supervise the women's wing's activities.

The recent trend of taking young girls between the ages of 18 to 25 to areas of the Syran conflict has caused special concern. These girls include a large number of Kyrgyz citizens now under the influence of radical religious movements and ideologues recruited by International Terrorist Organizations (ITO).

According to reports, currently, about ten female Kyrgyz citizens remain in armed gangs in Syria and carry out obligations of "combat wives" of belligerent terrorists. According to the established so-called "Sharia norms," in the event of the death of her husband, the "military wife" is transferred to another member of the ITO.

Marital status. Many extremists are married and have several children (53.1%). Of all those convicted of extremist religious activities, 21% had three to ten children. In southern Kyrgyzstan, heads of large families accounted for 49% of those convicted.
Age. Data on the age of individuals involved in extremist activities include: 19 - 24 years old: 20%; 25 – 29 years old: 30.5%; 30 – 39 years old: 35.3%; 40 – 49 years old: 10.2%; 50 years and older: 2.2%.

Ethnic background. According to our data, over 80% of individuals and convicts involved in religious extremist organizations are Uzbeks.

Cultural - educational level. Analysis indicates that 8.2% of supporters (2.7% convicted) of extremist organizations have higher education; 12.3% (7.7% convicted) have undergone secondary to special education; and 83.7% (89.6% convicted) have secondary education degrees.

Locations. The highest concentration of extremism is seen in big cities of Kyrgyzstan.

Organizational structure and activities of extremist organizations are based on strict secrecy, and involves surveying potential candidates’ place of residence and work, studying individual orders, and affirmation of the potential candidate by already established members.

Financing extremist organization activities is sourced by both external forces and internal resources. Each member is required to make a monthly contribution to the organization in accordance with their capabilities and profits (at a rate of 5-20%).

Collected funds are used to purchase copying and communications equipment, vehicles, cell phones, and incoming literature and translations.

Heads or leaders of extremist organizations are not very different from ordinary members except a few personal qualities. However, almost all leaders are distinctly eloquent, have authored theological books and pamphlets, as well as have developed organizational skills. Their leadership is stipulated by the force of their personalities.

Extremist crimes usually take place in areas with large concentrations of people such as railway stations, markets, and public transportation, and especially in areas where law enforcement officers cannot always guard.

24.6% of extremist crimes are committed as part of a group, indicating a distribution of roles among members, with each member performing a specific function. Additionally, some individual members may not be directly involved in crimes.

As religious extremism spreads throughout the country, it tends to develop and evolve into a more active level. In late 2013 to early 2014, it became apparent that identified Hizb ut-Tahrir members were government agent employees, students and undergraduates of leading schools, and entrepreneurs and businessmen, indicating an increase in the qualitative composition of religious extremist organizations.

Analysis of Kyrgyzstan’s religious situation: The internal and external factors causing radicalization and extremism

Today, society is increasingly aware of the dangers posed by some religious forces (movements) in destabilizing public security and threatening social welfare. Extremism of all forms leads to the trampling of citizens’ rights and freedoms, undermines state integrity and Kyrgyzstan’s international prestige, and poses a real threat to the foundations of the constitutional system and to inter-ethnic and inter-religious peace in the country.

Religious extremism is Kyrgyzstan has become a key factor contributing to the weakening of Kyrgyz statehood and heightening social instability. Growing extremism...
reinforces destructive riots in southern Kyrgyzstan, entailing opportunities for extremists to realize their goals and objectives using terrorist methods.

The increasing influence of Salafism, especially its radical elements, draws attention to itself. Expansion of Salafi ideas in our country mainly comes from the North Caucasus through Kazakhstan and the Middle East, namely Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Radical Salafist group practices are destructive, and aimed primarily against law enforcement agencies. This is evidenced by terrorist acts committed by Jaishul Mahdi members in 2010 to 2011 in Bishkek and Chui Region.

Also, destructive groups intensified their work among inmates in correctional institutions, allowing for an increase in supporters of extremist organizations in prisons, including staunch adherents of radical Salafist ideas. The danger in this stems from prisons having no alternative sources of information on Islam, and detainees become easy prey for propaganda in favor of extremist organizations. However, in late 2013 to 2014, the SPS under the KR Government and Ministry of Internal Affairs have performed activities involving the SAMK and the SCRA. Special attention must be paid to the personality of proposed imam candidates, and if necessary, visits should be arranged for territorial imams.

Undoubtedly, all existing problems cannot be solved through prevention as the fight against terrorism and extremism always includes operational and ideological measures conducted by the state with active civil society participation.

Religious extremism cannot be equated with religion; therefore, religion itself should not be attacked, but rather radical and perverted religion which, in the interest of initiators' objectives, is twisted into an ideological tool used to justify the use of violence.

The socio-political, economic, and religious analysis of Central Asia is indicative of a growing trend to increase modern threats to peace, stability, and sustainable development. The significance of anti-extremist and anti-terrorist activities is highlighted by an ongoing increase in tension in the Middle East, as well as potential threats from Afghanistan, especially after the 2014 drawdown of ISAF troops.

**Internal factors.** Factors feeding the rise of extremism include socio-economic crises resulting in a surge of organized crime, drug and human trafficking, corruption, unemployment, poverty, and the emergence of a new layer in Kyrgyz society, labor migrants, who hold powerless position in Russia and Kazakhstan due to high unemployment in home country. Consequently, conditions and living standards of Kyrgyz citizens now depends on a variety of factors including, income of migrant workers, deformation of political structures, decline in the general population’s living standards, suppression of dissent and opposition by the authorities, and political and religious leaders ambitiously seeking to accelerate implementation of tasks.

Additionally factors include, unemployment, corruption, absence of ideology, the population’s religious illiteracy, intensification of religious groups, lack of state control over religious organizations and individuals, low level of education of imams, insecurity, inadequate legislation to combat extremism, lack of a unified program of training and dissemination of religious education among the population, weak performance of the monitoring of the situation by public authorities, weak interaction between private and public bodies including NGOs, lack of regulation of financial flows coming from abroad for education, weak information security of the mass media, etc. Combined, these factors create fertile grounds for growing discontentment with official policy, and
increasing the ranks of militant groups which have their own program to improve public living conditions.

_External factors_ include the SAMK’s dependence on external investors and the unstable religious situation in neighboring countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, etc.). An especially important factor which expanded the sphere of influence of Islamic extremism is the collapse of the socialist system established by the Soviet Union, leading to the formation of independent states in its territory.

Experts studying internal and external factors establishing the basis for Islamic radicalization in Central Asia have discovered the following:

- Former Soviet states gaining independence restored relations with the Islamic world as well as with international Islamic centers at the state level;
- Central Asia’s import of religious literature contained traditional Hanafi views and extremist ideas;
- Arrival of foreign missionaries representing sometimes illegally operating radical movements of the Salafiya, etc. in Central Asia;
- Exchanges between delegations of religious institutions aided young Kyrgyz citizens in traveling to Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, etc. to study in Islamic schools. There is a lack of control and statistics on the number of those who left and lack of data on specific Islamic educational institutions, resulting in opportunities for extremist religious organizations to patronize youth and pay for their education. It is necessary to stem citizens’ training in religious schools abroad; currently, there is no national mechanism to solve this issue.

Recently, extremist groups IMU, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and the Salafis in Central Asia’s goals and objectives have become associated, with the exception of difference in methods of warfare. These groups all share a common goal: the establishment of a caliphate in the region.

Kyrgyzstan's experience in developing various programs and concepts in combating extremism, radicalism, and terrorism may be in demand in Central Asian countries, especially in practical experiences of law enforcement agencies in collaboration with Muslim organizations to prevent extremism. Extensive law enforcement experience requires advice from the expert community and stakeholder organizations.

In 2009, the State Agency for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic developed a state policy on religion for 2009-2015 of which the main components are devoted to measures improving state body – civil society institution interaction, including the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Thus, in order to counter radicalization and extremism, the government should address the socio-economic and political conditions conducive to its occurrence and prevent illegal extremist activities by allowing public and religious associations, scientists, theologians, religious scholars, and mass media participation. This participation should combat religious extremism which opposes humanistic ideas and principles of tolerance, civil peace, and accord.

Countering extremism can include political, sociological, psychological, and informational sources of power. Law enforcement should also play an important role. In accordance with the law, not only organizers and executors of extremist criminal acts, but also their ideological inspirations should be held liable. The effectiveness of fighting
religious extremism in our country depends on how consistently and strictly the requirements of the law will be fulfilled.

Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies identified underground groups distributing religious extremist literature including a magazine called Al-Vayi in Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik, and Russian languages. The organization also has a website which publishes an online magazine, Al-Muhtorot.

Material analysis suggests that Hizb ut-Tahrir has evolved into acting openly after the creation of structural formations in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken regions, and partly in Chui Region and Bishkek. Steps to establish primary cells (so-called hulks) have been taken in Naryn, Issyk-Kul, and Talas Regions, and in some districts of Chui Region by activists from southern Kyrgyzstan.

Training for Hizb ut-Tahrir can be held individually, using its websites popularly used in Bishkek’s internet clubs. All detained Hizb ut-Tahrir members are graduates of esteemed high schools, gymnasiums, and vocation schools. Active youth group members who have passed the initial training engage in spreading literature and sharing knowledge with newly elected youth wing members. Systematic training is organized twice a week in various mosques in Bishkek near universities. Parks and squares are also used for gatherings. After Friday namaz, training is conducted using banned radical extremist organizations’ literature. Detailed members revealed that they were recruited at different times and took an oath upon recruitment, and were paid monthly contributions of KGS 200-300 to the organization.

Additionally, illegal children’s education in madrasas, mosques, and hujras (private religious schools) is conducted. The most capable students continue to study in foreign religious schools, and only Pakistan has more enrolled students than Kyrgyzstan’s 300 citizens.

Criminal analysis in Kyrgyzstan indicates that religious extremist activities are intensifying in the country, obtaining increasing political overtones. Their focused and well-organized actions endanger national security. Visa-free agreements with 44 countries under which citizens of these countries enter and reside in Kyrgyzstan freely within 60 days has created favorable conditions for recruiters. However, the State Committee for National Security of Kyrgyzstan has long opposed these agreements because of the potential loss of control over the entry of foreigners; in their opinion, this could threaten national security of the country.

Thus, there is a real danger of mass influx of refugees to Kyrgyzstan, and under their guise, religious extremists and other criminal elements. Unfortunately, Kyrgyzstan contains favorable conditions for enhancing extremist organization activities like Hizb ut-Tahrir. Hizb ut-Tahrir followers openly declare plans to build a caliphate in the region. Their supporters attempt to persuade the country’s Muslim youth to practice radical Islam, especially in southern Kyrgyzstan. This is especially due to low living quality, anger, and lack of religious education, further limited by artificial restrictions.

The 10th Main Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ joint activities with the General Prosecutor’s Office of the Kyrgyz Republic resulted in the exposure of a Hizb ut-Tahrir youth wing active in Bishkek. This youth wing had been actively recruiting new members, particularly from the most capable students of prestigious universities, including KSMA and KSUCTA.

Restricting visa-free agreements with Turkey is reasonable as Kyrgyz citizens have used this agreement to travel freely to Syria. Extremist literature from Egypt, Pakistan,
Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, and Tajikistan skips also through custom points. Additionally, customs officers, employees of operating units, and police inspectors must be trained to recognize extremist propaganda.

Hizb ut - Tahrir is also attempting to intensify women’s participation, especially of women between the ages of 20 to 39. So-called women jaamats of ten people gather in mashvara discussions. These gathering places change frequently, and are most active in Kara-Suu and Aravan districts of Osh region. In Nookat district, women Dawahists are mostly Uzbek citizens. Recruitment of women is typically carried out through the process of learning namaz, studying the hadith, and training courses on the Quran lasting from one to six months.

Mechanisms of withdrawing from extremist organizations including Hizb ut -Tahrir remain unexplored. In 2013, various members announced their separation from this party, but in practice, did not cease their activities fearing danger for their families and property. After an active HTI Nurmuhammed member in Bazar-Kurgan district announced his separation to the media, his parents’ house was burned down.

Thus, to address the need to counter extremism, it is necessary to:

- Provide training for the 10th divisions of the republic in order to increase the level of education in combating extremism.
- Develop cooperation mechanisms and institutions between public authorities and Muslim organizations in a joint effort to counter violent extremism.
- It is necessary to address at various levels issues of clashes between religious and secular ideologies, conflicts between local secular institutions (secondary schools, local government bodies) and local Islamic jamaats on wearing Islamic paraphernalia.
- Take strict state control of Muslim organizations’ official structures (Muftiyat and kaziyat) to create a single, unified domestic Muslim school (Hanafism), use the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan as a platform for dialogue among all Muslim organizations, reduce the total number of Islamic schools, and introduce a single curriculum and academic load.
- Conduct a joint audit of all legal acts regulating the religion sphere to improve legislation to strengthen state – religious interaction in ideological opposition to extremism.

The 2010-2011 events in Kazakhstan during which a group of terrorists launched an open opposition against authorities made apparent that young believers of extreme radical takfirism ideology and jihadism are entering Kyrgyzstan from Kazakhstan due to the lack of security service actions. Overly stringent measures to suppress these events only led to an outflow of terrorists who could potentially return with more radical intentions.

In 2010 – 2011, burst of radical and terrorist activities included terrorist attacks prevented in Bishkek and the elimination of an underground Kazakh armed group. Early acts of terrorism have been associated with the Islamic Movement of East Turkestan directed China and Chinese businessmen. Terrorist attacks against the state and its policies, as well as against special services, are a new phenomenon having Kazakh origin and influence.

According to the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic, Jaishul Mahdi and Jund al Khilafah are groups conjoined by not only ideology and strong ties, but also in comprising a part of the Islamic Jihad Union, acting in the territory of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Currently, Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim community has no reason to
adopt a radical and uncompromising attitude towards the state, government institutions, and security forces. From a religious standpoint, evaluation of power differentiation depends on an individual’s affiliation with Davaat Tablígh, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Salafi Jamaats, and Sufi groups. However, a radical attitude towards authorities and ideological principles countering power structures were not observed, with the exception of jihadist groups linked with the international terrorist network. Their negative attitude is stipulated by their overall objectives in Central Asia, their focus on a military jihad against any secular government, or slightest discrepancies of their real goals. Even they do not have a real argument for jihad against the government or the security services of Kyrgyzstan. If such arguments exist, they are either general arguments about the religious precept of jihad or are of a personal character such as relatives or members of the same group have suffering from security service actions in Kyrgyzstan.

The absence of objective reasons for radicalization, extremism, or terrorism in Kyrgyzstan is not stipulated by the lack of obstacles to observing religious rules and rituals, but rather by the general lack of any meaningful control over the work of religious organizations, movements and groups, with the exception of that of extremist activities. The State Committee for National Security of Kyrgyzstan often works ahead of the curve, and in 2012, was able to prevent a series of terrorist acts and legislatively ban the activities of a number of terrorist organizations.

In particular, the decision of the Pervomaysky district court of Bishkek on 24 October 2012 recognized organizations Zhayshul Mahdi, Jund al Khilafah, Ansarulloh (Ansar Allah), and Al-Takfir wal-Hijra as part of Salafi takfirist-jihadist movement as terrorist and extremist organizations.

Ultimately, there are no purely internal factors for radicalization and human resources for terrorist organizations. Regular cases related to the ban on hijabs in schools or the proposal to ban the Salafism movement in Kyrgyzstan has been unable to mobilize believers in mass protests.

This explains the latest trends of which jihadi groups are beginning to recruit and adapt their activities to involvement of criminal groups in weapon sales and the drug trade. In Kazakhstan, this is explained by the Muslim community’s continued high level of radicalization and the prevalence of radical views, while Kyrgyzstan has become prone to this phenomenon due to the lack of human resources and the marginal position of jihadist in the overall structure of the Muslim community. This is typical for northern Kyrgyzstan, while southern regions are somewhat different.

Assumptions of jihadist marginality in northern Kyrgyzstan in relation to the Muslim community as a whole must emphasize already established definitions of jihadist social origin, including educated strata of youth, often from families with high income (which are marginal in relation to the traditional religious majority), should be augmented with criminalized groups. Most likely, this is stipulated by more rapid results of radicalization and readiness to take decisive action against law enforcement agencies.

Returning to strategy implementation, the lack of adequate funding and qualified personnel affects its implementation in other regions of the country. According to the State Committee on Religious Affairs particular, in Osh and Jalal-Abad regions, strategy implementation has been limited to inter-ministerial roundtables on extremism with clergy participation in Osh and Jalal-Abad. Meanwhile, in these regions of the country, a fragile peace is currently observed after a conflict in 2010 between the two major ethnic groups, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks.
Radical religious ideas were always present in Uzbek community. Cooperation and collaboration between the intelligence agencies of the two countries on this issue has always been at a considerably high level. Kyrgyzstan, as far as possible, always cut short any attempt to use its territory for terrorist activities against the government of Uzbekistan. At the same time, the radical part of the Uzbek community in the south fueled sympathy for the activities of a known terrorist organization, Islamic Movement of Turkestan (previously called IMU).

Following the tragic events of the summer of 2010, emphasis in the ranks of radical ethnic Uzbeks shifted towards Kyrgyz retaliation for the events in the south. This has led to a significant influx of ethnic Uzbeks into terrorist organizations Islamic Jihad Movement and Islamic Movement of Turkestan based in Waziristan. In this respect, ethnic conflict subsequently acquired a religious connotation and labeled Uzbeks as Muslims and Kyrgyz as infidels who allowed a massacre. However, realizing that both sides are Muslim has markedly reduced the ideological justification of religious revenge. From 2010 to 2011, numerous delegations of Muslim clerics from Russia, countries of the Islamic world and the Kyrgyz Republic visited southern Kyrgyzstan in order to attempt to dissolve enmity among Muslims.

These initiatives failed and could not restore former relations in the Muslim community in such a short time. Several initiatives have had the opposite effect. Inter-ethnic relations in the south are now characterized by the phrase "no war, no peace," causing isolation of various ethnic groups from their communities, leading to the creation of separate groups, Hizb ut-Tahrir and the jihadist jamaats, within a radical environment.

This situation is fundamentally different from the situation in the north of the country and world trends of jihad, where the so-called “jihadi international” has always been present and promoted.

Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies remain a common enemy for southern jihadist groups, further complicated by the Uzbek community’s view of security bodies. Uzbeks view law enforcement agencies as the enemy because, during the conflict, the police and armed forces were on the Kyrgyz side. Accordingly, Kyrgyz security forces are also an important target for terrorists in southern Kyrgyzstan.

Due to the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Kyrgyz Republic’s internal structure (change of Muftis, Hajj-related scandals), as well as the passive position of the State Commission for Religious Affairs leadership, only 10th Main Department Ministry of Internal Affairs currently addresses preventative, ideological, and theoretical opposition radical movements.

The main problems of religious extremism and terrorism

Disagreements within religious relations, specifically among various Jamaats (community) and individual figures of the Muslim clergy were revealed. Religious movements that have not traditionally existed in Kyrgyzstan have appeared. Among them are Tablighi Jamaat, Salafism, Ahmadiyya, Ismailis, and Sulaymaniyyah. Salafis and the traditional Kyrgyz clergy constantly conduct hard theological disputes. Such ideological clashes lead to internal division and worsening relations between intra-confessional believers, separation of mosques, and intolerance among members of different religious Jamaat.

Bitter disputes are ongoing around the missionary work of Tablighi Jamaat’s missionary work has caused bitter disputes, and is gaining more and more supporters. Today it is difficult to keep track of their activities, as Da’waatists go to Da’waat for 3 days to 4
months, and even leave the country. In performing their religious duties, Da'waat members leave their homes and families for up to four months in spite of financial difficulties, and sacrifices much for their ideology. Uneducated religious leaders often adversely affect these members.

Lack of imams’ religious education and level of knowledge is still a serious problem. According to our data, over two thousand minors are currently attending Islamic schools in the Kyrgyz Republic. The analysis shows that the children are spontaneously enrolled and educated in Madrasa starting at an early age. At the same time, many parents, after putting their children in religious educational institutions, are not interested in who teaches or what is taught to their children. Thus the children often experience negative extremist ideology and become victims of various extremist organizations and sects.

Almost 70% of all the imams in the country have no formal religious education, and carry out religious activities guided only by their own experiences. In the south, imams are mainly self-trained by various religious figures in hujras, mainly in Uzbekistan. In Uzgen, Osh Region, six imams have individually acquired religious knowledge from Andijan and Namangan theologians. Unfortunately, this process is beyond the control of public authorities and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan. Immediately, the SAMK’s interest in attracting local and foreign graduates of religious schools is questioned. According to our data, there are currently thousands of Kyrgyz citizens enrolled in foreign religious schools. Moreover, there are a lot of religious high schools and madrassas in the country. Since the 1990s, Kyrgyzstan has intensified the process of religious education inside the country and abroad. Kyrgyz citizens receive Islamic education in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, and Bangladesh. The bulk of our students are enrolled in so-called private madrassas under the guidance and authority of informal spiritual leaders. The learning process in these institutions is not transparent, and in the end, most students become members of various non-traditional Islamic movements, including extremist organizations.

 Politicization of Islam in Kyrgyzstan is both veiled and open. Certain political forces’ radicalism is ready to connect with radical religious movements. In practice, political leaders have used their influence and finances to support radical groups. Extremists can likewise become a political tool and can lobby for person interests through political groups. For example, in 2013, the Kumtordogu azhydaar video on JSC Kumtor was prepared using materials from banned religious extremist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Religious institutions today are actively involved in solving various socio-economic and other policy issues, including Islamic leaders, groups, and communities. Spiritual and ideological problems are artificially created and inflated to enable them, which indicates that in our country, the Muslim community is beginning to be of great interest as a political object by various political forces. Politicians’ specific interest in Kyrgyzstan’s Muslim community is due to Muslims’ ready-to-go constituency, search of slogans, and easy appeals.

Religious conflicts often arise in Kyrgyzstan. For example, there are numerous incidents that occurred in Kulanak Village, Naryn Region, and in some districts in Issyk-Kul during which local villagers prohibited proselytes to bury their dead in a Muslim cemetery. In addition, followers of unconventional religious teachings and Protestants do not participate in our celebrations, do not feel the need to defend the country, or serve in the army.

Difficult relationships among people who have accepted a "new faith" and the traditional Muslim population arise in the country, and are at times accompanied by violent actions.
For example, a Jehovah's Witnesses church in the village of Toktogul Jalal-Abad region was set on fire at night from 17 to 18 May 2012.

**Psychological and social portrait of extremists and terrorists**

Countering extremism requires joint effort between the government and the public. Successful, timely suppression of certain extremist organizations’ criminal activities depends on active and close cooperation. An inter-agency plan to combat extremism involved local state administrations, several ministries and agencies, and religious organizations.

To counter extremism in a multicultural and multiethnic Kyrgyzstan requires organization and unification of representatives of all expatriate communities committed to a wide variety of confessions. Social and preventive measures aimed at preventing extremism and strengthening interethnic consent must be accompanied by cultural and mass actions. In order to strengthen inter-ethnic relations various regions, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has conducted a number of social and preventative measures under the slogan “Uluttuk Yntymak - Kyrgyzstandyn onuguusunun Negiz.” These events were attended by high school and university students, government representatives, various ethnic groups, non-governmental organizations, and mass media.

Outreach activities among the population, including on preventing the spread of extremist ideology and deterring citizens from participating in destructive groups are yielding positive results. In 2012, in Nookat district of Osh region, after lengthy preventative measures by internal affairs, seven active members announced their withdrawal from REO Hizb ut-Tahrir.

It is impossible to resist radical and extremist ideology without the support of conventional religions themselves. Today, it is necessary to move on to a new, high-quality level of interaction with conventional religious organizations. An important step in this direction and the legal basis is the "concept of the interaction of Departments of Internal Affairs with religious organizations," implemented in 2009. The main criteria for the interaction between the Departments of Internal Affairs and religious organizations is cooperation in curbing illegal activities of ethno-cultural associations and religious organizations, pseudo-religious centers, and various destructive sects. Despite measures taken, public authorities’ anti-extremist activities are ineffective to date.

Meanwhile, foreign religious organizations and centers continue to provide active financial support to local extremist groups, and remains outside the control of authorities. Monitoring religious associations and educational institutions’ financial activities, in addition to monitoring Kyrgyz citizens’ foreign religious education is not conducted at adequate levels able to establish possible links with extremist organizations’. Forming anti-extremist, anti-terrorist ideology among young people requires collaborative efforts among government, religious and community organizations, artists and art, and mass media. Today, a single system of information provision is necessary and should be built by government agencies and civil society, expanding state agency – official clergy cooperation to establish specific training authorities, teachers, and civil society representatives to combat the spread of extremist ideology among youth.

Education institutions are important social pillars positioned to fully implement youth policies and to work with teenagers. The educational system today hardly uses tools to influence student consciousness and only address the transfer of knowledge and skills, leaving upbringing to the family. Additionally, even in the course of educational
Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic

Implementation, educational institutions do not transfer any intellectual or behavioral skills emphasizing tolerance towards other religious teachings, ethnic groups, etc.

Training and education on tolerance and a culture of ethno-religious dialogue in secondary school is far more important than other forms of education, as individual's consciousness develops during schooling. These activities' success and effectiveness depends on the degree of integrating specialists in various fields to develop theoretical foundations and practical advice on organizations dedicated to child care. Education and youth affair authorities should implement this integration in close contact with social institutions and law enforcement agencies.

Local administrative authorities, law enforcement agencies, and the general public must interact in order to fight against extremism and prevent ethnic conflicts. However, the power structures on the ground, represented by public administrations, do not possess objective information on ethno-religious tensions and there is no monitoring system established to monitor religious organizations activities, and work with local clergy and their leaders is poorly organized.

Current extremist and terrorist groups are equipped with modern tools of high technical performance, including modern computer technology, communications, and the latest developments in armaments, special materials, equipment, and even modern explosives. Therefore, there can be no question of achieving effective results in combating extremism and terrorism prevention with the existing logistical support of law enforcement and intelligence agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic.

**Psychological and social portrait of extremists and terrorists**

A potential terrorist is an individual capable of active restriction of his will in an attempt to achieve a target. A terrorist can transcend moral restrictions on causing harm to another person, including civilians.

However, in some cases, an acute distortion of conscience, including deep empathy for the suffering of fellow believers, tribesmen, the pain of losing loved ones in military-political conflict, may lead to the commission of a terrorist act by an individual not naturally prone to crime.

The general socio-cultural background of individuals involved in terrorism include spiritual crisis and loss of a distinct cultural value-based orientation in society as a whole or in certain social groups, deep social divisions within society, the imbalance of social justice, or involvement in socio-political or military conflict (direct or indirect), and the emergence of extremist subcultures among marginalized groups offering a new system of ideological values and radical action plan to overcome crisis.

In addition to counter- and anti-terrorism policies, the government must include a long-term mission with a strategic project aimed at development and compliance with core cultural values. A modern state requires acute formation of a political and economic elite vested in the country's interests. Cultural policy and support for the education system continuing cultural traditions is crucial. Additionally, the state must adequately respond not only to internal challenges, but also external geopolitical threats, which may occur in the form of terrorist activities.

Causes of terrorism, as well as causes of any form of political violence, include ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts, poverty, modernization stresses, political injustice, lack of peaceful communication channels, traditions of violence, the existence of revolutionary groups, government weaknesses, an erosion of confidence in the regime, and deep divisions among the elite. In order to timely respond to the potential threat of...
terrorism and prevent the emergence of any terrorist ideology, a clear understanding of the social dimensions of this phenomenon is required.

Most people believe that terrorism is a product of poverty, the result of upbringing in single-parent families, ignorance, social and sexual immaturity, lack of communication with the family, or low professional liability, dementia, or various psychopathologies. However, in reality, the social portrait of a terrorist includes an individual from the middle class and upper middle class. The vast majority of terrorists are from affluent, two-parent families indicative of capability to represent various spheres of society.

The average age of a jihad fighter is 26 years. Three fourths of jihadists are professionals or semi-professionals. Very few have liberal arts education, and very few have received religious education. Additionally, the number of terrorists with professional military education is insignificant. Modern terrorists are not orphans or socially irresponsible people disadvantaged in their careers or businesses, and the vast majority of them have children. If unmarried, usually the terrorist is too young for marriage. Modern terrorists are very mentally healthy people in comparison with the majority of the population. Only very few people with mental disabilities are involved in terrorist groups, as people with antisocial disorders rarely establish lasting relationships.

By the time they begin their jihad, terrorists are not very religious, and become increasingly religious upon jihad and having lived abroad. Terrorists usually have a past of exclusion from active economic and social life within their own countries, and before joining terrorist groups, have had friendly relations with experienced jihadists or were part of a group of friends collectively supporting jihadist groups or had direct and intimate family relations with jihadist groups.

This is not a complete, distinctive characteristic of a terrorist’s social portrait. Modern terrorists are mobile in their place of residence as they are intelligent and gifted individuals usually sent abroad to study. They are children of moderate religious families, cared for by loved ones.

The modern terrorist is fluent in computer technology. Many speak several foreign languages including German, French, or English. When terrorists feel homesick, they find compatriots in mosques, and travel the country visiting mosques not because they are religious, but rather to communicate with like-minded and relatable acquaintances. Terrorists skillfully use international humanitarian and cultural organizations as a cover.

Terrorists often move into newly rented homes together in order to share a specific diet prescribed by the Quran (halal). According to some experts, such inconspicuous dietary rules unite a group in which terrorists feel more comfortable complying with all requirements of the Muslim diet.

Most terrorists are men, although there are many women, whose role in terrorist organizations is prominent. Also, terrorist organizations are actively using women for covert and combat purposes.

Concerning terrorists’ personality, many are deprived of childhood maternal care. Ailments of the middle ear are very common among them, and a certain pattern develops, including underdevelopment, childhood injuries, and congenital diseases. Some have strong personality defects though appear as absolutely adequate, well-camouflaged people. There are some who harbor conscious terrorist feelings, understanding the implications including those who, in their childhood or youth, were unable to assert themselves or were humiliated in some way. Knowledge of the psychological characteristics of modern terrorist allows us to construct an appropriate
behavioral model. This is appearance, demeanor, and speech, as well as all behavioral responses can be attributed to deviant behavior including manifestations of inadequate alertness, undue nervousness and tension, and signs of deceitful behavior. These are not direct indications of an individual’s involvement in terrorist activities, but are clear suspicious signs that should be given attention.

Terrorists often need to publicize their actions in order to get a reaction from the media, political and public figures, and the public to recognize and support their self-created exclusivity. The media should conduct balanced coverage of such events without creating self-admiration and glorification of terrorist activities in the public eye.

Methods of recruiting members for extremist and terrorist organizations

Young people are considered the most vulnerable to extremist influence as young people unable to solve personal issues through family or friends often turn to religious organizations. Young people are not sufficiently socially protected, and youth involvement in extremism is a growing trend. Additionally, extremists often target girls because, according to sociologists and psychologists, women have always been more prone to religious propaganda, and if girls join radical groups, there is a greater chance that they will bring up their children within extremist organizations.

For example, Salafis in Kazakhstan target girls by capitalizing on their personal problems, lack of self-confidence, unattractiveness, desires to marry, and generally promise to solve their personal problems. Primarily, marginalized youth are drawn to extremist groups, especially those who come from villages, have no education, and lack employment opportunities, all of which translates into aggression, vandalism, and bigotry. Embittered youth are successfully used by political forces, and the trend of marginalizing Kyrgyz youth is alarming. As long as there is social stratification among young people, there will always be social grounds for extremist ideas.

The second target group includes students living in dorms as it is convenient and easy for religious preachers and propagandists to work with them. Additionally, affluent youth are targeted by extremists as these youth are often searching for new experiences, satiety, and excitement, leading to cases when wealthy youth become objects of religious extremist propaganda.

In recruiting young people and women, recruiters meet with girls and choose those who are most impressionable and susceptible. Drugs, literature, and electronic media containing extremist information aid in justifying the use of force in dealing with the government and armed struggle against infidels. Recruiters usually participate or are involved in organizing terrorist attacks in different countries.

Preparing newly recruited members is a long process. These people are often migrant workers, require processed documents, and do not violate the law. Meanwhile, building a cell begins with maximum involvement of new members, initially from fellow country people. Recruiters can operate in almost any environment, even within the walls of a prison where convicted terrorists gather people and form religious extremist groups. Upon release, all members are ready to perform certain actions upon command.

When youth are disinterested in education, professions, or sports, recruiters are able to initiate youth into extremist organizations as an essential, sometimes only, part of life. Recruiters work carefully around mosques as an attentive imam will not allow open propaganda.
A separate program works with non-Muslim youth, aged 17 to 25 years. Recruitment is most effective when material and person problems exist in potential members’ lives. Additionally, the lack of a clear moral compass or direction aids in recruitment. A universal method of recruitment does not exist; however, recruiters frequently begin talking about religion, convincing potential members they are attending the wrong mosque and are praying incorrectly, recommend literature that will supposedly explain life and the world, and promises answers to questions.

After this process of brainwashing, potential members are confused and hold a distorted view of Islam. It becomes impossible to reassure them of previously known processes, and they become manic. Eventually, a potential member holds to the attitude that anyone who thinks differently is an enemy.

Recruiters take into account psychological features of various segments of the country’s population, and often distribute extremist literature in Russian and national languages. Books, brochures, leaflets are written in simple and comprehensible language, and abundantly cite the Quran and Sunnah.  The content is logically arranged to imply that solutions to society’s plight can be attained by joining in the activities of a particular extremist party or group.

The majority of ordinary Hizb ut-Tahrir supporters do not realize that the fragmented versions of the Quran and Sunnah presented by the extremist organization are distorted versions intentionally confirming radical ideas. For example, Hizb ut-Tahrir’s program reads, “Hizb ut-Tahrir was founded in response to the statement of Allah: "May you be among the group of those who will call for good, establish (prescribe) that right, and forbid evil, and those who succeed."

In the academic edition of I. Krachkovsky, this portion of the Quran reads, “And let there be among you a community that encourages the good, orders to approved and deters from disapproved. These are happy” (Quran 3: 104). Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideologists have intentionally used a specific version, distorting its meaning and forcing aggression. Based on this ayah and given their interpretation, the party leadership proposes to consider Hizb ut-Tahrir as that very group that will “establish what is right and forbid evil.”

**Practical advice**

Having studied and analyzed extremists’ psychological and social portraits, the following conclusions can be made to prevent furthering extremist and terrorist networks:

It is necessary to constantly hold workshops on preventing extremism and terrorism among young people at the regional and district levels in joint cooperation with SAMK, SCRA, 10 MD MIA, SCNS, and other relevant ministries where the competent agencies should provide information.

Very often, young girls become an instrument in the hands of criminals. Only when individuals understand traditional Islam can they avoid serious consequences. Young people must be informed of methods of recruitment and must understand that social networks have come to the attention of criminals. Recruiters often use social networks to search for and actively community with those whom they are preparing for future terrorist attacks.

These preventative activities should be conducted in all secondary schools with expert participation to discuss issues of interest.

State policy on preventing extremism and terrorism should be established under strict control with respect to counter-terrorist activities by the Special Forces.
Preventing extremism and terrorism in Kyrgyzstan should include the following practical recommendations:

1. In the interest of prevention, teleconferences should be organized in all regions at the same time in order to collect young people on the ground so that clergy members and law enforcement officers can speak to them.

2. Organize the withdrawal from extremist organizations of citizens who have joined by ignorance or by some other reasons, and provide them with protection. Withdrawal should be conducted in several stages: first, before recruitment, the second, after recruitment, and the third, after conviction.

3. Track and monitor the expansion of Islamic ideological currents from foreign countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey.

4. Reformat and “reset” Tablighi Jamaat – daawatists activities in line with cultural traditions and customs of the people and within the rule of law, with a subsequent ban on 40 days and four month long visits abroad, leaving only a 3 day Dawat.

5. Require identification of leaders, not only in the country, but also outside the country as identifying rank and file REO Hizb ut-Tahrir members will not lead to effective counter extremism.

6. Engage theologians, conflict management specialists, and psychologists in training employees so that they may hold certificates for regulation and operation, provide training in 10 MD MIA KR centers, and conduct exams on professional suitability after completion of the training course.

7. Carry out separate activities in the Kyrgyz State Penitentiary among inmates convicted of extremism and terrorism.

8. Provide funds as initiatives for citizens providing information on suspicious persons preparing or committing extremist crimes.

9. Use international experience and engage researchers in combating extremism and terrorism.

10. Use experts in religious studies, scholars, and PhDs in transferring materials to investigating authorities.

11. Require all employees to be able to identify extremism and illegal migration. The 10th Unit should be experts in both areas.

In countering increased radicalization of women, prepare women with and recruit them in scientific fields.

12. Organize a commission comprised of the State Committee for National Security, the Ministry of Internal Affair, the State Committee for Religious Affairs, and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan to be sent to Saudi Arabia and other countries to study and identify Kyrgyz citizens studying in religious institutions abroad.
Manifestations of religious and political extremism is one of the challenges in Central Asia during a time of globalization. Religious extremism as an extreme form of social destruction creates a threat to national security and debases sustainable social development. Philosophers, political experts, historians, sociologists, and psychologists all study religious extremism, as do politicians, experts, and religious thinkers. Conceptually understanding religious extremism is particularly important for successful counter-extremism, including varieties, development prospects, differences in scope,
content, motivation, etc. One of the major academic problems in the expert community is the absence of a clear conception of religious extremism, including underdeveloped methodological procedures and study. Despite these problems, the following characteristics of religious extremism can be found:

- Religious extremist activates are directed to force change upon a political system or constitutional authority and violate sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Religious extremism is camouflaged by religious perceptions and slogans.
- Religious extremism is predominance by power methods of fighting to achieve goals.

Another problem in Kyrgyzstan’s academic research is poorly understood internal reasons appealing to extremism and radicalism. Unable to consider a variety of reasons, people join extremist organizations with a single ideology. Using this article, we will try to determine basic fundamentals of religious extremism in an attempt to study and identify causes and motivations for people joining extremist organizations. We will make no pretense to identifying an ultimate truth.

All extremist ideas and organizations have been imported into Kyrgyzstan from various countries; there are no locally produced religious extremist organizations.

Ultimately, extremists are mentally sound; however, a number of western professional psychologists and psychiatrists consider extremists, radicals, and terrorists as persons with mental disorders or sociopaths.45

However, according to the researchers’ opinion, “from a logical point of view, people with personal pathologies will not be able to find their place in the organization, to coordinate activity with other people and observe discipline.”46 Neo-Freudians and proponents of M. Klein and E. Fromm have developed more complex versions of this approach. Recognizing the absence of serious psychopathology of radicals and extremists and, in effect, recognizing their normality, Neo-Freudians take up the position that radicals and extremists suffer from childhood trauma, leading to pathological narcissism, paranoia, etc.47 However, findings from various research projects using cases in which German and Italian terrorists were arrested in 1970 who were part of the Red Army Faction and Red Brigades have rejected the hypothesis on the existence of psychopathology in extremism and terrorism.48

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46 Sergeev S.A. Studies of extremism and radicalism in foreign and domestic social sciences. The article was supported by the Ministry of Education and Science (contract number 02.740.11.5208, theme “Political extremism and radicalism in the Russian Federation: the social causes, types and forms of manifestation”) / Conflictology 2011.
Another initial thesis includes people seeking extremism and radicalism due to dissatisfaction. In his article, Maadzhid Navaz states that "dissatisfaction, whether real or pretended, and impossibility to express it is a fundamentally factor, causing potential extremists to seek alternative subculture and treatments. To understand the motive of a person, it is enough to figure out what he understands as dissatisfaction". According to M. Nawaz, "trying to find one reason which causes a person to take a path of extremism, is as useless as to make psychological portrait of a terrorist on the basis of his ethnic or gender identity, or appearance. Nothing will be done. Any man of any origin can be an extremist. Often this unconventional ideology attracts a large number of people, who turned to the new faith and people, the level of education of whom is above average."  

**Motivating factors for extremism**

Dissatisfaction is a result of complex external and internal factors. According to researchers, four main groups can jointly create extreme social situations "ensuring readiness and ability of certain social groups to extremist activity or complex of extremism motivation: social economic, political, ideological and psychological (including socio-psychological individual psychological factors, interconnected with each other). In addition, a push or a reason which, of course, should not be identified with the reasons of extremism is necessary to start the extremist activity."  

One of the main external factors affecting the formation of extremist motivation is **dissatisfaction with socio-economic status**. Here, property inequality is the primary prerequisite dissatisfaction and can include a critical drop in a particular social group’s living standards. 

According to researchers, "the lowering of the social status and related real rights and freedoms in this social system, social futility of this social group, which are expressed in the absence of real economic opportunities in this group even in the distant future to improve qualitatively their situation, or at least to ensure own social self-preservation. Escalation of socio-group conflicts through the reallocation of public ownership and public revenues, which is based on the desire of some social groups to increase shortly the level of exploitation of other social groups. Economic factors of extremism are formed as a result of transition of a particular social system, or a particular civilization into the condition of socio-economic crisis." Additionally, "manifestations of extremism..."
increase during the initial periods of social modernizations. Extremism and terrorism manifestations are declined sharply in the closing stages of successful changes. “54

This creates a mercantile motive “for the majority of the rank and file members of extremist organizations this motive is supreme. More often people are involved in extremism for the sake of money, more rarely - for the sake of other benefits. This may be due to extremism in the form of aggression, as each human activity often presents a kind of "paid work", especially if it is directed at a specific target.”55

However, a mercantile motive and poverty are not always the main reasons for joining extremist organizations. For example, leaders and activists of extremist and radical organizations do not belong to poor and marginalized groups. Data collected by American researcher Mark Seydzhmen,56 provides a radically different social portrait of terrorists. Seydzhmen utilizes a matrix of collected and selected data on terrorist intentions; three-quarter of terrorists come from middle and upper class families, and the great majority of 90% are representatives of happy, two parent homes. 63% graduated from colleges in comparison with an average rate of 5-6% of students in the developing world. Terrorists are often the best and most capable representatives of society.57

This can be explained by understanding extremism as an attractive new activity. Researcher G. Kasperovich stated that "for a particular number of persons, especially the wealthy and educated enough, extremism is interesting as a new, unusual field of activity. They are interested in risk, plans development, the nuances of the extremist actions. Such motive is indicative for the bored young people, who did not find purpose and meaning of life. As an example anti globalists can be given, most of whom do not know what they are really fighting for.”58

Political factors motivating extremism. As researcher M.Y. Yahyaev stated,59 "usually, socio-economic crises are accompanied by a sharp activation and intensification of the political struggle, in which antagonistic political groups, political parties by the law of political induction are spinning the wheel of more extreme forms of political struggle. The main political factors of extremism include:

- crisis of legacy control systems,
- political and socio-economic reforms of power within the crisis situation
- aggravation of the political struggle, which is a natural reaction of society, especially the political opposition to the political crisis and reformist transformations."

56 Mark Seydzhmen (Marc Sageman) officially worked with the CIA in Afghanistan in 1987-89, And then, After retiring, as a forensic psychiatrist handles bibliographic data of criminals to identify patterns in their malicious activities. After September 11, 2001, he offered his assessment of the terrorist actions, creating their underground networks in many other countries, to a wider audience. His views are presented in the book "Understanding Terror Networks".
58 U.G. Kasperovich. Motivation of extremism and factors of its formation // Psychopedagogy in law enforcement number 2 (49) / 2012.
As a result, the vast majority of the population is being excluded from the realization of state functions and management of social processes, and the absence of citizens' social control over societal and government processes. Citizens then lose faith in public authorities' abilities to run the country, reduce crime and corruption, develop industry and agriculture, reduce unemployment, and solve international problems. People, especially youth, attempt to identify a guilty party among different races, nationalities, religions, and any other distinguished social groups. For example, in Muslim countries including Central Asia, religious extremist groups state that Western authorities are the source of all socio-economic and cultural woes. According to Yahyaev, "predominance of authoritarian political regimes plays an important role in expansion of ethnic and religious extremism and terrorism in Islamic world. They provoke violence as a form of permission of political differences and give it the character of a cultural norm."60

These processes result in the appearance of alternative opposition organizations using religious slogans. High religious politicization affects the formation of extremist personalities in Central Asia, and the politicization of Islam shifts religious ethics to political ideology in Kyrgyzstan. For example, a REO Hizb-ut-Tahrir representative will also be a dzhihad – takfiris Salafi. A characteristic feature of “Dzhihadism” is a shift in emphasis from religious ethics to political ideology. According to the representative’s adherents, religion should not only be used personally, but also as the foundation of social structure. To this end, active and coercive proclivity is practiced under the guise of true Islam manipulated for extremist Muslim clergies.

**Ideological factor.** In Kyrgyzstan, an ideological vacuum formed after the collapse of the USSR was filled by religion and religious political extremist ideologies. Researchers stated that "transformation of philosophical fields, mental and ideological crisis has a significant impact on the level and condition of religious extremism. This is confirmed by the analysis of majority of terrorist groups, which shows that extremism is often the product of an ideological vacuum. Mental and ideological crisis almost always leads to the appearance of ideological vacuum that can be filled with extremist ideas."61

Though ideology is important, it is not the leading motive of entry into an extremist group, but rather serves as logical validation, which is expressed knowingly and openly. The main motive for joining religious extremist groups is more personal and steeped in the human desire to strengthen personal identity and group affiliation.62 We now know that many fanatical terrorist groups scattered around the world do not worry about ideological substance. Actions are more important for extremists than ideology. American researcher M. Crenshaw argues that in some cases, "there is an ideological framing of terrorist groups (surrealist ideology) when ideas changed and the prime
purposes of the struggle fade from memory. The ideology of the terrorists may be modified depending on the context of the political environment in which they affect."63

These factors establish a **marginal personality type**. According to researcher N. Namatov, "a key concept in the analysis of religious extremism reasons spreading in Kyrgyzstan may be the idea of marginality. Preachers of religious extremism orient in their activities on marginalized population stratum. It is easy to impose to marginal any political views, yield any external influence and promise a clear social status because of their needs to be someone." Extreme radical political forces and religious association are especially active against these groups. They act primitively, announcing that they are a leading socio-political power and promise immediate change in followers’ status. An individual who has marginal personality is often disoriented and has an inconsistent system of values.

**Before proceeding to psychological factors, it must be understood that people become extremists consciously and unconsciously.**

Psychological factors including socio-psychological and individual factors are integrated with each other. Internal reasons are formed under the influence of external factors, and an individual's reaction to these factors. Researcher M.Y. Yahyaeva believes that, "psychological factors of extremism are, on the one hand, the result of socio-economic and political reasons, on the other hand, they promote action enhancement of these causes and create favorable conditions for the perception of the extremist ideology by the collective consciousness. Thus, the final synthesis of all reasons of extremism, directly generating extremism, is carried out only through psychological factors. Background of extremist behavior is appeared not only out of the social and cultural environment of a man, but also inside himself. They depend largely on his psychological features."65 Under this assumption, people with extremist personalities with a specific perception of the environment develop extremist thinking and models of extremist behavior. Extremism inevitably moves from ideological and moral rigor to extreme ethical relativism and cynicism. Individuals prone to extremism have a high threshold for immunity including insensitivity and feelings of alienation in an emotional culture.66

**Socio-psychosocial disadvantages and frustrations** can be related to internal factors. According to M.Y. Yakhyayev, "the essence of frustration is a clash of a strong human motivation to achieve a certain goal with external obstacles. Barriers in achieving the goal can be physical, biological, psychological and socio-cultural. Psychologists separate five different ways of the individual's reactions to the situation of frustration: motor excitement (purposeless and disordered action), apathy, aggression

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and destruction, the stereotype (blind repetition of fixed unsuccessful behavior) and regression (return to more primitive modes of behavior). Extremism suggests the practical realization of his illusory (not adequately implemented) ideas and goals. So the outside world of social reality for extremist is always antagonistic. It is a barrier for implementation of his extremist religious utopias and extremism is usually in the situation of psychological frustration.⁶⁷

Frustration may be the result of a conflict of values, search for the meaning of life, social derogation, desire to receive expected status, role tension, the desire self-assert, etc.⁶⁸ Unfulfilled high expectations and the inability to realize needs may lead to developing a perceived disadvantaged position in society, further leading to a desire to actively intervene and dismantle the old order or accept a passive struggle in creating sects or mystical teachings.

**Hence, the search for identity** involves strengthening self-identity through group cohesion and personal connections. According to M. Nawaz, “identity crisis is also an important factor contributing the appearance of desire to search subculture. This causes a person to withdraw from identity, country and the nation, where he was born, and to accept the redone form of transnational partnerships with other disappointed like-minded persons.”⁶⁹ In this, the role of a charismatic recruiter is important. An individual who is able to inspire a sense of security and protection to those who have lost interest in dominant trends usually skillfully represents ideological interpretation of events, and helps followers understand the world through universal explanations.

Social identification is determined by an individual’s fundamental needs of being recognized as part of others, but also for self-realization and expectation of positive assessment from reference groups.

Finally, the individual’s marginal position in society is formed and expressed through various forms of avoidance and voluntary isolation. Voluntarily chosen marginality is a "situation of conflict with generally accepted rules, the expression of specific relations with existing social regime. Voluntary separation of marginals from the dominant social relations, customs, the current political situation means the desire to be out of society, to be in total opposition against society. Extremism is a tendency in the development of human activity, manifested in conditions of a mental overwork that leads to psychological disruption, stress, mental breakdown.”⁷⁰

Myth-making is one of the foundations of world marginal personality. According to N. Mambetov,⁷¹ "mythmaking is the utmost interest for extremist groups and an effective

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weapon in the fight for the "minds" of the people. Taking into account the fact that myths become a kind of "spiritual substance" they can force a person to act against his conscience or logic."

Motivations for extremist behavior such as "youth romance and heroism, the desire to fill own life and activity with special importance, brightness and unusual" is closely connected with myth-making. Often, it is accompanied by mental blindness and myths in which fearless heroes bring people goodness and establish justice by force, and sometimes with considerable sacrifice. Search for romance and heroism for extremists are interwoven with the game motivation's "demand for risk, life-threatening and freedom operations, desire to be in an unusual situation. The offender lives a full life making preparation for extreme actions, planning them, searching for partners, committing extremist actions and shaking off the pursuer. The game manifests when he enters into definite relations that are not typical for other crimes, with society, authoritative and law enforcement bodies, mass media. Assuming responsibility for the completed offence, extremist tells some information about himself and starts a new game from this moment, full of heroism for him. His position becomes more delicate, and he mobilizes his forces and tries to approve himself, whereof once again assert himself."

Mythology and Irrationalism in Extremism

Another element of an extremist worldview is irrationalism. According to researchers, "the basis of extremist’s logic is often formed not by the accounting principle of the objective reality (the principle of Freud's "I") and not by the norm of public morals (principle of Freud's "Superego"), but by the pleasure principle (principle of Freud's "It" or unconscious)" i.e. irrational. According to N. Mambetov, being a component of mythological thinking in religious extremism, irrationalism is a parallel or another way of understanding reality that is reflected in the ways of achieving goals by Hizb ut-Tahrir:

- Struggle for the formation of the "right way of thinking."
- Revolution in thinking, implemented through "political and cultural means" in the community.
- Peaceful transition of power, when all members of society have become "true Muslims."

Researchers believe that "these three points have the logic and sequence, but there are no current reality conditions, which are very close to utopia. In this case, a myth or image of "Fair Government" becomes the basis of ideology."

The myth or image of "a fair government" is closely connected with the transformation motive and active change of the world which is emphasized in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideology.

According to researchers,\textsuperscript{75} transformation motive is a strong incentive, connected with the world’s imperfections and injustices and a persistent desire to improve and transform the world. This motive is most relevant to super activists, that is, those that are very active, opportunistic people, who encourage others and people professionally engaged in extremist activities. For them, extremism is a tool, and the goal of world transformation. The motive of transformation is closely associated with ideological motives and ascendance over people.

Irrationalism in extremist world views is closely interconnected with \textit{friendly motive}. As U.G. Kasperovich noted, the variety of emotional attachment is in the heart of the friendly motive, from desire to avenge damage done against comrades in arms, co-religionists, tribesmen, relatives, and companions, to a desire to participate in extremist organization activities, for example, when an organization member is a friend or relative. People guided by this motive engage in extremist activities without thinking about what they are doing, mostly under emotion influence.\textsuperscript{76}

Another component includes a worldview that is black and white, divided into “we” versus “them,” and where eternal and irreconcilable struggles of the good “us” against the bad “them” creates an abyss between the two. This worldview makes staying away from conflict impossible as an individual can either be part of “us” or be classified as an enemy. There is an essential separation among these worldviews. Above all, personal and group characteristics can push people to commit crimes against other people for the sake of approval of their own extremist views or that which is held against a view.

Russian researcher A. Schegolov provides stable characteristics of extremist. In general, his characteristics can help identify a typology of extremist thinking in Kyrgyzstan.

A. Schegolov identifies \textit{rigidity or intellectual flatness}\textsuperscript{77} as one of the most important characteristics of an extremist personality. According to Schegolov, “the bearer of this feature does not necessarily have a reduced level of intelligence. Rather, it characterizes inability to think abstractly, to the highest degree of analytical generalizations derived from the external information - the creation of new meanings. Such a person in his judgments must be based on someone’s authoritative opinion, for forming his own position he needed ideological platform, received from the outside. At the same time, finding a certain coordinate frame, conceiving system of values, which reflects his view of the world, the rigid person is not able to take his beliefs critically. Attempts to over persuade him are hopeless. However, it is possible to impose new

\textsuperscript{75} U.G. Kasperovich. Motivation extremism and factors of its formation // Psychopedagogy in law enforcement. Number 2 (49), 2012.

\textsuperscript{76} U.G. Kaspyarovich. Motivation of extremism and factors of its formation // Psychopedagogy in law enforcement. Number 2 (49), 2012.

\textsuperscript{77} Based on the results of A. Schegolov researches the personalities of members of radical and extremist organizations committed heavy and especially grave crimes, including terroristic nature, under the influence of extremist ideology were identified resistant characterological traits that describe extremist personality, i.e. the person who does not passively accept a totalitarian ideology, but ready to carry out under its influence specific behavior acts, up to the commission of a crime associated with violence. Moreover, the qualitative content of ideological dogma can be either from conservatism and nationalism to anarchism or liberalism, from the approval of minority rights to protect the rights of animals.
facts and circumstances under his current picture of the world. For example, to the participants of various destructive groups, including those, which have polar ideological principles and openly warring against each other, we can explain the necessity of joint action, showing them the image of a common enemy (such as “bloody regime of Mubarak” in Egypt, where in the revolutionary events of 2011 on the same side of the fence were radical Islamists and students, oriented on secular lifestyle). The fact that after victory the interests of its creators diverge on different poles is obvious and Egyptian events in 2012-2013 clearly demonstrate what filament can achieve these contradictions that put the country on the brink of mentioned Civil War.”

According to A. Scheglov, another hallmark of an extremist is **high aggression**. Scheglov states that, “Extremist behavior is characterized by the belief, that radical correction of intolerable, critical situation where this social group is now is possible only by the violent severe measures and actions. Extremist behaviors are also characterized by the weakening or even disconnecting any regulatory restrictions, from legal to moral. In the event of a conflict there are only two version of its development: the violent suppression of the weaker opponent, or servile submission to the stronger. High self-aggression which is an important component of general aggression demonstrates, above all, the complexity in self-acceptance, aiming for self-modernization, the main aim of which is to find the "force", that would gain a competitive position in the extremist personality type carrier’s opinion. Strength sports and contact single fights are characteristic for such people. Martial Arts requiring long improvement of technology and spiritual practice are unattractive for them.”

A. Scheglov states that high values on the scale of **externalities** (external locus of control) are another characteristic of extremist individuals. Delegation of responsibility for their failures and difficulties in establishing interpersonal relationships to external factors are typical. They do not tend to reflect or seek the source of their problems within themselves. Their self-modernization is not aimed at finding their own place in their social environment, rather their purpose stems from an extremely selfish desire to dominate. Bargaining for forced compliance, they seek to master a weaker. They rationalize their right to social dominance by declaring their own "special public mission" based on their own exclusive social role. This factor considerably determines the necessity of existence in the extremist view of the world "image of enemy" as an external source of constant threat, on which responsibility for all failures is transferred. An extremist personality type carrier is ready to believe any wild accusation made by a

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78 Scheglov A Picture of the world as a criterion in the expert work against ideology extremism and terrorism MATERIALS IV All-Russian research-to-practice conference (Volume 2) "The role of the mass media and the Internet in the Prevention of Terrorism" Moscow 14-15 October 2013.

79 Scheglov A. World view as a criterion in the expert work against ideology extremism and terrorism MATERIALS IV All-Russian research-to-practice conference (Volume 2) "The role of the mass media and the Internet in the Prevention of Terrorism" Moscow 14-15 October 2013.
reference group member in establishing an enemy. For this individual, the original malignity of others is a self-evident characteristic of objective reality.80

A. Scheglov believes that one of the formal characteristic of extremist personality orientation is a factor of misanthropy which is "negative attitudes toward others, based on the extreme misfaith, perception of the world as extremely hostile are the characteristic of extremist type of personality. To implement a request for identity, which is natural for each person, here is possible only through an association of people with similar personality properties in a small reference group, united by a common ideology, participation in which is fixed by the common activity. The number of such "cells" is not more than 10 persons. Taking into account that personal traits of members of such small groups are similar, the participants obtain satisfaction of their request on identity. Within the group the extremist personality type carriers are in a position to be honest, do not hide their true beliefs to build the most fantastic and wild plans for the future. However, they have no relationships of personal affection. Emphatic ability of the extremist personality type carrier is reduced; it is uncharacteristic for him to take the place of other person, even close. Sometimes unproven suspicions is enough to turn aggression of members of such group on ex-comrade, who was accused in a particular offense or just declared to be an enemy. The enemy at once is dehumanized, depersonalized and deprived of human dignity. Yesterday's friend fell in this category is "inhuman" in the eyes of the extremist personality type carrier. Implementation of violent act with regard to "non-human is not conceived by the extremist personality type carrier as socially unacceptable behavior."

Extremism and Social Networks

One of the most important internal factors of participation in extremist organizations is the perception of extremist organizations as social networks in which social relations play an important role and strengthen identity through group cohesion and personal connections. Some researchers of Islam and contemporary Islamic movements consider the occurrence and activity of Islamic movements and organizations to be a reaction to the absence of a modern civil society and its organizations and social institutions. Alternative social institutions (mosques, hospitals, Islamic banks, and mutual aid funds) created by the Islamists compensate for this absence, and spread their influence everywhere.81 The theory of social networks (M. Granovetter, R. Bert)82 and social capital (P. Bourdieu, R. Coleman, R. Patnem)83 explains the cause of these processes. A social network is understood as a group of

80 Scheglov A. World view as a criterion in the expert work against ideology extremism and terrorism MATERIALS IV-th All-Russian research-to-practice conference (Volume 2) "The role of the mass media and the Internet in the Prevention of Terrorism" Moscow 14-15 October 2013.
individual agents that share informal norms or values. Social capital is understood as the ability of factors to guarantee benefits through membership in networks and other social structures. Here, benefits are not necessary material. They can be emotional attachments, social and mental needs, etc. Researchers studying German and Italian terrorist organizations from 1970 – 1980 noticed emotional attachment as well as personal relations and sympathies which, at that time, was considered merely as political socialization.

In 2000, the theory of social networks was applied in investigating and analyzing Al-Qaeda by M. Seydzhmen, Doctor of political sociology from University of Pennsylvania. In 1986-1989, he worked as a Foreign Service Officer of the USA in Islamabad. After analyzing the biography of identified Al-Qaeda terrorists, he concluded that the global Salafi dzhihad is a rather self-organized network structure with unusual characteristics of resistance and flexibility over structure, created at the behest of Osama bin Laden.

In this structure, social ties play a greater role than ideology. Certain restrictions on the use of network theory and network analysis impose the following circumstance: Although network analysis does not include a strictly quantitative nature and traditional mathematical procedures of sample design are not possible due to the absence of accurate data on the population (number of radicals, extremists, terrorists), the more biographical data can be collected and analyzed, the more we can rely on the conclusions reached. For example, German researchers who studied socio-psychological characteristics of Red Army Faction members, possessed 227 investigative cases of arrested militants. Italian researchers relied on a database created on the basis of court records 1,200 Red Brigade militants, as well as 28 in-depth interviews. M. Seydzhmen collected biographical data of 172 Al-Qaeda functionaries.

The use of network theories in Kyrgyzstan could reveal underlying motives and causes for entry of people in religious extremist organizations, aiding in effectively combating extremism.

**Conclusion**

Motives and factors making people join religious extremist organizations can conclude in the following:

- Under the influence of certain aggregate factors, any mentally sane person, regardless of age, gender, nationality, social, and financial condition can become an extremist.
- The basis for extremist activity is dissatisfaction with the external world and a
reflection of this dissatisfaction on the inner world.

• Extremists search for identity and strengthening identity through group cohesion and personal connections.

• Extremists coming from successful financial basis and status are interest in and attracted to extremism as an innovative activity.

• At the same time, extremists are disoriented and those who are disoriented can become extremists:

1. Some become extremists unconsciously without awareness or knowledge, both secular and religious.

2. Some joint extremist movements consciously, and are capable of though, but are characterized by an inability to think abstractly, to the utmost of analytical synthesis. These extremists must be supported by an authoritative opinion, and needs an ideological platform to establish positions received from the outside. In Kyrgyzstan, religious extremism serves as this ideological platform.

• Myth-making, irrationality, conscious or unconscious non-perception of an objective historical reality and facts prevail in the extremist worldview. Hence, we can see the predominance of such motives as romanticism and heroism rather than a rational worldview.

• Aggressive rejection of other opinion and the absence of self-criticism is one of the personality characteristics of an extremist.

• Dichotomous view of the world establishing a “we” versus “them” in which an eternal irreconcilable struggle takes place. In Kyrgyzstan’s religious extremist organizations, the west, the government, and sometimes other Muslims are labeled enemies in this worldview.

• Though ideology is very important for an extremist, it is not a leading motive for joining the group, as actions are more important than ideology. Participation in social network organizations in which an individual can self-actualize becomes an important factor of participation in religious extremist organizations.

• One of the most important internal factors of participation in extremist organizations is the perception of extremist organizations as social networks with social ties, group cohesion, and personal relations. An example includes Hizb ut-Tahrir in Kyrgyzstan which was established as a social institution and an alternative to the government which is attractive to a large number of people who are ready to act with deep loyalty and devotion to this organization, further increasing the organization’s social and political capital and influence.