

Workshop 2: Dealing with civic unrests and early warning rapid response – Lessons learned from around the world

Panelists:

Raya Kadirova, President of the Foundation for Tolerance International, Kyrgyzstan

Faredun Hodizoda, Director of the Academy of Dialogue, Tajikistan

Dieter Von Blarer, Former Peace-Building Advisor in Central Asia of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs' Human Security Division, Switzerland

Klaus Neukirch, Deputy Director, Operation *Service*/Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE

Moderator:

Tim Epkenhans

Workshop Summary

The Workshop “Dealing with civic unrests and early warning rapid response” broached the issue on the uprisings in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the last decade. The two countries were represented by stakeholders of the respective mediation and prevention processes. Raya Kadyrova and Faredun Hodizado shared their professional experiences with the panel and the audience. Both countries had to face crucial structural violence, whereas Kyrgyzstan also had to deal with physical violence between the police and civil society organization leaders. As Kadyrova reported, demonstrators were harmed and some even murdered by the police in 2002. That incident had its foundation in the gap between constitutional and national law that interpret the right to demonstrate differently. While in the Kyrgyz constitution the right of demonstration is written down without restrictions, national law requires the demonstrators to obtain permission by the local government for conducting demonstrations.

Tajikistan is marked by ongoing tensions after the civil war and problems of coping with the heritage of Soviet domination. Hodizoda highlighted the prevalent political interpretation of Islam as a threat for post-soviet society.

Together with the OSCE, local initiatives launched a high level dialogue between religious representatives and secular stakeholders. Dieter Von Blarer, Former Peace-Building Advisor in Central Asia of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs' Human Security Division of Switzerland, completed the picture by incorporating the donor' s perspective. He reiterated the work done in Kyrgyzstan, which focused on building trust between the local communities and the administration in order to prevent violence. In Tajikistan no immediate threat of violence was observed, however, there

remained a potential for future violence. Therefore the risk of escalating tensions was assessed between the Islamic communities and local authorities.

With questions from the audience, the panel discussed the role of Kazakhstan in the OSCE intervention in Kyrgyzstan. Kadyrova declared that a struggling country could not solely rely on international organizations and demanded a reshaping of the structure and procedure of international organizations. In contrast, Neukirch underlined the importance of the parties directly involved in the conflict and stressed that international organizations only took up a supporting role. Klaus Neukirch, Deputy Director of the Operation Service and Conflict Prevention Centre of the OSCE, pointed out the substantial effort of the OSCE in strengthening early warning systems.

All participants highlighted the process of bringing together all parties in the conflict to build a ground for common discourse and the need to strengthen local capacities and stakeholders as a key measure for prevention of violence.