

ACI'25 MUN



ANTALYA PRIVATE ACI COLLEGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE 2025

SCO

AGENDA ITEM:

2022 KAZAKHSTAN PROTESTS

UNDERSECRETARY GENERAL:
ECE YIGIT

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Letter from the Secretary General:

First of all, let me extend a huge and warm welcome to all of the participants to the very first official session of Private Açı High School Model United Nations Conference of 2025, which will be held in Antalya from September 2nd to 4th!

I, Yasemin Raithel, as the Secretary-General of this well-planned and coordinated conference, it is my immense pleasure to be able to present this organization with this position. I sincerely wish you a fulfilling and thriving one. Model United Nations Conferences are not just a conference, you have a wonderful opportunity to level-up your knowledge of international relations and today's issues, gaining confidence whilst being a representative in the committees. Especially, members of the Academic Team; our Under-Secretary Generals, Academic Assistants and Board Members are the best you could ever ask for in Antalya society. Each of our committees are carefully selected for you to have the best experience ever. From advanced committees to beginner ones.

My utmost gratitude to the Principals and Teachers of our school, their effort and guidance made this conference possible. Moreover, I want to thank every single attendee of AÇIMUN'25, particularly our Academic and Organization Teams, who worked hard and served their best. Also a special appreciation goes to the only other person of the Executive Team, his organization skills are beyond any measure.

Last but not least, I want to leave a quote from Founder Father of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk:

Turkish Youth, your first duty is to preserve and to defend Turkish Independence and the Turkish Republic forever. This is the very foundation of your existence and your future. This foundation is your most precious treasure.

Lastly, whether you are a first timer delegate or an experienced member of ours, I wish everyone a marvelous experience and success during the conference. Hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

Yasemin RAITHEL

Secretary-General of AÇIMUN'25

Letter from the Under Secretary General:

First of all, I would like to start by welcoming you to the committee. I am Ece Yiğit, the Under Secretary General of the committee. I can say that I am as excited as you are to be on this committee. Welcome the SCO!

As a result of a lot of work and effort, I am leaving you a guide that you will benefit a lot from and in this way you can stand out with your own work. My general request is that you read this guide in particular. Political events with a historical background are worth studying in their entirety. What happened before and after will always guide us and give us new political experience. I have full confidence that you will get the best out of this committee.

I will be following your studies with great attention, so please start by preparing for this study guide and read it in its entirety. In committees with a political and historical background, your own work and additional preparation for these committees will determine your fate in the committee.

So how well you do depends on your dedication and preparation. I know that this committee will be a different experience for you in this respect. So I wish you good luck and I believe you will do good work.

You can always contact me with any questions and problems you may have. You can always take it as an interlocutor and do not avoid direct communication. I wish you all the best and good luck!

Kindest Regards,

***Ece Yiğit
Under Secretary General of SCO***

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Key Terms:

Anti- democracy: *opposed or hostile to democracy as a form government or to certain of it's future, as majority rule or political equality.*

Oligarchy: *Oligarchy is a form of government in which power is concentrated in a small number of individuals. The leaders of such regimes are often called oligarchs and are usually characterized by having titles of nobility or large amounts of wealth*

Reform: *Reform means the improvement or change of things that are wrong, corrupt, unsatisfactory, etc.*

Reform is often considered the opposite of revolution.

Developing countries can implement a series of reforms to improve living standards, often with the support of international financial institutions and aid agencies.

Mutiny: *Mutiny is a revolt among a group of people (typically of a military or a crew) to oppose, change, or remove superiors or their orders. The term is commonly used for insubordination by members of the military against an officer or superior, but it can also sometimes mean any type of rebellion against any force. Mutiny does not necessarily need to refer to a military force and can describe a political, economic, or power structure in which subordinates defy superiors.*

Protests: *A protest (also called a demonstration, remonstrance, or remonstrance) is a public act of objection, disapproval or dissent against political advantage. Protests can be thought of as acts of cooperation in which numerous people cooperate by attending, and share the potential costs and risks of doing so.*

Propaganda: *Propaganda is the dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumours, half-truths, or lies—to influence public opinion. Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas.*

Introduction to the Committee:

At the beginning of 2022, the government in Kazakhstan raised fuel prices. The uprisings, in which the citizens of the country took to the streets, caused great tension in the country. The protests first started on January 2 with socio-political demands, followed by protests against the government of Kazakhstan. The use of force against the protesters turned into an uprising. The uprisings, mainly in Kazakhstan the protests were followed with concern first in the Turkic world, Russia and then worldwide. Demonstrators seized the airport and critical points and carried out anti-government protests

President of Kazakhstan, Kassym Generous Tokayev, held a press briefing at the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) for help. Tokayev's appeal to the CSTO With the call, Russia immediately started preparing to send troops to the border of the country. Following Russia's preparations to send troops to the region, Pashinyan's timed aid to Kazakhstan Armenia became involved in the developments with the announcement that they would send.

The activism of the people is reflected on the streets and is seen as a revolt rather than a protest. The plight of citizens due to socio-economic problems and the failure of the country's policies to work properly gives governments an opportunity for a certain period of time, but after a long period of time, citizens are faced with the fact that citizens do not turn a blind eye to the current situation. Such moments can be as dull and dysfunctional as they can be revolutionary to the extent of determining the fate of countries. The public's reaction to the crisis is pushing the government to take new decisions, which in the current situation could lead to civil unrest in the country.

That is exactly what this agenda item serves to do, and shows us how a protest can shape the situation and the future of a country that is stuck in this situation.

Wrong decisions can anger the public, but they can also lead to more wrong decisions and a stalemate. Izvestiya, one of the most influential media channels in Russia, reported that Tokayev thanked the CSTO, news reports. In addition, it was stated that the protests clearly turned into the use of force while Kazakhstan was described as "the country on fire". In addition, the Russian media questions how these events will affect the Kazakh economy, and the Kazakh national economy, the trajectory of the tenge currency and the Russian ruble. This media example shows

that public reactions to wrong decisions can lead countries into a more troubled situation. The decisions of governments in response to the crisis and their reaction to protests will determine the fate of everything in this situation.

History of the Kazakhstan:

The history of Kazakhstan, a landlocked country in Central Asia, has been marked by many processes and struggles. The Kazakhs, who lead a nomadic lifestyle, have lost their autonomy from time to time, let alone dealing with their own turmoil. Although Kazakhstan is not recognized as part of Central Asia by the authorities of the former Soviet Union, it has similar physical and cultural geographical characteristics to other Central Asian countries.

The Cumans entered the steppes of present-day Kazakhstan in the early 11th century, where they merged with the Kipchaks to form the vast Kuman-Kipchak confederation. Although the ancient cities of Taraz (Aulie-Ata) and Hazrat Turkestan had long served as important way stations along the Silk Road linking East and West, real political consolidation only began with the Mongol invasion in the early 13th century. Administrative regions were established under the Mongol Empire, which eventually came under the rule of the emerging Kazakh Khanate (Kazakhstan). Throughout this period, traditionally nomadic life and a livestock-based economy continued to dominate the steppe. In the 15th century, a distinct Kazakh identity began to emerge among the Turkic tribes, a process which was consolidated by the mid-16th century with the appearance of the Kazakh language, culture, and economy. Kazakhstan is an independent state in the position of one of the Turkic Republics as it is known today, but it has faced conflicts in the historical process. By the early 17th century, the Kazakh Khanate was struggling with the impact of tribal rivalries, which had effectively divided the population into the Great, Middle and Little (or Small) hordes (jüz). Political disunion, tribal rivalries, and the diminishing importance of overland trade routes between East and West weakened the Kazakh Khanate. Khiva Khanate used this opportunity and annexed Mangyshlak Peninsula. Uzbek rule there lasted two centuries until the Russian arrival.

During the 17th century, Kazakhs fought Oirats, a federation of western Mongol tribes, including Dzungars. The beginning of the 18th century marked the zenith of the Kazakh Khanate. During this period the Little Horde participated in the 1723–1730 war against the Dzungars, following their "Great Disaster" invasion of Kazakh territories. Under the leadership of Abul Khair Khan, the Kazakhs won major victories

over the Dzungar at the Bulanty River in 1726, and at the Battle of Anrakay in 1729. Ablai Khan participated in the most significant battles against the Dzungars from the 1720s to the 1750s, for which he was declared a "batyr" ("hero") by the people. Kazakhs were also victims of constant raids carried out by the Volga Kalmyks. Kokand Khanate used weakness of Kazakh jüzs after Dzungar and Kalmyk raids and conquered present Southeastern Kazakhstan including Almaty, formal capital at first quarter of 19th century.

The Kazakh people have always migrated to other provinces outside the geography where they have always existed and have always been nomads.

The Kazakh people have always migrated to other provinces outside the geography where they existed and have always been nomadic. In the 19th century, when the Russian Empire began to expand into Central Asia, unrest broke out. Kazakhstan was also affected. The Russian Empire declared Russian as the official language in all the places it occupied and wherever it exerted its influence, and attempted to integrate the people there. The Russian Empire's attempts to impose its own system caused resentment among the Kazakh people. The Kazakh people have always migrated to other provinces outside the geography where they existed and have always been nomadic. In the 19th century, when the Russian Empire began to expand into Central Asia, unrest broke out. Kazakhstan was also affected. The Russian Empire declared Russian as the official language in all the places it occupied and wherever it exerted its influence, and attempted to integrate the people there. The Russian Empire's attempts to impose its own system caused resentment among the Kazakh people.

From the 1890s onwards, ever-larger numbers of settlers from the Russian Empire began colonizing the territory of present-day Kazakhstan, in particular the province of Semirechye. The number of settlers rose still further once the Trans-Aral Railway from Orenburg to Tashkent was completed in 1906, and the movement was overseen and encouraged by a specially created Migration Department (Переселенческое Управление) in St. Petersburg. During the 19th century about 400,000 Russians immigrated to Kazakhstan, and about one million Slavs, Germans, Jews, and others immigrated to the region during the first third of the 20th century.

The competition for land and water that ensued between the Kazakhs and the newcomers caused great resentment against colonial rule during the final years of Tsarist Russia, with the most serious uprising, the Central Asian Revolt, occurring in 1916. The Kazakhs attacked Russian and Cossack settlers and military garrisons. The revolt resulted in a series of clashes and in brutal massacres committed by both sides. Both sides resisted the communist government until late 1919.

This conflict between Kazakhs and Russians did not start and end unilaterally. This process, which started with the Russian colonization of the Kazakhs at the very beginning, ended with the loss of their sovereignty.

Totally dependent on nature and located geopolitically between the two largest nations of Eurasia, China and Russia, the Kazakh nomads were often subject to invasion by their economically and politically more stable, settled neighbors.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, nomadic tribes of Jungars, led by Chines Bogdy-khans, began a large-scale war against the Kazakh state. Here were bitter battles throughout the steppe lands, and, weakened by tribal and kin group divisions, as well as by regional affiliations, the Kazakh were defeated in 1723. This defeat is remembered to this day as a tragedy and is known in Kazakh as “Ak Taban Shubyryndy”.

However, thanks to the courage of “batyrs” (knights), the decisiveness of the Kazakh leader Ablai-khan, the diplomatic activities of the Kazakh “Biys” (sages) Tole bi, Kazdausty Kazybek bi, Ayteke bi, as well as the self-sacrifice of the people, the Kazakhs escaped the total capture and physical annihilation of the population. In order to obtain guarantees of independence and security, Kazakh khans started searching for the military assistance of the Russian Empire, which was actively expanding its border to the East, deep into Siberia. While Russia’s help saved the Kazakhs from annihilation, Russia also took this opportunity to begin a colonization process: building town-fortresses, moving a significant Russian population from internal regions of Russia into the steppe, transferring pastures to these Russian peasants and dividing Kazakh steppe land according to Russia’s administrative-territorial structure. Finally, Kazakhstan lost its sovereignty.

As I mentioned earlier, the Kyrgyz, who were uncomfortable with Russian integration, could not resist this colonialist activity. They forcibly lost their nomadism, lost their language, and Kazakhstan's economy began to integrate into the Russian economic order. On the territory of Kazakhstan various industries, transport and trade were developed. As a result, a national working class and intelligentsia also began to develop.

Alongside many failed social and economic experiments, the creative Kazakh intelligentsia made numerous successful attempts at ethnic and cultural adaptation to European civilization in the context of local conditions. These were based on the best examples of Russian spirituality. Despite the success of this diverse work of the Kazakh intelligentsia, the fate of the leaders of the national liberation movement was tragic.

In 1917-1918 they formed a revolutionary party “Alash” and founded the government “Alash-Orda”, the aim of which was to liberate the Kazakh people from colonial oppression. Among the best known of these intellectuals were Alikhan Bukeikhanov, Ahmet Baitursynov and Mirzhakip Dulatov. They were engaged not only in political activity, but also in cultural and educational work, literary-public activity and scientific

research. The distinguished poet-philosopher and historian Shakarim Khudaiberdiyev also played a special role in Kazakh development during this period, with his research and philosophy advocating eternal and universal humanistic values. Almost all of these intellectuals were repressed and executed during the years of Soviet domination. The Kazakhs, who are known for their nomadic lifestyle in Central Asia, remained under the influence of Russia until recently and lost their independence in their own state.

Development of Kazakhstan in the Soviet Period:

The Cossacks were spectators rather than participants in the Russian Civil War that followed the fall of the Tsarist regime in 1917. A provisional Kazakh government established by the provisional Alash Orda political party existed in name only. In 1919-20, the Bolshevik Red Army defeated the White Russian forces in the region and occupied Kazakhstan. The Soviet government established the Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic on August 26, 1920 and renamed it the Kazakh A.S.S.C. in 1925. From 1927 onwards, the Soviet government pursued a strong policy to convert Kazakh nomads into a settled population and colonize the region with Russians and Ukrainians.

Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic:

(1936–1991)

Қазақ Советтік Социалистік Республикасы ([Kazakh](#))

Казахская Советская Социалистическая Республика ([Russian](#))



The Cossacks, who had lost their nomadism and started to progress industrially with the transition to settled life, had also come under the umbrella of the Russian economy with Russian integration. With the industrialization that began in the early 1920s, industrialization became one of the Soviet Union's (no longer Russia, but the Soviet Union) biggest goals to develop the country's economy. Kazakhstan, which had become its colony, existed to serve this purpose. For the Kazakhs, who had previously been forced to abandon the nomadic life due to the forced resettlement of

Russians in their villages, the beginning of the industrial revolution again became the most important factor.



(Under the influence of the Soviet Union)



(Prior to the influence of the Soviet Union)

Soviet repression of the traditional elite, along with forced collectivization in the late 1920s–1930s, brought mass hunger and led to unrest (see also: Famine in Kazakhstan of 1932–33). The Kazakh population declined by 38% due to starvation and mass emigration. Estimates today suggest that the population of Kazakhstan would be closer to 28-35 million if there had been no starvation or migration of Kazakhs. During the 1930s, many renowned Kazakh writers, thinkers, poets, politicians and historians were killed on Stalin's orders, both as part of the repression and as a methodical pattern of suppressing Kazakh identity and culture. Soviet rule

took hold, and a Communist apparatus steadily worked to fully integrate Kazakhstan into the Soviet system. In 1936 Kazakhstan became a Soviet republic. Kazakhstan experienced population inflows of millions exiled from other parts of the Soviet Union during the 1930s and 1940s; many of the deportation victims were deported to Siberia or Kazakhstan merely due to their ethnic heritage or beliefs. For example, after the German invasion in June 1941, approximately 400,000 Volga Germans were transported from Ukraine to Kazakhstan. Deportees were interned in some of the biggest Soviet labor camps, including ALZHIR camp outside Astana, which was reserved for the wives of men considered "enemies of the people". The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic contributed five national divisions to the Soviet Union's World War II effort. In 1947, two years after the end of the war, the Semipalatinsk Test Site, the USSR's main nuclear weapon test site, was founded near the city of Semey.

World War II led to an increase in industrialisation and mineral extraction in support of the war effort. At the time of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's death, however, Kazakhstan still had an overwhelmingly agriculturally based economy. In 1953, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev initiated the ambitious "Virgin Lands" program to turn the traditional pasture lands of Kazakhstan into a major grain-producing region for the Soviet Union. The Virgin Lands policy brought mixed results. However, along with later modernizations under Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, it accelerated the development of the agricultural sector, which remains the source of livelihood for a large percentage of Kazakhstan's population. By 1959, Kazakhs made up 30% of the population. Ethnic Russians accounted for 43%.

Growing tensions within Soviet society led to a demand for political and economic reforms, which came to a head in the 1980s. A factor that contributed to this immensely was Lavrentii Beria's decision to test a nuclear bomb on the territory of Kazakh SSR in Semey in 1949. This had catastrophic ecological and biological consequences that were felt generations later, and Kazakh anger toward the Soviet system escalated.

In December 1986, mass demonstrations by young ethnic Kazakhs, later called Jeltoqsan riot, took place in Almaty to protest the replacement of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Kazakh SSR Dinmukhamed Konayev with Gennady Kolbin from the Russian SFSR. Governmental troops suppressed the unrest, several people were killed and many demonstrators were jailed. In the waning days of Soviet rule, discontent continued to grow and found expression under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost.

On 16 December 1991, Kazakhstan became the last Soviet republic to declare independence. Its communist-era leader, Nursultan Nazarbayev, became the country's first President, a position he has retained for more than two decades.

Caught up in the groundswell of Soviet republics seeking greater autonomy, Kazakhstan declared its sovereignty as a republic within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in October 1990. Following the August 1991 aborted coup attempt in Moscow and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan declared independence on 16 December 1991.

Cold War Era:

Between 1949 and 1989, the Soviet Union conducted several nuclear weapons tests. The vast majority of these took place at Kazakhstan's Semipalatinsk test site, also known as the Polygon. The late policy of the Soviet Union and Kazakhstan's independence were intertwined with the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union. There were other reasons for the Soviet Union's choice of Semipalatinsk, as well as more politically insidious elements. In the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s, Stalin's ideal of elevating Russian national culture to a superior position often led to the sacrifice of the welfare of non-Russian republics for the sake of the Soviet modernization project. Kazakhstan was one of them. As a result of Stalin's collectivization, 1.5 million people in Kazakhstan, a quarter of the population, died of famine in what became known as the Goloshchyokin Genocide or Asharshylyk. In addition, during the Stalin-era Great Terror, millions of so-called enemies of the state were deported from other parts of the Soviet Union to the steppes of Central Asia. The region was seen as a dumping ground for undesirables. Moscow therefore had such effects in Kazakhstan.

Up to this point :Kazakhstan Existence :

The January 2022 protests in Kazakhstan (known locally as Bloody January – Qandy Qantar) were unprecedented both in their scale and in the rapidity with which they spread across the country's major cities. But the drivers behind these protests had long been plain to see: economic inequality, rampant corruption, and the regime's failure to deliver on its promises of good governance and economic growth. Indeed, they were rooted in the Nazarbayev regime itself. The authoritarian regime's systemic penetration of the very fabric of state-society relations throughout President Nursultan Nazarbayev's 30-year rule produced conditions where the regime's political decision-making was largely divorced from society. As the gap between the two widened during the challenging last decade of Nazarbayev's rule (2011–2021), exacerbated by the economically disastrous effects of the pandemic, socio-economic grievances intensified. In the absence of contested elections or accountable governance, and given the spread of patronal politics, citizens had no way to influence political decision-

making. Protests were thus the only way for them to be heard. It was a widely publicized event that aroused worldwide interest and media coverage.

The January 2022 protest wave emerged as a direct response to the crisis within the regime. Since it did not allow for the institutionalization of a new opposition after the failures of the old opposition and its almost total disappearance by 2015–2016, the protests were not homogeneous or well planned. Instead, they involved a variety of protesting groups, some of which were organized in informal political and labor union networks and others of which were not organized at all but simply groups of citizens who came together spontaneously due to their shared rage at the fact that the regime was “robbing” them of opportunities for a better life.

The mass mobilization in January 2022 received an impetus from three important structural changes in regime-society relations. First, Nazarbayev’s 2019 resignation led to the emergence of widespread grassroots initiatives united under the Kazakh Spring banner and mass street protests that made many citizens aware of the possibility of contentious politics. Second, the economic inequality exacerbated by the pandemic crisis and corruption scandals in the vital healthcare system increased the rift between the masses and the elites, who were divorced from the impoverished social groups and failed to understand their demands. Finally, and perhaps most significantly for the “riot of the marginal groups” (as they have been dubbed in the local press), the consistent impoverishment of different parts of the Kazakhstani population and unbearable economic inequality opened space for discourses of unfairness that the regime failed to address. These protests started as a concrete response by people to the crisis.

Suppression of the Protest:

In order to understand the events that unfolded into the unprecedented mass protests in Kazakhstan, we first need to specify what types of groups were involved in each region. Protests were comprised of very diverse and disjointed groups that happened to be on the streets at the same time. Each city, with its own socio-economic conditions and legacies of previous social movements formations and protests, makes this phenomenon even more complex. For example, the 2011 Zhanaozen labour disputes left deeply structured and embedded networks of informal mobilization and informal labor unions in western Kazakhstan.

The January events in Kazakhstan started in Zhanaozen and spread quickly to the neighboring city of Aktau, making the Mangystau region the hub of the rapidly growing peaceful protests as of 2 January. This prompted Tokayev to form a special government commission, which traveled to Aktau to establish a dialogue with the

peaceful protestors. The president also quickly lowered LPG prices to 85–90 KZT (US\$0.20) from the previously increased price of 120 KZT (US\$0.28). But this did not calm the protestors, who then demanded the ouster of the government, calling for parliament, local governors, and even the president to step down in favor of “new faces” who would implement political reforms. The protests quickly spread to the major city of Almaty in the south of the country, where local activist groups began calling for peaceful protestors to come out into the streets across Kazakhstan “in solidarity” with the Zhanaozen and Mangystau protestors. The violence, which evolved most dramatically in Almaty and other cities in the south (Taldykorgan, Taraz, Kyzylorda, and Shymkent), has to be separated from the initial peaceful mobilization in terms of both its demands and the structure of the protest. The protests in Almaty started on the evening of 4 January, when the political groups Oyan, Qazaqstan (Wake Up, Kazakhstan!) and the unregistered Democratic Party of Kazakhstan (DPK), chaired by Zhanbolat Mamay, called for their supporters to gather and peacefully protest in the

First President’s Park and the Almaty Arena – two distinct points in the city located far from each other. The columns of protestors then marched to Respublika Square in central Almaty, where they clashed with the police, who were awaiting them with tear gas and stun grenades.¹⁰ The clashes continued throughout the night as the groups of protestors occupied the main square on Satpayev Street (uptown) and the Old Square (downtown) on Tole bi street, where the Soviet and post-Soviet parliaments had been located before the capital was moved to Akmola/Astana/Nur-Sultan. Both squares are imbued with historical and contemporary symbolism: every protest since 1986 has occurred in one of the two, bringing together members of the old – and now diminished – formal opposition. Those protestors who gathered in Almaty from 4 January, however, represented highly disorganized groups of spontaneous actors without a single leader.

The leaderless nature of Almaty’s cycles of contention among the peaceful protestors clearly differed from the organized peaceful protests in western Kazakhstan, where previous links and informal leaders allowed for self-mobilization and even a tribune with an open microphone. However, the Almaty protestors did not lack solidarity; indeed, this formed the backbone of the peaceful protests. People held flags and called for “significant” political changes and “Kazakhstan without the Nazarbayev family.” They advocated for anti-corruption measures and a better life, clearly referencing the socio-economic inequality in which many found themselves. There were also populist calls for the redistribution of wealth: many in the crowds continued to see the state as the owner of assets and regulator of the specific economic relations that benefitted some privileged groups of elites (see Mazorenko and Kaisar 2022.) These groups did not unite or form a singular leadership. Indeed, the conditions of authoritarian rule had led to the political disintegration of the formalized opposition: the DVK movement in 2001, the Ak Zhol party in 2005–2006, and the Azat Social-Democratic Party in 2006–2012. The remaining opposition “POST-SOVIET AFFAIRS 9” figures – for example, exiled former banker Mukhtar Ablyazov and his circle of

mostly exiled activists –are highly marginalized in the Kazakhstani public sphere. New opposition structures – those of Zhanbolat Mamay, for example, and movements such as Oyan, Qazaqstan – have only gained force since 2019. The latter initiated a social media campaign for peaceful rallies in solidarity with the Zhanaozen and Mangystau protestors on 2 January, and the two groups organized the largest peaceful rallies for the cause in Almaty on the evening of 4 January. Yet these activists were quickly identified by the police and detained or beaten up, with the result that they had little chance to participate in the subsequent days of protest. Meanwhile, the streets of Almaty were taken over by socio-economically diverse groups of people united in their grievances and who seized the tremendous window of opportunity that the evening and night of 4 January opened up. Unprecedented peaceful rallies

thus took over the major public squares shortly before the riot police started attacking them. Protests prior to January 2022, which had occurred in industrial areas, focused on labor disputes, socio-economic inequality, and the lack of legal support for labor unions or the protection of workers' rights against TNCs. The tactics that the regime chose to repress these industrial protests –harassing the activists, using sporadic violence, and blaming the workers – in fact united the protesters. The trauma of the Zhanaozen 2011 violence against unarmed protestors created a sense of solidarity and cut against the regime's misinformation about these events and the labor disputes that preceded the violence. There were other important factors in play here that contributed to a more organized mobilization. The presence of informal networks in smaller cities where people had stronger bonds created by work, family, and similar socio-economic conditions of everyday life, such as those in western Kazakhstan, allowed for the protests to remain peaceful throughout and sustain themselves thanks to a growing sense of solidarity in January 2022. The increasingly unequal living conditions in big cities such as Almaty, in contrast, led to disunity among the protestors, who had fairly similar demands for a better life and better political governance but saw different ways of achieving these demands depending on their class background and access to such privileges as a stable

income, housing, and education. Almaty's legacy of protests in the past decade clearly separated those fighting for survival and those fighting for a better quality of life within the "golden square"(the center of the city). In essence, the development of Kazakhstani regime-society relations is imbued with complex layers and understandings of illegality and inequality. Dwellers in informal settlements, who come from the lowest classes, remain illegally housed due to their lack of institutional access, even as the regime's abundant access to and appropriation of state institutions allows it to spread its own illegality, which is rooted in the political system itself. We discuss the development of this paradox in the next section.

The violence that evolved most dramatically in Almaty and other cities in the south (Taldykorgan, Taraz, Kyzylorda, and Shymkent) has to be separated from the initial peaceful mobilization in terms of both its demands and the structure of the protest.

The first reports and eyewitness accounts from Almaty and Taldykorgan identified some of the violent groups as meticulously organized, taking orders from specific “curators” and acting with a clear plan in mind: occupation, destruction, unprecedented violence. Since many of these groups of men were dressed in ordinary clothing that did not distinguish them from other protestors, it was hard to separate the two groups. This later led to unprecedented violence: peaceful protestors across Kazakhstan were detained and tortured to get them to “confess” to theirs. The organized violent groups employed several additional tactics to hide their identities. They drove cars without plates, attacked and killed anyone who tried to film or identify them, broke street surveillance cameras to be sure they would not be recorded, followed orders, and worked in groups. This behavior distinguishes them from the groups of sporadic and completely disorganized protestors who met on the streets for the first time while participating in the mobilization.



Tokayev Administration:

Protests in Kazakhstan are not limited to specific dates. The 2nd President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who took office in the 2019 elections, was preceded by Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was in office for a long time. The political factions that split during his term were not holding back from reacting to the government. During the unrest in January that year, demonstrators demanded the full removal of Nazarbayev from the political scene—and Tokayev seized the opportunity to emerge from the former president's shadow. He purged some people from the old government. No one now questions Tokayev's authority. He is firmly in control of Kazakhstan's "power vertical," and all top officials are loyal to him personally. However, in order to cement his victory, Tokayev was also obliged to seek a degree of popular support. To this end, he announced a program of reforms in March 2022 to deliver a "New Kazakhstan." The plans included the liberalization of Kazakhstan's party system, electoral reform, and limits on the powers enjoyed by the head of state. They were supposed to foster democratization and rid Kazakhstan of Nazarbayev's toxic legacy.

At the time, Tokayev stressed he was pursuing the path of reform against the advice of officials and experts urging him to preserve the status quo. This sort of rhetoric was very much in sync with widespread demand for change, justice, and accountability. Tokayev was not only addressing a domestic audience—he was also looking abroad. His promises to build a "new Kazakhstan" helped him craft a reputation as a reformer in the West. Many saw the regime as relatively progressive, particularly amid democratic backsliding in other parts of Central Asia.

Tokayev, who at first seemed to be continuing Nazarbayev's legacy, then tried to look different, but history repeated itself and he became his successor.

Indeed, Tokayev has not only assumed all the powers that were wielded by Nazarbayev, he has also taken on Nazarbayev's symbolic role. Like Nazarbayev, Tokayev often gives policy speeches in which he admonishes "his" people, and

telegraphs ideological messages. At a recent meeting of the National Kurultai (a consultative body chaired by the president), for example, Tokayev addressed a whole range of issues from national identity to social development. He opined on how young people should behave, how the spring holiday of Nowruz should be celebrated, and which version of Islam is most appropriate for Kazakhs.

At the start of his presidency, Tokayev appeared pliable and modest. But he has evolved into a typical autocrat-patriarch, and there are signs his regime could become more authoritarian still. In 2023, the opposition activist Marat Zhylyanbayev was jailed for seven years for “financing an extremist organization.” The journalist and activist Duman Mukhammedkarim, whose blog became popular after the 2022 unrest, was sent to prison for seven years for the same offense in 2024. And Janbolat Mamai, the leader of the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, was handed a six-year suspended prison sentence for “organizing mass unrest” in 2023, and banned from taking part in any public activities.

It seems that now that Kazakhstan’s new authorities feel more confident, they are more willing than ever to use both rhetoric and repressive tactics that are familiar from the Nazarbayev regime.

Seeking to justify the underwhelming achievements of the reform program, senior officials have been suggesting that the system is impossible to change overnight. Surveys carried out by polling agency Paperlab in April 2024 show that this explanation has been widely accepted. Many Kazakhs blame inept implementation at the local level, and external factors (the war in Ukraine, natural disasters, and others) for the failure of reforms. However, many also understand the fictive nature of the reform program. “Only the leaders have changed; the direction of travel is the same,” said one participant of a focus group.

Over the last two years, Tokayev’s regime has learned how to create the illusion of change while doing little of substance. Big ideas—like that of a “new Kazakhstan”—have turned out to be simply efforts to fill the vacuum left by years of political stagnation. Genuine reform would entail the introduction of meaningful constraints on the power and privilege of Kazakhstan’s rulers. But the regime is obviously not ready for such a step.

General Structure of the Committee and Purposes:

There are some things to understand in all this work and agenda. Nations intervene in crisis management through their reactions in the aftermath of crisis moments. These interventions often put a "stop" to bad things. It is the people themselves who provide a front and a mechanism of protection against the control of governments and what they have done and will do. These resistances continue through protests, propaganda against governments and mass perceptions, following integrative groups or political secession.

There are many socio-political insights that you will also address in this committee. The decisions you take and will take will continue as a product of a process. That's why it is important that the solutions that are produced are influenced by many different things in many different ways. I hope that there will be a lot of discussions and a rich content in terms of topics.

Question to be Addressed:

- 1. Given Kazakhstan's post-Soviet legacy of state tradition and its socio-political structure, what hidden steps could be proposed for a transition to a multi-party democracy, at least in the long term?**

2. What is the scope of the country's intentions regarding the guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms and institutional democratization?
3. What are the external obstacles and constraints, primarily from proceeding from former external dependency to the Russian state, to these intentions?
4. What are the fundamental pillars of the country's single-party regime, and how might the transformation of its economic infrastructure unfold? What are the real differences in principle and practice between the current Tokayev regime and the previous Nazarbayev regime in terms of the promises made to society?
5. What can be done if reforms do not materialize or promises are broken? What decisions can be taken at the governmental level to ensure that people's aspirations are met?
6. What goals can be set for a free Kazakhstan? How can we move on from past mistakes and take action?

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