

## Experts: Kyrgyzstan not to repeat "Kosovo scenario"

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Concerns in Kyrgyzstan over country's repeating the "Kosovo scenario" in case of arrival of the OSCE mission are unreasonable because of the different ways of development of these countries, as well as the role that international forces can play there, experts say.

"Southern Kyrgyzstan and Kosovo are completely different scenarios and we can hardly compare them or expect similar developments," Nicolás de Pedro, Researcher at Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), told Trend.

On Tuesday a protest action took place in the two largest cities of Kyrgyzstan - Bishkek and Osh - against the deployment of the OSCE police forces in the south of the Republic. Only about 50 people protested in Bishkek, and several dozens in Osh. The bulk of the protesters were young people who have chosen the slogan "No OSCE police" and "Let us not turn the country into Kosovo!"

"We oppose against these measures because we believe that this could eventually lead to a split in the country, one of the participants in the protest rally told ITAR-TASS. - It is possible that after this, the Kosovo scenario can be played in the south of Kyrgyzstan".

Experts, however, exclude a repetition of the Kosovo scenario.

The Kyrgyz situation is more complex due to the multiplicity of actors and issues involved, but this would not necessarily mean a split in the country, Pedro, an expert on Central Asia, said. No any significant group, including the Uzbek minority, neither a neighboring country nor a great power is pushing for such a situation.

OSCE police mission consisting of 52 unarmed people will arrive in Kyrgyzstan during a month at the request of the interim government to assist in stabilizing the situation in the country. The central government hopes that this will reduce tensions in the volatile region and will significantly improve the professional level of local law-enforcement agencies.

In addition, a group of international experts should investigate the tragic events in Osh and Jalal-Abad, where in June, according to the official version, armed clashes occurred between Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities.

There is no reason to fear a repetition of "Kosovo scenario" in Kyrgyzstan, said expert of the Finnish Institute International Affairs (FIIA), Igor Torbakov.

"Kosovo was a mono-ethnic enclave where the vast majority of Albanians acted for increasingly high degree of autonomy, and after the failed politics of the [Serbian leader] Slobodan Milosevic, the situation led to the establishment of an international mandate over Kosovo and unilateral recognition of independence," Finnish expert on Central Asia Torbakov told Trend.

According to him, when in Kyrgyzstan it is spoken about "Kosovo scenario", it is assumed that country's division to the north and south will occur. But south of the country remains ethnically mixed and multi-ethnic region.

Those Uzbeks, who are in some areas in the south with relative majority, act only for the expansion of their rights - a broader representation in government agencies, police, etc. No serious separatist movement of the Uzbek minority in Kyrgyzstan can be discussed, said Torbakov.

It is impossible to compare the potential role that the OSCE would or could play in Kyrgyzstan with the role NATO played in the Kosovo conflict, he said. Although NATO is a military-political block, it has enough strong military component. And, according to the expert, it is possible to say that NATO was waging a war against Yugoslavia.

"Whatever the OSCE does in Kyrgyzstan, there are no parallels with that made by NATO in Kosovo, said Torbakov. - Even if to imagine that someone would want to tear off the south from the north, the OSCE does not have real resources for this".

The Albanian authorities in Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in February, 2008. The country's independence has been recognized by 69 of 192 U.N. member countries, including the United States and several EU nations. According to the decision of International Court of Justice in the Hague taken on July 22 this year, declaration of independence of Kosovo does not violate international law.

Kosovo had been under control of UN administration and KFOR international force led by NATO since the summer of 1999 in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The resolution confirms the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia), and also calls for a decision on Kosovo's final status.

"The OSCE's small mission is in Kyrgyzstan to monitor the situation and is not engaged in peacekeeping as was the case with NATO troops in Kosovo," Jos Boonstra, Senior Researcher at FRIDE, told Trend.

If there is resistance from the Kyrgyz population against the mission, it will be crucial for the OSCE and the international community to explain the purpose of the mission and take away the fears people have, he said.

Welcoming the OSCE police mission's placement in Kyrgyzstan, the experts, however, doubt the ability of such small number of unarmed people to stabilize the situation.

The goals and functions of the police team of consultants are derived from the name. One should not expect control of the situation in conflict zones and decisive action from its small staff, the head of the Association of Political Scientists of Kyrgyzstan Nur Omarov told Kyrgyz news agency "24kg".

"And its arrival to the country rather delayed. The presence of the OSCE peacekeeping forces were necessary initially, during the southern events, he said. - But this moment was lost by the leadership of the country."

The head of the coalition "For Democracy and Civil Society" Dinara Oshurahunova called the arrival of the OSCE police in the south of Kyrgyzstan an important event. According to her, OSCE specialists will much help local law-enforcement officials, who "don't have experience in conflict situations".

Protests against the small and unarmed OSCE mission will not prevent its arrival, and are connected with the reluctance of certain circles in OSCE observers' disclosing the true causes of the April massacre in southern Kyrgyzstan.

According to Torbakov, it is obvious that the emergence of a mission is unprofitable to someone from representatives of the ethnic Kyrgyz authorities in the south (Osh and Jalal-Abad), who somehow were involved in riots against the local Uzbeks.

"I can only imagine that some elements want to obstruct the arrival of the police mission because they have an interest in hiding certain things from the international community," Herbert Salber, head of the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Center, told Deutsche Welle.

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