



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Forty-ninth session
Geneva, 28 April–9 May 2025

Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Kyrgyzstan*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review and the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a summary of 25 stakeholders' submissions² for the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations³ and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

2. JS8 recommended that Kyrgyzstan ratify the Statelessness Conventions.⁴

B. National human rights framework

1. Constitutional and legislative framework

3. OSCE-ODIHR asserted that constitutional changes weakening parliament, and subsequent extensive legislative changes, had impacted the 2021 parliamentary elections.⁵

4. OSCE-ODIHR recommended that Kyrgyzstan review the legal framework to ensure compliance with international obligations and standards for democratic elections, and address other shortcomings through an inclusive, consultative and transparent election process.⁶

2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

5. OSCE-ODIHR noted that the Draft Constitutional Law provided some guarantees for independence of the Ombudsperson but that certain areas required improvement by providing transparent and participatory merit-based selection and appointment procedures, revising the

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



grounds and process for dismissal, and providing functional immunity to the Ombudsperson and staff.⁷

C. Promotion and protection of human rights

1. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

Equality and non-discrimination

6. Although Kyrgyzstan included anti-discrimination legislation in its human rights action plan and National Plan for Gender Equality, JS11 reported no progress in its implementation, noting that Kyrgyzstan lacked a clear legal framework on discrimination, with no defined concept or complaint mechanism.⁸ JS11 recommended that Kyrgyzstan adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.⁹

7. JS5 reported a lack of definition of hate crime and hate speech, leading to incitements of hatred by authorities and radical groups.¹⁰ JS11 provided that while the Criminal Code considered crimes motivated by racial, ethnic, national, religious or inter-regional hatred as aggravating factors, the list of characteristics was non-exhaustive, limiting access to justice.¹¹

8. JS5 recommended that Kyrgyzstan adopt a law against hate speech and hate crime.¹² JS11 recommended to adopt hate crime and hate speech legislation with an exhaustive list of characteristics.¹³ OSCE-ODIHR recommended raising awareness and building the capacity of criminal justice officials to address hate crimes.¹⁴

Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

9. JS9 asserted that dozens of registered cases of torture by law enforcement officials demonstrated that torture remained a widespread issue, reportedly mostly inflicted to obtain confessions.¹⁵ While Rules for Medical Documentation of Violence, Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment and Punishment were approved, JS9 observed inadequate compensation mechanisms for torture victims.¹⁶ Legislative changes had removed criminal liability for obstructing the activities of the National Centre for Prevention of Torture (NCPT) and led to denial of access for visits.¹⁷ The definition of “torture” in the Criminal Code failed to provide criminal liability for torture committed by other persons “acting in an official capacity”.¹⁸ JS11 noted that many torture complaints were dismissed, and criminal cases were not pursued.¹⁹ JS11 listed systemic challenges in investigating torture complaints, including medical examinations and victim safety.²⁰

10. JS9 recommended that Kyrgyzstan: ensure adherence to the regulation excluding evidence obtained through torture;²¹ intensify police reform, including improving the criteria for evaluating performance;²² implement the Rules for Medical Documentation;²³ ensure appropriate victim compensation;²⁴ eliminate obstruction to NCPT activities, investigate cases of obstruction, and hold offenders accountable;²⁵ ensure that investigations into torture allegations are conducted by an independent body, that pre-investigative inquiry is conducted promptly, and that procedures guarantee judicial review;²⁶ and expand the subjects of the crime of torture to other persons acting in an official capacity.²⁷

11. FLD reported cases of poor detention conditions.²⁸ JS7 noted that in several penal institutions, conditions did not meet requirements.²⁹ Despite measures taken to improve detention conditions, JS9 noted that violations of international standards included insufficient meals, a lack of beds, and dilapidated buildings.³⁰

12. JS7 recommended to ensure that detention conditions and the treatment of detainees correspond to international standards, including regarding living space, sanitation, and access to medical and legal assistance.³¹ JS9 recommended improving detention conditions.³²

International humanitarian law

13. HRW reported that two major border conflicts had involved armed forces and resulted in deaths, injuries, displacement, and damage to infrastructure. The un-demarcated border

had been a source of tensions over water resources. HRW noted the targeting of marked ambulances and civilian crowds, and the use of bombs during border clashes.³³

14. HRW recommended that Kyrgyzstan: protect schools from attacks or military use and endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, mount an independent investigation into alleged violations of international humanitarian law committed by its forces and hold perpetrators accountable, provide compensation and support to families of victims of serious violations of international humanitarian law, and ensure that any border demarcation agreement and interim border arrangements respect the rights of local populations, including access to education, adequate housing, water, and an adequate standard of living.³⁴

Human rights and counter-terrorism

15. Jubilee noted that one of the grounds on which a draft Law on Freedom of Religion and Religious Associations could allow authorities to veto religious association registration applications was in cases of “possible involvement in terrorist and extremist” activities.³⁵ Jubilee observed a bill introduced in November 2023 to prohibit women from wearing niqabs and men from growing beards in the interest of “public security”.³⁶ JS11 reported that several organisations and individuals had been listed as terrorist or extremist, with anti-extremism laws predominantly targeting religious organisations, especially Islamic groups. JS11 highlighted that Criminal Code amendments criminalised the production and distribution of extremist materials, and carried a sentence of up to 5-years’ imprisonment. Religious expert assessments were frequently used as evidence.³⁷

16. Jubilee recommended that Kyrgyzstan clarify and narrow the definition of “terrorism” and “extremism” in the law to prevent their misuse against religious organisations engaged in legitimate practices, and establish judicial oversight for related decisions.³⁸

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

17. Stakeholders contended that interference from the executive, inadequate funding, reliance on political bodies, and pervasive corruption within the judicial system undermined judicial independence.³⁹ They noted a dominant role of the President and Parliament in the appointment and dismissal of judges;⁴⁰ budgetary needs conditioned on final approval by the Cabinet of Ministers and Parliament;⁴¹ and pervasive corruption, with allegations of predetermined outcomes and bribery.⁴²

18. JS3 and JS7 recommended that Kyrgyzstan allocate sufficient resources to ensure the proper functioning of the judiciary.⁴³ JS3 recommended to adopt legislative reforms that guarantee transparent, merit-based processes for the selection, promotion and removal of judges, and combat corruption by strengthening citizen oversight, ensuring transparency in the use of finances, and making all court rulings and judicial decisions public.⁴⁴ JS7 recommended to limit the President’s influence by introducing legal mechanisms that restrict executive overreach, ensure the transparency and independence of bodies responsible for judicial selection and discipline, and implement independent budget management systems.⁴⁵

19. Given reported violations of due process and fair trial guarantees, JS3 recommended that Kyrgyzstan ensure that defendants have access to a freely chosen lawyer, and establish independent commissions to oversee state-appointed lawyers.⁴⁶

20. Noting that several journalists had faced fair trial violations and lack of due process, JS4 recommended that Kyrgyzstan ensure that all journalists are granted the right to a fair trial before an impartial court, that their right to adequately prepare their defence is protected, and that the presumption of innocence is respected.⁴⁷

21. JS9 and JS11 noted that the Criminal Procedure Code had reinstated the practice of having a limited pre-investigative inquiry, instead of automatic initiation upon registration, resulting in mostly refusals to initiate cases.⁴⁸ JS7 noted that the pre-investigative inquiry increased the potential for manipulating crime statistics, as police were incentivised to close investigations to reduce the number of registered crimes.⁴⁹

22. JS7 recommended that Kyrgyzstan abolish pre-investigative inquiry and revise the performance metrics for law enforcement.⁵⁰ JS9 recommended to consider abolishing pre-

investigative inquiry.⁵¹ JS11 recommended streamlining the pre-investigative inquiry, ensuring comprehensive investigations while holding investigators accountable for unlawful refusals to initiate cases.⁵²

23. JS7 noted barriers to accessing legal assistance in the Jalal-Abad region due to a lack of legal aid centres, inadequate coordination among relevant entities, inconsistent standards and practices, and little public awareness of free legal aid services, while funding for the system was insufficient, with unclear mechanisms for lawyers' remuneration.⁵³ JS7 recommended that Kyrgyzstan increase the number of legal aid centres and enhance their accessibility, establish uniform quality standards, improve public awareness of services, allocate additional state funding, and implement a transparent payment system to prevent corruption.⁵⁴

24. JS3 raised concerns over threats, physical attacks, arbitrary detentions, and persecution of lawyers, and inadequate investigations by law enforcement.⁵⁵ JS3 reported interference from law enforcement, including unauthorised searches of law offices and unlawful questioning of lawyers.⁵⁶ JS3 recommended that Kyrgyzstan establish a committee to protect lawyers' rights, and include in the Criminal Code safeguards for lawyers during criminal proceedings.⁵⁷

25. Although the Bar Association was created as an independent body, stakeholders reported that amendments to the Law "On the Bar Association and Lawyer's Activity", particularly the inclusion of government representatives on the Bar Association Ethics Commission, and involvement of the Ministry of Justice in its elections and activities, undermined its independence.⁵⁸ JS10 observed that the Law did not grant the Qualification Commission independent status, as it existed within the Ministry of Justice.⁵⁹

26. JS3 recommended that Kyrgyzstan amend the Law "On the Bar Association and Lawyer's Activity" to ensure that no government representatives were present on the Ethics Commission.⁶⁰ JS7 recommended to revise existing laws to minimise state interference in the Bar Association's operations, and ensure that licensing processes for lawyers are impartial.⁶¹ JS10 recommended amending the Law and remove representatives of the Ministry of Justice from the Ethics Commission and the Qualification Commission.⁶²

Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

27. FLD contended that Kyrgyz authorities misused security laws and the Criminal Code to target human rights defenders, exerted pressure on journalists and human rights defenders, subjecting them to reprisals for investigative work, silenced journalists through shuttering media outlets, and persecuted human rights defenders requesting environmental information, notably regarding the transfer of the Kempir-Abad water reservoir and nearby land from Kyrgyzstan to a neighbouring country.⁶³ FPU observed increased criminal prosecution of journalists and activists, particularly under defamation and extremism-related charges.⁶⁴ HRW noted the detention of human rights defenders, activists, bloggers, and politicians for public dissent.⁶⁵ IPHR-CA reported that those criticising the authorities faced increasing intimidation and harassment, ranging from online threats to arrests and criminal prosecution.⁶⁶ JS1 reported criminal cases against journalists and social media users for expressing dissenting opinions, with courts issuing prison sentences.⁶⁷ JS10 reported the mass arrests of activists, journalists, bloggers, and human rights defenders due to criticism of the government.⁶⁸

28. Stakeholders recommended that Kyrgyzstan: ensure that civil society activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and politicians are protected in the exercise of their freedom of opinion, expression, assembly and association, so that they can conduct their activities without fear of reprisals or legal harassment;⁶⁹ ensure the transparent investigation of all cases of harassment,⁷⁰ and crimes committed against them;⁷¹ refrain from intimidation and reprisals, and protect them from attacks, abduction, arbitrary arrests and detentions, judicial or administrative harassment;⁷² refrain from using security legislation to criminalise legitimate human rights work,⁷³ and revise the Criminal Code to prevent its misuse.⁷⁴ FLD recommended establishing an independent national mechanism to protect human rights defenders, lawyers, and journalists.⁷⁵

29. Stakeholders asserted that the authorities had failed to conduct an adequate investigation into the ill-treatment that led to the death in prison of human rights defender Azimjan Askarov.⁷⁶ They recommended that Kyrgyzstan: carry out independent, impartial and transparent investigations into his death;⁷⁷ conduct an effective investigation;⁷⁸ and ensure an impartial investigation into his alleged torture.⁷⁹

30. Many stakeholders reported on the amended Law on Non-Commercial Organisations, noting that: it mandated that non-governmental organisations receiving any foreign funding and engaging in vaguely defined “political” activities must register as “foreign representatives”;⁸⁰ it granted authorities broad powers, allowing access to internal documents and events, and the ability to conduct intrusive inspections;⁸¹ it required them to register in a foreign representatives’ registry;⁸² and non-compliance could lead to dissolution of the organisation.⁸³ While some organisations voluntarily registered as “foreign representatives”, IPHR-CA reported that others initiated self-liquidation or limited activities to avoid implications.⁸⁴ OSCE/ODIHR underlined serious deficiencies of the “foreign representatives law” concerning freedom of association, noting a lack of legitimate justification, failure to comply with the principle of legal certainty, and that authorities were granted broad powers to inspect and supervise the activities of non-governmental organisations.⁸⁵

31. Stakeholders recommended that Kyrgyzstan: repeal the “foreign representatives” law;⁸⁶ remove the requirement to publish personal details of NGO staff members;⁸⁷ conduct a thorough review of the law, repeal or amend laws that excessively restrict civil society activities, collaborate with civil society, provide transparent registration processes, and protect civil society’s right to funding;⁸⁸ amend the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations, abolish the “foreign representative” status, and ensure the independence of NGOs by establishing reasonable and clearly defined frameworks for state oversight;⁸⁹ and ensure that legislation affecting NGOs aligns with international standards and is elaborated in consultation with civil society and international experts.⁹⁰ OSCE/ODIHR recommended that Kyrgyzstan abandon the proposed amendments to the “foreign representatives law” and engage in consultation with stakeholders to enhance the legal framework for the enjoyment of the right to freedom of association.⁹¹

32. Several stakeholders reported on 2021 legislation regarding protection from “false information”, enabling authorities, without judicial oversight, to order the removal of information deemed “false” or “inaccurate” from internet platforms and the shutting down of media outlets.⁹² Stakeholders also noted a systematic targeting of investigative journalists, including with attacks, deportation, raids, arrests, imprisonment and organisational liquidation.⁹³ Criminal charges of critics on social media reportedly often relied on vaguely worded Criminal Code provisions on calling for “disobedience” or “inciting” hatred.⁹⁴ JS1 noted the closure of a public foundation for having allegedly not registered as a media outlet, and that in 2020, Kyrgyzstan constrained social media and mobile and broadband internet during its contested elections.⁹⁵ JS4 highlighted that 2021 constitutional amendments gave the government additional direct powers over journalists and media outlets, and the Law on the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Corporation transformed the public broadcaster into a state-controlled entity.⁹⁶ JS11 highlighted that a draft bill amending the Code of Offences prohibited filming police officers.⁹⁷

33. While commending positive features of the draft Law on the Mass Media, including the prohibition of censorship and media monopolisation and guarantees of journalistic freedoms, OSCE/ODIHR noted provisions that compromised media independence, undermined investigative reporting, and placed media regulation under concentrated government control.⁹⁸ JS11 reported that while the Draft Law revision removed severe restrictions, it still prohibited foreign ownership of mass media and required permit-based accreditation for foreign media.⁹⁹

34. Stakeholders recommended that Kyrgyzstan: repeal the Law on Protection from Inaccurate (False) Information;¹⁰⁰ stop using the Law to retaliate against media outlets;¹⁰¹ and ensure that all cases involving claims of “false” or “defamatory” information are considered by courts in accordance with fair trial standards.¹⁰² Stakeholders also recommended to: stop pursuing criminal cases, forcing closures, blocking sites or otherwise obstructing the work of independent media;¹⁰³ conduct investigations into all reported cases of harassment of journalists;¹⁰⁴ ensure that all journalists are granted the right to a fair trial;¹⁰⁵ end arbitrary

detention, interrogation, and lengthy pre-trial detention of journalists, and release all jailed journalists arbitrarily detained or in lengthy pre-trial detention;¹⁰⁶ ensure that the government does not arbitrarily shut down broadcasting stations, media outlets,¹⁰⁷ the internet and social media,¹⁰⁸ and review and cancel court decisions to liquidate media organisations.¹⁰⁹

35. Stakeholders further recommended that Kyrgyzstan: repeal legislation restricting media outlets from operating freely, and comply with international standards to protect freedom of expression, ensuring safe working conditions for journalists and media outlets;¹¹⁰ ensure that new media law aligns with international standards;¹¹¹ amend the Criminal Code to provide criminal liability only for actions that incite hatred and violence;¹¹² amend the “Law on Non-Commercial Organizations” to preclude application to media workers, ensure that defamation disputes are resolved exclusively under civil law and that restrictions of freedom of speech are subject to judicial review, and establish a mechanism to protect journalists and an independent broadcast regulator;¹¹³ repeal or revise laws restricting freedom of expression;¹¹⁴ and avoid restrictions on videorecording police conduct.¹¹⁵

36. Although peaceful protests were often held without interference, stakeholders reported that organisers and participants needed to obtain “permission” from the authorities, who continued to restrict and ban assemblies, with exceptions for official events.¹¹⁶ Kylym Shamy noted that related court rulings were not communicated to citizens, leading to the automatic detention of organisers and participants by police without alerts, and that those detained faced criminal charges, while social media posts about peaceful assemblies resulted in criminal prosecutions.¹¹⁷

37. IPHR-CA recommended that Kyrgyzstan uphold the right to peaceful assembly in line with international standards, ensure citizens are not detained or penalised for exercising this right, and avoid imposing blanket restrictions on assemblies.¹¹⁸ JS11 recommended introducing restrictions on long-term bans on peaceful assembly, and investigate such unlawful restrictions.¹¹⁹ Kylym Shamy recommended to repeal all court decisions restricting peaceful assemblies, review all cases against detained participants, dismiss criminal cases against those attempting to hold peaceful assemblies, end unjustified bans for prolonged periods, end the criminalisation of related social media communications, and train the police, prosecutors and judges on the right to peaceful assembly.¹²⁰

38. Stakeholders reported: that the Law on Freedom of Religion mandated that all religious organisations register with the government, prohibiting any unregistered religious activity;¹²¹ that the Law required religious groups to register with member lists of at least two hundred citizens and information on funding and doctrines, and prohibited the involvement of children in religious organizations;¹²² that there were numerous reports of undue government restrictions on freedom of religion, and impunity for acts of violence and hostility;¹²³ and that religious communities struggled to gain state registration, feared reprisals, and faced raids and fines.¹²⁴ Forum18 noted that all public expressions of Islam were controlled by the Muslim Board, often leading to repression, including mosque closures for allegedly lacking registration.¹²⁵ ADF also reported that many mosques were raided and shut.¹²⁶ ECLJ noted that registered religious organisations were also subject to government surveillance, arrests, and fines.¹²⁷

39. ADF recommended that Kyrgyzstan: amend the Law on Freedom of Religion to permit unregistered religious activities, allow children’s participation, and ease restrictions on proselytism and religious materials;¹²⁸ remove criminal penalties for unregistered religious groups;¹²⁹ remove burdensome registration requirements and rescind intrusive government monitoring;¹³⁰ and repeal provisions restricting the freedom of religion.¹³¹

40. ADF highlighted that the government had proposed a new draft law to replace the Law on Freedom of Religion, increasing oversight of religious organisations.¹³² Stakeholders expressed concern that it: would make registration more burdensome by requiring religious organizations to re-register every five years;¹³³ required an increased number of members for a religious organization to register;¹³⁴ and would provide for greater censorship, prohibiting powers, and the banning of religious education.¹³⁵ ECLJ asserted that prohibiting minors from participating in religious activities constituted a violation of religious freedom.¹³⁶ Jubilee observed that the new law would prohibit Muslims from establishing associations outside the

state-controlled Muslim Board.¹³⁷ JS2 expressed concern that the proposed Law would severely restrict religious freedom.¹³⁸

41. ECLJ recommended that Kyrgyzstan reform its laws to ensure alignment with international standards, ease registration requirements for religious organisations, and guarantee individuals' right to practice their faith without government permission and related restrictions and punishments.¹³⁹ Jubilee recommended to simplify the registration process for religious organisations, guarantee that no group is denied registration or religious freedoms based on religious bias and provide legal recourse for groups that face these issues, avoid state interference in religious activities, especially the prohibition of unregistered religious groups, eliminate the five-year re-registration requirement or introduce a streamlined renewal process, and establish a formal consultation mechanism including representatives from diverse religious communities for revisions to relevant laws.¹⁴⁰

42. While commending the Draft Law on Political Parties containing several crucial elements in line with international standards, OSCE-ODIHR highlighted that some aspects required improvements to not unduly interfere with political parties' internal activities and to further the political participation of all segments of society.¹⁴¹ OSCE-ODIHR reported that the Early Presidential Election and Referendum were held against the backdrop of a political crisis, a campaign dominated by one candidate, and a lack of critical media reporting due to a restrictive legal media framework.¹⁴² OSCE-ODIHR reported that vote buying remained a concern.¹⁴³

43. OSCE-ODIHR recommended that Kyrgyzstan foster an environment where voter and candidate engagement were not hindered, uphold media freedom, and amend the law to guarantee more balanced political representation.¹⁴⁴ OSCE-ODIHR recommended to address vote-buying, ensure transparency of campaign funding, investigate reports of vote-buying and abuse of administrative resource efficiently, and ensure legal provisions for the secrecy of voting in practice.¹⁴⁵

Right to privacy

44. JS5 reported that regulations for maintaining the NGO Registry of Foreign Representatives required the disclosure of all staff names, which violated constitutional privacy rights.¹⁴⁶ It noted that the right to privacy of LGBTQI+ individuals had been violated due to media outlets and bloggers publishing materials depicting their faces without their consent and calling for violence against them.¹⁴⁷

45. JS5 recommended that Kyrgyzstan investigate incitements to violence and breaches of privacy by the media, bloggers, and public figures.¹⁴⁸

Right to education

46. Despite the new Law on Education, increased budget allocation, and Education Development Programme 2021–2040, BCN identified issues with education quality, due to a lack of educational materials, government control over textbooks, insufficient teacher training, inadequate school autonomy, and the diversion of resources from critical education needs through corruption.¹⁴⁹

47. BCN recommended that Kyrgyzstan raise teacher salaries, provide teacher training on inclusive education and technology use, improve educational infrastructure, combat corruption, improve access to education for girls, enhance school infrastructure to better accommodate students with disabilities, and expand early childhood education.¹⁵⁰

2. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women

48. Notwithstanding progress, with new laws on domestic violence, JS6 reported that sexual violence against women and girls remained a concern.¹⁵¹ JS6 and HRW noted that marital rape was not criminalised.¹⁵² JS6 noted that the definition of rape in the Criminal Code failed to account for non-consensual acts without violence, threat of violence, or abuse of the victim, and that Kyrgyzstan lacked a gender-sensitive methodology for investigating

sexual violence crimes due to stereotypes within the criminal justice system.¹⁵³ JS6 highlighted that child, early, and forced marriages remained a significant issue.¹⁵⁴

49. JS6 recommended that Kyrgyzstan: introduce a consent-based definition of rape, amend the Family Code to set 18 as the minimum age of marriage without exceptions, criminalise or treat as an aggravating factor rape committed against a spouse, ex-spouse, partner, or ex-partner, ensure that all cases of sexual violence against women and girls are investigated, prosecuted, and adjudicated with a victim-centred approach, introduce guidelines for criminal justice professionals to respond to gender-based violence, and improve data collection.¹⁵⁵

50. HRW reported that the authorities had not responded consistently to cases of bride kidnapping and domestic violence that had led to death or other grave dangers to women and girls, and did not fully enforce protective measures or hold perpetrators accountable. Cases of violence against women and girls remained underreported and survivors faced barriers to accessing justice such as insufficient shelters, dismissive responses by authorities, stigma, and harmful stereotypes.¹⁵⁶

51. HRW recommended that Kyrgyzstan ensure full investigation and prosecution of domestic violence against women and girls, including cases of bride kidnapping, ensure that the police, prosecutors, and judges, issue and enforce protection orders, and investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, while holding those who fail to do so accountable.¹⁵⁷

52. Although Kyrgyzstan had enacted legislation stipulating that no more than 70% of individuals of the same gender could be represented in Parliament and in local governments, JS11 reported that electoral laws had been amended to establish a new system that did not meet gender quotas.¹⁵⁸ While commending the comprehensive gender strategy, action plan, and consultative process, JS11 underlined gaps in the implementation of gender equality initiatives, noting that many public bodies remained uninformed on related issues.¹⁵⁹ Politicians engaging in victim-blaming rhetoric reportedly created additional barriers for victims seeking help.¹⁶⁰

53. JS11 recommended that Kyrgyzstan implement the gender strategy action plan, ensure thorough investigations into bride kidnapping cases, and hold officials accountable for hate speech and victim-blaming.¹⁶¹

Children

54. BCN noted that existing legal provisions did not adequately define the minimum age for work.¹⁶²

55. ECP reported that a draft Child Code to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings had been adopted in 2021, but was withdrawn in 2023. The 2012 Child Code protected children from cruel, brutal, inhuman or degrading treatment, but lacked explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in the home, day care, and alternative care.¹⁶³

56. ECP recommended that Kyrgyzstan resume its efforts to enact a law that would prohibit all corporal punishment of children in every setting of their lives.¹⁶⁴

Persons with disabilities

57. While recognizing a new “Law on Education” regulating inclusive education for persons with disabilities, HRW reported significant challenges in its implementation. Despite the development of minimum standards and special programmes to accommodate children with disabilities, HRW observed inadequate infrastructure, lack of transportation, insufficient early education opportunities, and the absence of reasonable accommodations and adapted curricula in schools.¹⁶⁵ HRW recommended that Kyrgyzstan ensure equal access to inclusive education for children with disabilities by providing support, tools, and accommodations, including through appropriate learning materials and assistive technology.¹⁶⁶

58. HRW and JS6 underlined the abuse experienced by women and girls with disabilities.¹⁶⁷ HRW noted that violence by family members or partners was often unreported and unaddressed due to discrimination against people with disabilities, and that there was a shortage of services for survivors of domestic violence with disabilities.¹⁶⁸ JS6 reported

burdensome and discriminatory evidentiary standards in sexual violence cases, exacerbated when the victim had a disability, and further barriers including inadequate technical means to report crimes, lack of guidelines for interviewing vulnerable victims, insufficient knowledge among law enforcement, and discriminatory perceptions.¹⁶⁹

59. HRW recommended to align disability rights and domestic violence legislation with international standards to ensure human rights-based responses to violence against women and girls with disabilities, and ensure reasonable accommodations to access justice, including requiring training for law enforcement and judicial personnel, and accessible procedures.¹⁷⁰ JS6 recommended that Kyrgyzstan remove discriminatory investigation procedures.¹⁷¹

Minorities

60. JS11 reported that extremism-related charges prescribed under the Criminal Code disproportionately affected Uzbek nationals, with a majority of individuals accused of distributing extremist materials being of Uzbek origin.¹⁷² BCN noted reports that the assessment of students of Uzbek-language schools showed the lowest results, exacerbated by the lack of educational materials in minority languages, limiting the ability of students to learn in their native languages.¹⁷³

61. ADF underlined that minority groups, including Ahmadi Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Falun Gong, were de facto banned from operating, and faced mob violence and attempted forced conversions.¹⁷⁴ ECLJ highlighted significant government and local authority control over minority Christian denominations, who also faced harassment by the Muslim majority.¹⁷⁵ Forum18 reported that violent attacks against non-Muslims in regions outside the capital had continued, while smaller communities often encountered problems in conducting burials.¹⁷⁶

62. ADF recommended to ensure effective protection of religious minorities, including converts, with accountability for violence against them.¹⁷⁷ Jubilee recommended ensuring that religious communities are allowed to gather and practice their faith, without interference.¹⁷⁸

63. JS2 reported that Kyrgyz authorities initiated a criminal investigation against Jehovah's Witnesses in 2019, and imposed censorship on all its religious literature, that Jehovah's Witnesses were denied local registration required for religious activities, and that members were arrested in southern Kyrgyzstan, linked to lack of registration.¹⁷⁹ JS2 noted that Kyrgyzstan had not implemented UN Human Rights Committee's views censuring Kyrgyzstan for violating the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses by refusing to grant registration, and that in 2022 the Bishkek City Court reportedly stated that the Views were not binding for Kyrgyzstan.¹⁸⁰

64. JS2 recommended that Kyrgyzstan ensure that Jehovah's Witnesses can register Local Religious Organisations in the southern regions, and terminate the criminal prosecution of Jehovah's Witnesses, the censorship of their publications, and the interference with their peaceful manifestation of religious beliefs.¹⁸¹

65. Connection-e.V reported that Kyrgyzstan limited the possibility for alternative service only to those who belonged to a registered religious organisation whose creed did not allow the use of weapons or service in the armed forces. It noted that the term of alternative service was 50 per cent longer than that of military service, and those performing alternative service had to pay a fee.¹⁸²

66. Connection-e.V recommended that Kyrgyzstan recognise the right to conscientious objection to military service according to international standards, by providing an alternative service which all conscientious objectors have access to and that is not punitive or discriminatory in its nature, cost or duration, and repeal discriminatory provisions limiting the right to conscientious objection only to members of religious organisations whose creed prohibits the use of arms, and provisions imposing a discriminatory fee on objectors.¹⁸³

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

67. Stakeholders observed that the new Law on Measures to Prevent Harm to the Health of Children criminalised the "propaganda" of "non-traditional sexual relations", and

restricted related information among minors.¹⁸⁴ JS5 reported police violence against LGBTQI+ persons, including extortion, physical assaults and entrapment, that LGBTQI+ activists faced persecution by law enforcement and hate speech by members of Parliament, that sexual orientation and gender identity were not included as protected grounds in any legislation, that transgender women faced illegal evictions, and that Kyrgyzstan amended the Law “On Civil Status Acts” to remove the provision allowing transgender people to change their gender marker, and raised the minimum age for accessing gender-affirming healthcare from 18 to 25.¹⁸⁵ FLD reported instances of law enforcement officers blackmailing relatives of youth human rights defenders working on LGBTQI+ rights.¹⁸⁶

68. FLD recommended repealing the “LGBTI propaganda” law.¹⁸⁷ JS5 recommended that Kyrgyzstan repeal the law restricting sexual orientation and gender identity discussions among minors, prosecute hate speech against LGBTQI+ persons by government officials, add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds in relevant legislation, investigate unlawful evictions, protect lesbian, bisexual and transgender women from gender-based violence, and ensure legal gender recognition and access to gender-affirming healthcare starting at age 18.¹⁸⁸

Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers

69. PF-LC reported delays in processing refugee status applications due to a limited number of authorised staff, and discriminatory practices based on country of origin.¹⁸⁹ It noted that individuals recognised as refugees by UNHCR but lacking official legal status at the national level, known as mandate refugees, faced restrictions in accessing social rights due to the lack of national recognition and naturalisation mechanisms.¹⁹⁰

70. PF-LC recommended that Kyrgyzstan increase the number of authorised staff for refugee status processing, amend the Refugee Law to establish timeframes for issuing registration certificates for in-country applications, ensure non-discrimination in reviews, and improve the legal status and access to services for mandate refugees.¹⁹¹

Stateless persons

71. While noting the Law on Citizenship amendments to offer more protection for stateless individuals and ensure universal birth registration, JS8 reported that stateless persons still faced challenges accessing socio-economic rights, and encountered burdensome requirements to obtain residence permits and administrative barriers restricting the freedom of movement due to the lack of internationally recognised travel documents.¹⁹²

72. JS8 recommended that Kyrgyzstan ensure that stateless persons can obtain identity cards without needing a residence permit, amend laws to enable them to apply for status recognition and legal residency, uphold the principle of non-refoulement, create internationally recognised travel documents for stateless persons, ensure their access to healthcare and social security, and establish a formal statelessness determination procedure.¹⁹³

Notes

¹ A/HRC/44/4, A/HRC/44/4/Add.1, and A/HRC/45/2.

² The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org.

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ADF	ADF International, Geneva (Switzerland);
BCN	The Stichting Broken Chalk, Amsterdam (the Kingdom of the Netherlands);
Connection-e.V	Connection e.V., Offenbach (Germany);
ECLJ	European Center for Law and Justice, Strasbourg (France);
ECP	End Corporal Punishment, Geneva (Switzerland);
FLD	Front Line Defenders - The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Blackrock, county Dublin (Ireland);
Forum18	Forum 18, Oslo (Norway);

FPU	Free Press Unlimited, Amsterdam (the Kingdom of the Netherlands);
HRW	Human Rights Watch, Geneva (Switzerland);
IPHR-CA	International Partnership for Human Rights - Central Asia, Brussels (Belgium);
Jubilee	Jubilee Campaign, Fairfax, VA (the United States of America);
KylymShamy	"Kylym shamy" Public Foundation, Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan);
PF-LC	Public Foundation "Legal Clinic Adilet", Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan).
<i>Joint submissions:</i>	
JS1	Joint submission 1 submitted by: Access Now, New York (the United States of America); and Freedom for Eurasia;
JS2	Joint submission 2 submitted by: The Asia-Pacific Association of Jehovah's Witnesses, Selters (Germany); and The European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses;
JS3	Joint submission 3 submitted by: Barreau de Paris, Paris (France); and Public Foundation "Right for Everyone";
JS4	Joint submission 4 submitted by: Committee to Protect Journalists, New York (the United States of America); Freedom for Eurasia; and Free Russia Foundation;
JS5	Joint submission 5 submitted by: Eurasian Coalition for Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity, Tallinn (Estonia); Kyrgyz Indigo; Qün Jelesi; Trans Initiative group MA in Kyrgyzstan; and BizdaBarbyz;
JS6	Joint submission 6 submitted by: Equality Now, New York (the United States of America); Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan; Union of People with Disabilities "Ravenstvo"; Positive Dialogue; Civic Union; and Ensan Diamond;
JS7	Joint submission 7 submitted by: International Partnership for Human Rights - Central Asia, Brussels (Belgium); The Akyikat-Karegi Civil Society Network; and The Lawyers for Human Rights Public Foundation;
JS8	Joint submission 8 submitted by: Nationality For All, Banksia Beach (Australia); the Central Asia Network on Statelessness; and the Statelessness and Dignified Citizenship Coalition - Asia Pacific;
JS9	Joint submission 9 submitted by: World Organisation against Torture, Geneva (Switzerland); and International Partnership for Human Rights;
JS10	Joint submission 10 submitted by: Civics Public Foundation, Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan); and New Generation of Human Rights Defenders of Kyrgyzstan;
JS11	Joint submission 11 submitted by: Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan); and Coalition for Equality.
<i>Regional intergovernmental organization(s):</i>	
OSCE/ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Warsaw (Poland); and Representative of Freedom of the Media.
³ The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:	
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
OP-ICESCR	Optional Protocol to ICESCR
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

- ⁴ JS8, p. 9 para. 4.
⁵ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 13.
⁶ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 14.
⁷ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 11.
⁸ JS11, paras. 8 and 11.
⁹ JS11, paras. 13–14.
¹⁰ JS5, para. 14.
¹¹ JS11, para. 12.
¹² JS5, para. 32.
¹³ JS11, paras. 13–14.
¹⁴ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 22.
¹⁵ JS9, para. 4.
¹⁶ JS9, paras. 33, 37 and 38.
¹⁷ JS9, paras. 53–55.
¹⁸ JS9, paras. 5 and 31.
¹⁹ JS11, para. 45.
²⁰ JS11, para. 46.
²¹ JS9, p. 4.
²² JS9, p. 4.
²³ JS9, p. 7.
²⁴ JS9, p. 9.
²⁵ JS9, p. 10.
²⁶ JS9, p. 6.
²⁷ JS9, p. 7.
²⁸ FLD, para. 6.4–6.6.
²⁹ JS7, para. 7.2.
³⁰ JS9, paras. 42, 43 and 45.
³¹ JS7, para. 7.3.
³² JS9, p. 10.
³³ HRW, p. 7–8.
³⁴ HRW, p. 8.
³⁵ Jubilee, para. 4.
³⁶ Jubilee, para. 12.
³⁷ JS11, paras. 68–70 and 72–74.
³⁸ Jubilee, para. 16.
³⁹ JS3, para. 8 and JS7, paras. 3.1–3.2.
⁴⁰ JS3, paras. 9–10 and JS7, paras. 3.1–3.2.
⁴¹ JS3, para. 11 and JS7, para. 3.8.
⁴² JS3, para. 12.
⁴³ JS3, para. (i) and JS7 para. 3.9.
⁴⁴ JS3, paras. (ii) and (iii).
⁴⁵ JS7, para. 3.9.
⁴⁶ JS3, paras. 18–20, 22 and (vi) - (vii).
⁴⁷ JS4, para. 27 and 59–61.
⁴⁸ JS9, paras. 15 and 16, and JS11, paras. 46 and 58.
⁴⁹ JS7, paras. 2.5 and 2.8.
⁵⁰ JS7, para. 2.8.
⁵¹ JS9 p. 7.
⁵² JS11, para. 81.

- 53 JS7, paras. 5.1–5.3 and 5.5.
54 JS7, para. 5.6.
55 JS3, paras. 27, 28, 30 and 35.
56 JS3, para. 34.
57 JS3, paras. (ix) - (x).
58 JS3, paras. 14–15, JS7, para. 4.2 and JS10, p. 7.
59 JS10, p. 7.
60 JS3, para. (iv).
61 JS7, para. 4.7.
62 JS10, p. 8.
63 FLD, paras. 3.2, 4.1–4.2, and 5.1–5.2.
64 FPU, paras. 2.3–2.4.
65 HRW, p. 4.
66 IPHR-CA, para. 5.1.
67 JS1, para. 6.
68 JS10, p. 10.
69 HRW, p. 5, FLD, paras. 7.4 and 7.7, IPHR-CA, para. 2.6, JS9 p. 12 and JS10 p. 10 (2) and p. 9 (1).
70 JS5 para. 27, JS9 p. 12, and JS10 p. 10 (3).
71 FLD, para. 7.5.
72 FLD, para. 7.9 and IPHR-CA para. 5.13.
73 FLD, para. 7.2.
74 IPHR-CA, para. 5.13.
75 FLD, para. 7.3.
76 FLD paras. 6.1–6.3, HRW p. 2, JS4, paras. 17–18, JS11, para. 63.
77 FLD, para. 7.6.
78 HRW p. 2.
79 JS4, para. 44.
80 FLD, paras. 2.2–2.3, HRW, p. 4, JS1, para. 15–16, JS4, para. 16, JS5, paras. 5 and 7, and JS10, p. 4.
81 FLD, para. 2.2 and JS9, para. 61.
82 FPU, para. 2.6.
83 HRW, p. 4, IPHR-CA, para. 2.1, JS9, paras. 61 and 64, and JS10, p. 5.
84 IPHR-CA, para. 2.4.
85 OSCE/ODIHR, para. 7.
86 FLD, para. 7.1, FPU, para. 3.2, HRW p. 5, IPHR-CA, para. 2.6, and JS5, para. 26.
87 JS5, para. 28.
88 JS9, p. 12.
89 JS10, p. 5 (1) and (2).
90 IPHR-CA, para. 2.6.
91 OSCE/ODIHR, para. 7.
92 HRW, p. 2, IPHR-CA, para. 3.5, JS1, paras. 18 and 21, JS4, para. 16, JS10, p. 8 and JS11, para. 17.
93 HRW, p. 2–3, IPHR-CA, paras. 3.1–3.3, JS4, paras. 18–23 and 26 and JS11, para. 19.
94 IPHR-CA, para. 5.7 and JS4, paras. 31–32.
95 JS1, paras. 10, 13 and 24–25.
96 JS4, para. 15–16.
97 JS11, para. 18.
98 OSCE/ODIHR, para. 8.
99 JS11, para. 15.
100 HRW, p.3, IPHR-CA, para. 3.9 and JS4 para. 40.
101 JS4, para. 64.
102 IPHR-CA, para. 3.9.
103 IPHR-CA, para. 3.9, JS1, para. 27(b), JS4 paras. 45–46 and 55, and JS11 para. 22.
104 JS1, para. 27(c) and JS4, para. 56.
105 JS4, para. 47.
106 JS4, paras. 45, 48 and 51–52.
107 JS4, para. 68.
108 JS1, para. 27(m).
109 JS1, para. 27(i).
110 FPU, para. 3.2.
111 IPHR-CA, para. 3.9.
112 JS1, para. 27(l).
113 JS4 paras. 39–40, 58 and 72.
114 JS10, p. 9 (1).

- ¹¹⁵ JS11, paras. 20–21.
¹¹⁶ IPHR-CA, para. 4.2, JS1, para. 14, JS5, paras. 9–10, JS11, paras. 24, 26–27 and 29 and KylymShamy, paras. 1.1 and 1.4.
¹¹⁷ KylymShamy, paras. 1.7 and 3.1.
¹¹⁸ IPHR-CA, para. 4.6.
¹¹⁹ JS11, paras. 33–34.
¹²⁰ KylymShamy, paras. 4.1–4.6.
¹²¹ ADF para. 12, and ECLJ, para. 7.
¹²² ADF, paras. 9, 12 and 13.
¹²³ ADF para. 21.
¹²⁴ Forum18, paras. 18 and 24–28.
¹²⁵ Forum18, para. 4.
¹²⁶ ADF, para. 24.
¹²⁷ ECLJ, para. 13.
¹²⁸ ADF, para. 35(a).
¹²⁹ ADF, para. 35(b).
¹³⁰ ADF, para. 35(c).
¹³¹ ADF, para. 35(d).
¹³² ADF, para. 20.
¹³³ Forum18, para. 10, ECLJ para. 14 and Jubilee, para. 4.
¹³⁴ ECLJ para. 14 and Jubilee, para. 4.
¹³⁵ Forum18, para. 10 and Jubilee, para. 4.
¹³⁶ ECLJ, para. 16.
¹³⁷ Jubilee, para. 4.
¹³⁸ JS2 para. 35.
¹³⁹ ECLJ, para. 25.
¹⁴⁰ Jubilee, paras. 14–15 and 18–19.
¹⁴¹ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 9.
¹⁴² OSCE-ODIHR, para. 15.
¹⁴³ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 17.
¹⁴⁴ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 14.
¹⁴⁵ OSCE-ODIHR, para. 18.
¹⁴⁶ JS5, para. 7.
¹⁴⁷ JS5, para. 17.
¹⁴⁸ JS5, para. 30.
¹⁴⁹ BCN, paras. 5 and 13.
¹⁵⁰ BCN, paras. 29 and 35–38.
¹⁵¹ JS6, paras. 10, 12 and 15.
¹⁵² JS6, para. 20 and HRW p. 5.
¹⁵³ JS6, paras. 17, 19 and 21.
¹⁵⁴ JS6, para. 26.
¹⁵⁵ JS6, p. 9–10.
¹⁵⁶ HRW, p. 5.
¹⁵⁷ HRW, p. 6.
¹⁵⁸ JS11, paras. 35–36.
¹⁵⁹ JS11, paras. 37–38.
¹⁶⁰ JS11, para. 39.
¹⁶¹ JS11, paras. 41–43.
¹⁶² BCN, para. 25.
¹⁶³ ECP, paras. 1.2, 2.1, 2.5 and 2.6.
¹⁶⁴ ECP, para. 1.3.
¹⁶⁵ HRW, p. 6.
¹⁶⁶ HRW, p. 7.
¹⁶⁷ HRW, p. 7 and JS6, para. 28.
¹⁶⁸ HRW, p. 7.
¹⁶⁹ JS6, paras. 29 and 32.
¹⁷⁰ HRW, p. 7.
¹⁷¹ JS6, pp. 9–10.
¹⁷² JS11, paras. 71 and 78.
¹⁷³ BCN, para. 18.
¹⁷⁴ ADF paras. 22 and 25.
¹⁷⁵ ECLJ, paras. 12 and 21.

- ¹⁷⁶ Forum18, para. 5 and 7.
¹⁷⁷ ADF, para. 35(e).
¹⁷⁸ Jubilee, para. 20.
¹⁷⁹ JS2, paras. 2–4 and 6–7.
¹⁸⁰ JS2 paras. 14–20.
¹⁸¹ JS2, paras. 51(1) and 51(4).
¹⁸² Connection-e.V, paras. 10, 14, 16–17 and 23.
¹⁸³ Connection-e.V, para. 23.
¹⁸⁴ FLD, para. 2.4 and JS5, para. 3.
¹⁸⁵ JS5 paras. 4, 10, 12–13, 16, 18 and 23.
¹⁸⁶ FLD, para. 2.4.
¹⁸⁷ FLD, para. 7.1.
¹⁸⁸ JS5, paras. 24, 29, 31, 33–34, and 35–37.
¹⁸⁹ PF-LC, paras. 4 and 6, and 10–11.
¹⁹⁰ PF-LC, para. 12.
¹⁹¹ PF-LC, paras. 13–14 and 16–17.
¹⁹² JS8, paras. 17, 21, 23, 26 and 28.
¹⁹³ JS8, p. 9 paras. 1–7.
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