

## Kyrgyzstan



**Population:** 5,431,747 (July 2009 est.)  
**Population Growth Rate:** 1.396% (2009 est.)  
**Birth Rate:** 23.44 births/1,000 population (2009 est.)  
**Life Expectancy:** *total population:* 69.43 years; *male:* 65.43 years; *female:* 73.64 years (2009 est.)  
**Literacy Rate:** *total population:* 98.7%; *male:* 99.3%; *female:* 98.1% (1999 census)  
**Net Migration Rate:** -2.57 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2009 est.)  
**Unemployment Rate:** 18% (2004 est.)  
**Gross Domestic Product per Capita:** \$2,100 (2008 est.)  
**Religions:** Muslim 75%, Russian Orthodox 20%, other 5%  
**Languages:** Kyrgyz 64.7% (official), Uzbek 13.6%, Russian 12.5% (official), Dungan 1%, other 8.2% (1999 census)  
**Ethnic Groups:** Kyrgyz 64.9%, Uzbek 13.8%, Russian 12.5%, Dungan 1.1%, Ukrainian 1%, Uygur 1%, other 5.7% (1999 census)  
**Capital:** Bishkek<sup>1</sup>

### Trafficking Routes

Kyrgyzstan is a source country of men, women, and children trafficked to Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan,<sup>2</sup> the United Arab Emirates,<sup>3</sup> China, Germany, Greece,<sup>4</sup> and Ukraine.<sup>5</sup> Kyrgyzstan is also reported as a destination country for individuals seeking employment from Tajikistan.<sup>6</sup>

Kyrgyzstan has been identified as a transit country for individuals smuggled from the Asian region to Western European countries, the United States, and Canada.<sup>7</sup>

### Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s contributed to political, economic, and social instability in former member countries, including Kyrgyzstan. As a result, an “absence of effective rule of law” and a “lack of respect for human rights” have contributed to the trafficking

<sup>1</sup> CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK 2009 (July 20, 2009), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Press Release, UNICEF Central and East European and Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), UNICEF-supported report “Child Trafficking in Kyrgyzstan” reveals gap in reliable data (July 4, 2008), *available at:* [http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/media\\_9266.html](http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/media_9266.html).

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, UNICEF, Sold for \$12,000: Tackling Child Trafficking in Kyrgyzstan (Nov. 19, 2008), *available at:* [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/kyrgyzstan\\_46457.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/kyrgyzstan_46457.html).

<sup>4</sup> THE ADVOCATES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS-STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, KYRGYZSTAN, <http://www.stopvaw.org/Kyrgyzstan.html> (last visited July 20, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO), FORCED LABOUR: FACTS AND FIGURES (2009), *available at:* [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_106245.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_106245.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>7</sup> INTERPOL, PEOPLE SMUGGLING (July 16, 2009), <http://www.interpol.int/public/THB/PeopleSmuggling/Default.asp>.

of individuals throughout these countries. In addition, a lack of economic opportunity drives individuals to seek work in other countries; this migration is often illegal and is managed by organized criminal groups.<sup>8</sup> More specifically, trafficking for the purpose of forced labor is facilitated by seasonal labor migration to Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, coupled with few recruitment regulations.<sup>9</sup>

## Forms of Trafficking

Young Kyrgyz girls are being trafficked for sexual exploitation, including in the sex industry.<sup>10</sup> Many girls are trafficked internally—from rural regions to cities—for the purpose of forced prostitution.<sup>11</sup>

Cases of forced marriage, many of which include “bride kidnapping,” are prevalent throughout Kyrgyzstan.<sup>12</sup> Women and girls as young as 12 years old are kidnapped by groups of men and forced into agreeing to marriage. Often, rape accompanies this crime so as to shame the victims and deter any attempt of escape.<sup>13</sup>

Child labor also appears to be a significant problem in Kyrgyzstan; children comprise 21.9 percent of the Kyrgyz workforce.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, children are used as laborers in coal mines to financially support their families.<sup>15</sup> Other forms of forced labor include work in the agriculture and construction fields, which is accompanied by debt bondage and withheld wages.<sup>16</sup>

## Government Responses

In an effort to improve legislation prohibiting trafficking, a working group headed by the Kyrgyz State Committee on Migration and Employment and supported by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was instituted in April 2009. The group consists of parliamentarians, civil society and executive authority representatives, and independent experts; these individuals will be reviewing antitrafficking laws and suggesting amendments to the government.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Human Trafficking and Smuggling in Russia, the FSU, and Beyond* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC), March 31, 2008, *available at*:

[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=events.event\\_summary&event\\_id=393561](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=events.event_summary&event_id=393561).

<sup>9</sup> INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, KYRGYZSTAN-FACTS AND FIGURES,

<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/activities/asia-and-oceania/central-asia/kyrgyzstan> (last visited July 21, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF CEE/CIS *supra* at 2.

<sup>11</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights *supra* at 4.

<sup>12</sup> Press Release, The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), OSCE Center in Bishkek support parliamentary hearing on gender and legislation to curb bride kidnapping (Mar. 3, 2009), *available at*: <http://www.osce.org/item/36562.html>.

<sup>13</sup> HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, RECONCILED TO VIOLENCE: STATE FAILURE TO STOP DOMESTIC ABUSE AND ABDUCTION OF WOMEN IN KYRGYZSTAN (2006), *available at*: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/kyrgyzstan0906webwcover.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Press Release, ILO, Over 30% of children in Kyrgyzstan do hard labour (May 14, 2009), *available at*: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/moscow/news/2009/0514.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> *Child labour in Kyrgyz coal mines*, BBC News, Aug. 24, 2007, *available at*: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6955202.stm>.

<sup>16</sup> ILO *supra* at 5.

<sup>17</sup> Press Release, OSCE, OSCE Center supports work to bring Kyrgyz human trafficking legislation in line with international standards (Apr. 3, 2009), *available at*: [http://www.osce.org/cthb/item\\_1\\_37097.html](http://www.osce.org/cthb/item_1_37097.html).

In 2005, the Kyrgyz government passed the Law on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Persons, which prohibits the trafficking of individuals for all purposes. In addition, trafficking victims who agree to aid investigations are exempt from prosecution.<sup>18</sup>[E: prosecution for what?]

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic prohibits forced labor in article 28, which states that citizens shall not be subjected to such labor except in the event of war, natural disaster, epidemic, court-sentenced punishment, or other “extraordinary circumstances.”<sup>19</sup>

Article 13 of the Kyrgyz Family Code prevents forced and underage marriage, by stating that “Entry into marriage requires mutual voluntary consent of the man and the woman entering into marriage and both of them being of the marriage age.” Article 14 of the family code stipulates the marriage age is 18 years, except under certain circumstances when one may marry at 16 years.<sup>20</sup>

Also, article 129 of the Penal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic criminalizes the rape of a juvenile girl and subjects the offender to 17–20 years’ imprisonment or death.<sup>21</sup> In addition, article 124 of the penal code was amended in 2003 and now stipulates that anyone who participates in any stage of the trafficking process, including recruitment, transfer, sale, or purchase, is liable for three to 20 years’ imprisonment.<sup>22</sup>

## **Nongovernmental and International Organizations Responses**

Oasis Kyrgyzstan is a nongovernmental organization based in Bishkek that focuses on three primary aims: reintegration of street children into society, protection of trafficking victims, and creation of training and job opportunities for at-risk youth. Oasis Kyrgyzstan is a member organization of the global Stop the Traffik campaign, whose initiatives include raising public awareness of trafficking, advocating for victims, and funding anti-trafficking projects worldwide.<sup>23</sup>

The Golden Goal Public Association is a Kyrgyz NGO whose efforts are categorized under five primary goals: civil education, social help to vulnerable groups, promotion of human rights protection, prevention of human trafficking, and institutionalization of civil society. To prevent human trafficking, Golden Goal sponsors training, consultations, and informational

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<sup>18</sup> ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK- COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT, KYRGYZSTAN (2005), *available at*: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Country-Gender-Assessments/cga-kgz.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic art. 28, *available at*: [http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal\\_affairs/legal\\_cooperation/foreigners\\_and\\_citizens/nationality/documents/national\\_legislation/kyrgyzstan%20constitution%20of%20the%20kyrgyz%20republic.asp#P46\\_1713](http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_cooperation/foreigners_and_citizens/nationality/documents/national_legislation/kyrgyzstan%20constitution%20of%20the%20kyrgyz%20republic.asp#P46_1713).

<sup>20</sup> UNICEF, CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW IN KYRGYZSTAN (2006), *available at*: [http://www.unicef-irc.org/research/ESP/CountryReports2006/kyrgyzstan\\_law\\_rep2006.pdf](http://www.unicef-irc.org/research/ESP/CountryReports2006/kyrgyzstan_law_rep2006.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> INTERPOL, LEGISLATION OF INTERPOL MEMBER STATES ON SEXUAL OFFENSES AGAINST CHILDREN, NATIONAL LAWS-KYRGYZSTAN, <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaKyrgyzstan.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> RUSLAN KHAKIMOV, UNITED NATIONS DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, LEGAL ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION REGULATING RELATIONS IN PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE IN KYRGYZSTAN (2009), *available at*:

[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw\\_legislation\\_2009/Expert%20Paper%20EGMGPLHP%20\\_Ruslan%20Khakimov%20revised\\_.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw_legislation_2009/Expert%20Paper%20EGMGPLHP%20_Ruslan%20Khakimov%20revised_.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Oasis Kyrgyzstan- About Us, <http://www.oasiskg.org/aboutus.htm> (last visited July 21, 2009).

campaigns; victims are provided with legal and social assistance while being reintegrated into society.<sup>24</sup>

## **Multilateral Initiatives**

In 2007, Golden Goal and OSCE's field office in Osh collaborated on an anti-trafficking project, Preventing Women and Children Trafficking in the South of Kyrgyzstan. Funded by the French government, the project's initiatives included training lawyers and judges in the area of trafficking, encouraging state intervention through the State Committee on Migration and Employment, and disseminating trafficking-awareness material at public transportation stations.<sup>25</sup>

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is very active in Kyrgyzstan and promotes several anti-trafficking projects. IOM Bishkek sponsors Combating Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia: Prevention, Protection, and Capacity Building, which supports regional programs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan; it includes such initiatives as supporting an NGO network and hotline, operating shelters, repatriating victims, and implementing prevention measures.<sup>26</sup> IOM Bishkek has also published the *Manual on Care, Rehabilitation, Recovery, and Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings for the Kyrgyz Republic* and *Role of NGOs in Counter Trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic*.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Golden Goal Public Association, available at: <http://www.goldengoalosh.org/WEB%20ENG/index.htm> (last visited July 21, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Press Release, OSCE, OSCE Office launches project to combat human trafficking in Kyrgyzstan (Apr. 24, 2007), available at: <http://www.osce.org/item/24122.html>.

<sup>26</sup> IOM *supra* at 9.

<sup>27</sup> IOM Publications, <http://www.iom.elcat.kg/publications.htm> (last visited July 21, 2009).