

Another Coup in Kyrgyzstan?

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On 10 February, the website of Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov, president.kg, reported: *“Kamchybek Tashiev has been relieved of his position as Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the State Committee for National Security. The President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sadyr Zhaparov, signed a decree according to which, in accordance with paragraph 4 of part 1 of Article 70 and Article 71 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, Kamchibek Kydyrshayevich Tashiev has been dismissed from his position as Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers - Chairman of the State Committee for National Security”.*

Kamchibek Tashiev is a friend of Sadyr Zhaparov. They began their political careers together in 2010, and it was Tashiev who literally rescued his friend Zhaparov from prison in 2020 during the country's latest revolution. Zhaparov planned to run in the 2017 presidential election, but was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Zhaparov became president in January 2021 and immediately appointed his friend Tashiev as head of the SCNS.

For the past five years, they have worked hand in hand. Tashiev is from the southern clan of the country, while Zhaparov is from the northern clan. Zhaparov, the president, is the face of authority, while Tashiev is the strong arm. While Zhaparov dealt with political and legal issues, Tashiev did all the dirty work at home, fighting corruption, arresting businessmen, the opposition, criminals, etc. Tashiev purged the country of undesirable and uncontrollable elements and became the most influential figure in the country after the president.

Kyrgyzstan remains under Moscow's influence. The economy and trade, energy and labour migration remain within Russia's sphere of influence. As for the security forces, over the past five years, the country has increased the size of its special services, particularly the State Committee for National Security, several times over and granted the security forces broad powers. All this has been done at Moscow's expense and under Moscow's leadership. Kyrgyzstan is involved in such Kremlin projects as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Naturally, the question arises: why did Zhaparov dismiss such an important figure for the president, since now he is left without support? Who will protect him in the event of a new revolution? After all, the people of Kyrgyzstan are very quick to rise up and overthrow the government, as was the case with the Tulip Revolution (24 March 2005), the April Revolution (7 April 2010) and the October events (5–6 October 2020).

Zhaparov dismissed Tashiev from his post while he was undergoing treatment in Germany. Tashiev was not arrested upon his return home, as is often the case in such countries. Moreover, Tashiev reacted calmly to this decision and, in his address, called on citizens *“not to take any illegal action”* for the sake of peace and stability in

the country. This suggests that the process was planned in advance. Most notably, Moscow, which oversees this tandem, has remained silent and has not reacted to this process in any way.

Immediately after Tashiev's dismissal, Zhaparov issued orders on changes in the structure of the SCNS. The Border Service and the 9th Service of the SCNS were transformed into the State Security Service, directly subordinate to Zhaparov. In other words, the resources that Tashiev had used were transferred to the president's control without resistance. The people are unusually calm, with no mass clashes or preconditions for unrest and revolution.

The whole process began against the backdrop of the upcoming election of a new president of Kyrgyzstan in January 2027. Earlier, in November 2025, Zhaparov dissolved parliament and held early elections, forming a parliament that was as loyal as possible ahead of 2027, even though the next parliamentary elections were not due to take place until November 2026.

As for the elections themselves, Zhaparov was elected in January 2021 under the old Constitution of 2010, which stipulated a six-year term of office without the right to re-election. Zhaparov is currently reforming the constitution with the aim of amending the law and allowing him to run for president twice for a term of five years. This is a common procedure in such countries, and if the person is strong and has support, he remains in power for life, as in Tajikistan, Belarus, Russia, etc.

Kyrgyzstan remained liberal for a long time, but with the arrival of the Tashiev-Zhaparov tandem, the situation in the country changed dramatically. It can be said that an 'authoritarian regime' has formed in Kyrgyzstan. The country has finally left the ranks of liberal democratic countries and joined other Central Asian regimes, where all power belongs to one person and laws are adapted to his objectives.

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