

Experts discussed timely religious issues with local authorities, religious leaders and local communities in the towns of Tokmok, Kara-Balta and Sokuluk village.

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### Русский



These meetings were aimed at establishing interfaith harmony, tolerance and mutual understanding. The events were also aimed at establishing interfaith dialogue and improving the interaction of stakeholders in prevention of conflicts and violent extremism.

The events were organized by IWPR Kyrgyzstan in collaboration with the State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA) and the State Agency for Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (SALSGIR).

A total number of 180 people – social workers, representatives of LSG, community leaders, students and religious leaders – attended the meetings.

The meetings featured presentations of the following speakers: Head of SCRA Analytics Department Gulnaz Isaeva, Chief Specialist of SCRA Analytics Department Aibek Iminov, Head of SALSGIR Department of Interethnic Relations Nazar Israilov and Head of the Progressive Public Association of Women ‘Mutakalim’ Jamal Frontbek kyzy.

Despite a significant amount of explanatory work done by the state bodies and non-governmental organizations, there is still a need for more efforts in raising the level of knowledge of religious issues, improving interaction between actors and promotion of tolerance values.

To achieve these goals, informative presentations, handouts and a Q&A session modules were developed. The meetings began with a presentation by Nazar Irsaliev, who spoke about the work of SALSGIR and reviewed in detail the values of diversity and mechanisms for promotion of ethnic tolerance. He also presented a new concept of interethnic relations, which will be aimed at the process of integration and creation of a cohesive society, while preserving the identity of each ethnic group.

**Nazar Irsaliev:** *“These events were very appropriate and effective. First, we will increase the capacity of public reception offices, representatives of LSG, public advisory councils and civil society to understand the ways to solve religious problems and prevent violent extremism. Second, we must establish cooperation among actors in order to counter radicalization and promote religious tolerance more effectively. We must continue to work with the population to establish the unity of the people while preserving the identity of all nationalities. It is very good that IWPR is aimed at working with representatives of remote areas, as they often do not receive the necessary information.”*



The events were continued by SCRA representatives' presentation, in which they elaborated

on the legislative framework of the Kyrgyz Republic on religious activities. The values of religious freedom were at the core of their presentation. The speakers stressed that every citizen has the right to choose religion and highlighted the importance of promotion of the religious tolerance values as a tool in the fight against violent extremism.

The first part of meetings ended with the presentation of Jamal Frontbek kyzy, who focused the audience's attention on the need for active participation of community leaders and LSG in the dissemination of human rights values, religious tolerance and information received at the events conducted. Having a wide experience in the promotion of women's rights, Jamal Frontbek kyzy told about the cases of women's participation in the fight against stereotypes and considerable contribution to the peacebuilding.

***Gulbara Amankulova***, Chief Specialist of the Department of Social Policy, Tokmok Mayor's Office: *"Thank you very much for paying attention to this issue in our district. The topic is very sensitive and requires a thorough approach. We would like to organize meetings for students in religious institutions to improve understanding of tolerance and the dangers of radical ideas."*

The second part of meetings featured discussions, questions and answers. In this part, the participants of the meetings addressed their questions and raised concerns. They asked about the issues of religious education in schools, wearing religious attributes, methods of combating violent extremism, and also proposed their own proposals for prevention of radicalization.

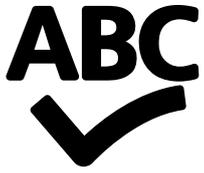


*Izati Belekova, Head Teacher for Educational Work, Kara-Balta school No. 4: “It was a very informative and useful meeting, participating in which we received not only answers to concerns, but got to know about possible mechanisms for preventing violent extremism among young people. These meetings should be held more often and for a wider audience. Perhaps, we could organize these meetings with high school students and conduct them together.”*

A similar proposal was also voiced out during the meetings in the town of Tokmok and Sokuluk district center.

Informative brochures containing extracts from laws, information about the Interfaith Council, religious diversity in the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as methods of promoting dialogue, were distributed at the event.

IWPR plans to conduct similar meetings in other regions of Kyrgyz Republic.



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