

Trainings in Kyrgyzstan were held in Jalalabat, Osh and Batken cities, in Kazakhstan - Kyzylorda, Turkestan and Taraz cities.

[На русском](#)



Imams at the training in Kyzylorda. Photo: cabar.asia

Imam khatibs of border areas, representatives of local kaziats and press service of the muftiate of both countries took part in the events.

These trainings were held in the framework of the IWPR's "Forging links and raising voice to combat radicalization in Central Asia" project. Earlier [trainings](#) for journalists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were conducted on international

standards of covering religious issues. The articles of training participants are published on the thematic platform belief.cabar.asia.

The educational workshop was aimed at improving media literacy, legislative aspects, which regulate the religious freedom and anti-extremist activity, as well as modern methods of countering violent extremism. Another goal was to involve spiritual leaders in promoting tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

Local imam khatibs often touch the issues of radicalism as the urgency of this phenomenon has evolved in recent years.

Despite the existing level of knowledge, the representatives of the Muslim clerics face difficulties in promoting tolerance, as well as developing mechanisms to counter violent extremism.

IWPR Central Asia has developed a special training programme for imam khatibs of every country depending on their needs. Trainings in Kyrgyzstan were devoted to “New media tools to promote tolerance and interfaith dialogue.” The programme contained explanation of the significance of promoting tolerance and religious diversity in Kyrgyzstan. Legal norms regulating the religious freedom, responsibility for extremist activity, as well as the concept of secular state were explained. Special emphasis of the training was given to the improvement of media literacy among imam khatibs, review of manipulative tactics of extremist organisations, as well as modern media tools to communicate with the population.



Imams at the training in Osh

“There is great need of such trainings for imam khatibs. We, as the representatives of the clerics, have a special status in the society and play a significant role in promoting tolerance and preventing violent extremism. This training has made a practical contribution to the improvement of imams’ skills and also offered new opportunities to promote peace and tolerance,” Ravshan Ermatov, head of fatwa department of DUMK [Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan], said.

Media expert Ikbol Isakov held a session on media literacy and tools to counter violent extremism. The session started with the interactive test on media literacy of participants by means of the online platform plicker.com. Imam khatibs were involved in analysis of fake videos spread in the region and were taught the methods of identifying of fake materials. In addition, they were introduced into social media functions and options as a tool to promote tolerance and the role of imams in preventing violent extremism.

“Imam khatibs have only 30 minutes a week to communicate with people. It’s difficult to raise their awareness of the values of tolerance for such a short time. Imams need to master modern media tools, have skills of prompt response to provocative materials. Imams were demonstrated applications to identify the authenticity of the video data through the example of provocative and propaganda videos, and also they were told about the need to verify information,” Ikbol Isakov, media literacy trainer, said.



Head of analytical department of State Commission for Religious Affairs Gulnaz Isaeva speaks in front of imams at Osh. Photo: cabar.asia

Head of analytical department of the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic Gulnaz Isaeva explained in detail the legal framework of the Kyrgyz Republic regulating religious policy. Participants of the training divided into groups and analysed

laws and regulations, prepared group presentations. Imams stated that the Kyrgyz Republic is a secular state, and every citizen has a freedom of religion.

“These trainings are useful not only in terms of improved media literacy of imam khatibs, but also in terms of understanding the law of Kyrgyzstan,” Isaeva said.

Yusufkhon Zakaria uluu, an imam khatib from the village of Shark, Karasu district, Osh region: “I am thankful to the organisers of the training. It’s a pleasure that the international media organisation, IWPR, with the participation of representatives of the State Commission for Religious Affairs focus on the training of imam khatibs. I have received very valuable information today, particularly, about the need to use advanced technologies in promoting tolerance. This training has inspired me to participate actively in promoting tolerance.”

By results of the training, imam khatibs evaluated the work done by the trainers and also told about the current problems in their communities. They wished to take part in a more in-depth training.

Kazakhstan

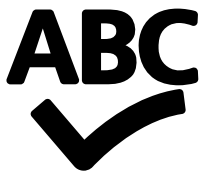
Trainings in Kazakhstan were dedicated to “Modern tools to promote tolerance and counter the propaganda of violent extremism.” The programme also contained explanation of the significance of promotion of tolerance, religious diversity in Kazakhstan and laws and regulations that regulate anti-extremist activity. The training placed special emphasis on the method of prevention of violent ideologies and practices. A method to detect radicalisation level, as well as methods of deradicalisation of people were introduced.

The trainings started with the review of the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The session was held by Amanzhol Urazbaev, candidate of legal sciences, chair of the panel of “Counter-terrorism committee”. He covered the issues of religious diversity in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the need to promote tolerance among local communities. Imam khatibs learned about the need to promote interfaith tolerance as one of the factors of deradicalisation of society.

“I have got an insight about the religious situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Laws guarantee freedom of religion for every citizen. Imams should take more action to promote tolerance and prevent violent ideologies and practices,” imam khatib Bakhbergen Saparov of Kentau, Kazakhstan, said.

Mirkhat Madiarov, expert in radicalisation and violent extremism, told imam khatibs about key factors and methods of radicalisation. The participants were told in details regarding violent ideologies and methods of recruitment. The session also covered the importance of awareness-raising among communities in order to prevent violent extremism.

The training has attracted interest among participants who expressed willingness to take part in additional trainings.



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