

Kyrgyzstan Asks for intervention of Russian Peacekeepers

Both Russia and the U.S. have military bases in the former Soviet republic

By [Global Research](#)

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BISHKEK — Kyrgyzstan's interim leader said on Saturday that the Central Asian state wanted Russian peacekeepers to help stop ongoing ethnic violence in the south of the country.

Roza Otunbayeva's comments came after she had spoken by phone to Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin late on Friday.

At least 50 people have been killed and hundreds injured in continuing inter-ethnic violence that began in southern Kyrgyzstan's city of Osh on Thursday evening. Hospitals are unable to feed the injured and refugees, mainly Uzbek women and children, are heading for the border with Uzbekistan.

"The situation has gotten out of control since yesterday evening and we need outside military forces to arrest the situation," Otunbayeva said. "In connection with this, we are turning to Russia."

The interim leader said reports indicated that ethnic "Uzbeks, Russians and Tatars" were being sought out and murdered by the rioters.

"We are waiting for news from Russia and we are ready for active dialogue to bring outside forces in," she went on.

Otunbayeva also said that the death toll in the region was "higher than you or I know," and that rioters had even temporarily seized control of an armored vehicle.

"Entire streets are on fire," an Interior Ministry spokesman said earlier. "The situation is very bad. There is no sign of it stopping. Homes have been set ablaze."

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Friday that he was confident the government in Bishkek would resolve the situation, but that Russia was ready to help if necessary.

"All the problems of Kyrgyzstan have internal roots. They are rooted in the weakness of the former authorities and their unwillingness to take care of the people's needs. I believe all the existing problems will be resolved by the Kyrgyz authorities. The Russian Federation will help," he said.

However, he also said that troops from the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) post-Soviet security bloc would not enter Kyrgyzstan as this was only possible in the case of

an attack on the country by a foreign state.

The CSTO includes Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan

Osh was the stronghold of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who was overthrown following violent street protests in early April.

The interim government has declared a state of emergency and deployed troops to the region.

“We’re clearly talking about a stand-off between two ethnicities. We need to... calm these people down, and this is what we are doing right now,” Otunbayeva said earlier.

Medics have been unable to reach many of the injured people due to the fighting.

“Our doctors practically didn’t go out on calls at night because they were afraid,” Osh’s top doctor was quoted by the 24 kg news agency as saying.

He also added that those doctors that had attempted to reach the injured had been attacked.

The UN has appealed for calm and has called on Kyrgyzstan’s interim government to “pay particular attention to inter-ethnic relations in the country.”

Both Russia and the U.S. have military bases in the former Soviet republic, which many experts fear may now be on the brink of civil war.

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