



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Kyrgyz citizens overthrow President Ayakev (Tulip Revolution), 2005

- Colour Revolutions (2000s)

Time period notes: February 27 is taken as the starting date here because the first protests that set off the Tulip Revolution against Ayakev began on this day, after the first round of parliamentary elections.

February 27,
2005

to: March 24,
2005

Country: Kyrgyzstan

Goals:

The dismissal of 2005 parliamentary election results, the resignation of President Ayakev, and new presidential elections.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance

Methods in 4th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 5th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 6th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
- 123. Boycott of legislative bodies
- 170. Nonviolent invasion
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Additional methods (Timing Unknown):

- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Group characterization:

- Opposition leaders
- citizens

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Kurmanbek Bakiyev, leader of the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (PMK); Coordinating Council of People's Unity; Politician
Roza Otunbayeva

Partners:

Kyrgyz Diaspora, Student Groups

External allies:

U.S. Ambassador Steven Young, U.S. government, other foreign governments

Involvement of social elites:

The State Secretary Osmunkun Ibraimov resigned in protest of Ayakev's refusal to negotiate with protesters. Parliamentarians refused to attend Parliamentary meetings in protest. The U.S. Ambassador and other foreign diplomats criticized the government's use of force against protesters.

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

- U.S. Ambassador Steven Young

Groups in 5th Segment:

- Foreign governments
- Student groups

Groups in 6th Segment:

- Osmunkun Ibraimov
- a greater number of protesters in Bishkek

Segment Length: *Approximately 4 days*

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

President Ayakev and his supporters

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not Known

Campaigner violence:

Some demonstrators threw rocks when attacked by police. Some reports say demonstrators vandalized government buildings during some occupations and others say they did not. The looting and vandalism was either work of demonstrators or pro-government provocateurs.

Repressive Violence:

Police and military troops attacked protesters and made mass arrests during demonstrations. Government provocateurs also attacked demonstrations.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

4 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

The parliamentary election results were not dismissed, but Ayakev resigned and the interim government was able to organize free presidential elections in July 2005.

The leadership groups survived through the campaign and the Coordinating Council of People's Unity organized the interim government.

The campaign grew from small enclaves of protest in Southern cities to large protests in southern and northern regions as well as large protests in the previously pro-Ayakev capital city, Bishkek.

popular and well liked; but due to concerns about increasing corruption within his government and his family, Ayakev's popularity began to fall. Parliamentary elections in February and March 2005 secured a majority of seats for the pro-government politicians that supported Ayakev. During the first round of voting on February 27, many opposition politicians had been removed from the ballot or disqualified in some way. During the second round of voting, which took place on March 13, the coalition called "For Democracy and Civil Society" reported inconsistencies and electoral violations.

After the February 27 elections, opposition groups—mainly led by the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (PMK)—had issued statements and begun protest demonstrations in many regions outside of the capital, Bishkek, demanding a cancellation of the election results and Ayakev's resignation. On March 10, PMK leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev and twenty-two other MPs put forth a vote of no confidence in President Ayakev during a small gathering outside of the Parliament building in Bishkek.

During these initial protests, the government used violence to suppress gatherings, arrested leaders, and censored independent newspapers and radio stations in order to control the coverage of the elections.

After the March 13 elections took place, opposition groups increased their protests. On March 19, 3,000 people outside of Bishkek and 50,000 people in Jalalabad echoed the call made by the earlier protesters demanding a dismissal of the election results and Ayakev's resignation. In the southern towns of Jalalabad and Osh, protesters began occupying government buildings. In response to these occupations, on March 20 the government sent troops to remove the occupiers, arresting hundreds of the demonstrators.

In response to the mass arrests and violent repression from the government, Kyrgyz nationals in the United States and Europe staged protests in front of the Kyrgyz embassies in those countries on March 21. When the new parliament congregated the next day, President Ayakev announced that he would not negotiate with opposition groups. Even as he announced this, ten out of the seventy-one parliamentarians refused to participate in the meeting as a show of support for the anti-Ayakev protests. Many politicians who had previously supported Ayakev were also beginning to leave his side and support the protesters, including members of the Foreign Service.

By March 23 the Kyrgyz opposition controlled two thirds of the country and one third of the population. Youth organizations in Bishkek organized a protest with 1,000 people in the center of the capital. Troops and pro-government provocateurs quickly attacked this group, injuring at least 20 and arresting 200 more of the protesters.

On March 24 the opposition protests reached their peak, quickly becoming a full-scale revolution. Protests in Bishkek, which had been largely pro-Ayakev, increased in size as between 15,000 and 20,000 protested in the central square continuing to call for Ayakev's resignation. That same day the State Secretary resigned from his position because of his disagreement with Ayakev. Groups of opposition protesters began to occupy the main governmental building in Bishkek. During these protests and occupations in Bishkek, the state-run media turned against Ayakev and began to broadcast messages in support of the protesters. Meanwhile, there was looting and arson throughout the country, but it is not clear if this was the result of demonstrators or government-sponsored provocateurs.

The protesters in Bishkek also occupied the Kyrgyz White House, even as armed troops were beginning to crackdown on the March 24 demonstrations. Around the same time, popular opposition leader Felix Kulov was released from jail.

That day, Ayakev left the country with his family, seeking asylum in Moscow. On March 25 the opposition formed an interim government led by PMK leader Bakiyev, in order to ease the transition towards greater democracy in Kyrgyzstan and to organize new presidential elections.

Ayakev officially resigned on April 3, 2005 and in the following weeks he was stripped of his title as the first president of an independent Kyrgyzstan, refused security protection within the country, and his family was denied their immunity privileges. After the people power revolution in March, more violent political turbulence occurred in Kyrgyzstan, while citizens also continued to use peaceful demonstrations in an attempt to secure greater democratic elections. On July 10, the interim government held new presidential elections, which Bakiyev won with Kulov as the new Prime Minister. However, the response

to Bakiyev's presidency was mixed and in April 2010, he was ousted in a second revolution. He was replaced by the popular politician and another leader of the Tulip Revolution, Roza Otunbayeva.

Research Notes

Influences:

The Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia (1).

The 2010 protests in Kyrgyzstan to oust President Bakiyev (2).

Sources:

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Kyrgyzstan's Revolution: Causes and Consequences. Hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe on April 7, 2005. Accessed online (20/05/2011).

Marat, Erica. The Tulip Revolution: Kyrgyzstan One Year After. Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, 2006.

Additional Notes:

This campaign was first researched by Maurice Weeks (02/12/2008), but was researched again and rewritten by Max Rennebohm (21/05/2011).

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Max Rennebohm 21/05/2011

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[2] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/example-paradox-repression>

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