SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

CAUSES AND MOTIVES OF RADICALIZATION AMONG CENTRAL ASIAN LABOR MIGRANTS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

A COUNTRY REPORT

ON THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
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This report is principally authored by the Social Research Center of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic in person of Nurbek Omuraliev and Kairatbek Jamangulov. The overall project was delivered in cooperation with Search for Common Ground, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOS RAS), Royal United Services Institute of Great Britain (RUSI), National Academies of Sciences of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as independent researchers from Central Asia, who all had some input into the different versions of the report, but ultimately each one is responsible for their iteration. RUSI is the principal author of the English one, IOS RAS for the Russian one, the Central Asians each respectively for theirs.

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Preface

Dear reader,

Welcome to the findings of a unique research around the causes and motives of Radicalization among Central Asian Labor Migrants in the Russian Federation!

Migration, particularly economic migration, has emerged as an important factor in increasing Central Asians’ susceptibility to radicalization and recruitment into extremist groups. There also exists a group of experts who believe that isolation, discrimination, and resentment might even play a greater role in radicalizing labor migrants in Russia, rather than strong or extreme religious beliefs. The study also considered the resiliency factors in these communities that prevent individuals from becoming radicalized. In order to better understand the causes and motivations of radicalization amongst migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan currently residing in Russia, including drivers and recruitment methods, Search, in collaboration with key research and think tank institutions, conducted this unique research.

The research was conducted in 13 different cities across Russia. A team of Central Asian researchers collected 218 interviews from labor migrants, diaspora leaders, imams, local officials and others to gain an understanding of the factors that play a role in the radicalization of labor migrants in Russia. Our special thanks is extended to the teams of Central Asian researchers (from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), who were on the ground for over a month speaking with respondents, as well as to the team of two world-known think tank institutions – the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOS RAS) and the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI). RUSI helped design the research questionnaire and train the research teams, while
IOS RAS provided support on the ground in Russia and contributed to the analysis of the data.

We, the team at Search for Common Ground, believe the findings of the research will contribute to filling the research gap regarding the radicalization of Central Asian labor migrants in Russia and will be used to inform policy makers, academics and practitioners and improve their understanding of the nature and extent of the violent extremist threat linked to Central Asia.

The project team also believes that the research base will seek to identify potential areas of strategic cooperation around PVE/CVE among state and non-state actors in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia, building an appropriate programmatic response.

Once again, thank you to our partners for working to sustain peace in Central Asia!

Yours truthfully,
Keneshbek B. Sainazarov
Central Asia Program Director
Search for Common Ground
**Executive summary**

*Goal and objectives of the project:*

This project aimed to carry out a sociological analysis of the causes and motives of radicalisation among labour migrants from Central Asian countries in the territory of the Russian Federation, based on the methodology developed by the UK Royal United Services Institute in cooperation with the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and researchers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The overall guidance and implementation of the project were implemented by the office of the Search for Common Ground in Kyrgyzstan.

The research goal was to study from various angles the problem of radicalisation and recruitment of labour migrants to extremist groups through a survey of opinions, observations, experiences, and perceptions of labour migrants on various issues related to the topic.

Interviews were conducted in 13 cities of the Russian Federation from the Far East to the western part of Russia. Researchers from Kyrgyzstan interviewed 82 respondents and conducted 3 focus groups among labour migrants and immigrants from Kyrgyzstan, including 28 interviews with ethnic Uzbeks.

*Summary of findings:*

Young people are the most vulnerable group in the processes of radicalisation. As ethnic Kyrgyz respondents believe, this applies primarily to Kyrgyz citizens who are ethnic Uzbeks coming from the Osh region. It is they who joined the ranks of terrorist organizations in Syria supporting the ideology of Al-Qaeda, according to many respondents.

Unfortunately, Kyrgyz citizens of Uzbek ethnicity are clannish and reluctant to communicate with Kyrgyz communities and representatives of Kyrgyz diplomatic institutions in Russia. According to a number of respondents, they also rarely join the communities of Uzbek citizens.

Other factors include poor education and/or poor Russian of people of Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnicity from rural areas. As a rule, poor education and poor
knowledge of the Russian language lead to low-paid employment. In this regard, recruiters usually promise big money as a lure for going to Syria or force people to go there for debts.

Respondents from Kyrgyzstan pointed out the following factors of resilience against radicalisation, among others: the acquisition of Russian citizenship, the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the Eurasian Economic Union, the arrival of labour migrants in Russia together with their families which allows preserving the same family life as it was at home. Many see the family as a constraining factor, since it is a main reason for them to stay and earn money in Russia. Other factors of resilience included educational background and professional skills, as well as the knowledge of the Russian language which allow finding a well-paid job.

Summary of recommendations:
- It is necessary to support the further constructive interaction of the Kyrgyz diaspora in Russia with local Russian authorities and representative missions of the relevant bodies of the Kyrgyz government in Russia;
- To study and implement programs aimed at strengthening and improving the sense of citizenship and cohesion of different groups and communities in Kyrgyzstan, to promote constructive communication between various groups, especially in the South;
- To study and implement an effective policy on the management of issues related to spiritual activities, education, and practice;
- To strengthen measures and the interaction between state bodies, local government institutions and local communities for preventing and combating extremist activities and radicalisation.
Introduction

The research project “Causes and Motives of Radicalisation of Labour Migrants from the Countries of Central Asia in the Russian Federation” is the first of its kind study based on researching the topic in all regions of Russia. The study was conducted through interviews with people from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan who came to Russia as labour migrants or fewer people who settled in Russia but had close contact with communities of labour migrants – for example, imams of mosques, leaders of diaspora organizations and representatives of organizations working with labour migrants (providing legal consultations or translation services, etc.). In total, more than 218 individual interviews were collected.

The project was realized thanks to the cooperation of three principal parties in the period from late May to late December 2017. The Bishkek office of the organization Search for Common Ground was the main organizer of the whole project and was also responsible for gathering a group of field researchers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (two researchers from each country). The UK Royal United Services Institute (hereinafter - RUSI) was responsible for developing theoretical and methodological foundations of the project as well as for analyzing the data and preparing an English version of the consolidated final report. The Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (hereinafter - the IOS RAS) was the third main participant of the project which had to provide full support to the project in organizing an orientation seminar, provisional and final meetings of the project participants, in organizing logistics during field research and analyzing collected data and writing a Russian version of the consolidated final report.
This study is a qualitative empirical research based on semi-structured interviews with labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan in 13 major cities of Russia: Khabarovsk, Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk, Ekaterinburg, Samara, Krasnodar, Astrakhan, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, etc. Based on the previously agreed questionnaire prepared by RUSI, two researchers from Kyrgyzstan - along with two colleagues from Tajikistan and two colleagues from Uzbekistan, with the support of two representatives of IOS RAS – conducted interviews both by prior agreement with respondents and during random meetings.

The questionnaire and the subsequent analysis of the research data were based on the theoretical and conceptual basis suggested by RUSI. It assumes an analytical approach “from outside to inside” - that is, a gradual shift of the research focus from studying the general social context to actual cases of radicalisation and their causes. This is different from the approach of some researchers who first studied portraits of recruited extremists and used them to produce a generalized account of reasons and motives for all radicalisation. The methodology of this study is a more balanced one that does not allow a mistake of overgeneralizing from individual cases of radicalisation and attributing the conclusions to the whole of society.

Conceptually, this analytical approach divides the factors of radicalisation and resilience against it into four “baskets”: structural (or systemic) motivators - social, economic and political factors that shape the life of a community and labour migrants; individual incentives and vulnerabilities which are personal factors resulting from individual experience, difficulties, aspirations, family and other situations, and so on; enabling factors are the factors that do not directly lead to radicalisation, but create the conditions under which systemic and individual factors can become more active, and push a person to radicalisation. The fourth “basket” in this study (resilience) means the factors that counter possible radicalisation of a person, restrain a person from falling under the influence of radical recruiters.

It is important to emphasize that this project, according to its methodological approach, did not focus on radicalized people. A considerable number of respondents had encountered the problem of radicalisation when their close relatives and acquaintances were recruited, or they heard of such cases from other
people who personally faced the problem. Based on all the data collected in this study, it is possible to deduce several general conclusions.

Firstly, the number of Central Asian labour migrants recruited to radical extremist groups, when compared with the total number of labour migrants in Russia, is very small – less than one percent. Therefore, one cannot speak of a high level of radicalisation among labour migrants. Secondly, each individual case of recruitment to extremist groups ultimately represents a confluence of different circumstances and causes, and therefore, it is not possible to identify specific reasons that would explain all cases. Thirdly, the data of this study still make it possible to identify a number of factors most probably related to the radicalisation and recruitment of individuals from among migrant workers. These general conclusions allow us to develop better-balanced and more effective measures for preventing and combating the problem.

Factors of radicalisation

According to the conceptual approach described above, all the data collected through individual interviews and focus groups were analyzed in terms of four “baskets” of radicalisation factors - structural (or systemic) motivators, individual incentives and vulnerabilities, enabling factors, and factors of resilience against radicalisation. This section concludes with brief analytical conclusions for each of these groups of factors.

Structural motivators

Among the general factors and conditions (structural motivators - SM), contributing to the marginalization of an individual, the following were named:

- The lack of knowledge or poor knowledge of the Russian labour legislation and bringing one’s previous experience of interaction with Kyrgyz officials to the Russian reality. (A representative of the Kyrgyz diaspora administration in Irkutsk: “The Russian legislation on migration meets the current needs for ensuring the national interests and security of the Russian Federation. Problems arise because labour migrants do not want to observe it. (...) They try to bypass laws by giving a bribe during their registration, stay or applying for a job. They think that they can circumvent laws by bribing or that they can survive without documents at all.” A representative of the Kyrgyz diaspora administration in Khabarovsk: “As Kyrgyz,
we have a worst character trait which is the failure to comply with the requirements of laws in a timely manner.”)

- The weak economy of Kyrgyzstan, its weak social welfare system and weak social policy generate serious social and economic problems in Kyrgyzstan (A respondent from Moscow: “Thus, the state itself creates a target audience for recruiters.” A respondent from Khabarovsk: “There is no good political strategy in Kyrgyzstan, the population is being ignored”).

- According to the majority of respondents, young people are the most vulnerable group, while this applies, as respondents of Kyrgyz ethnicity believe, to Kyrgyz citizens who are ethnic Uzbeks from the Osh region. Many respondents said that it is these citizens who were filling the ranks of terrorist structures in Syria with the ideology of Al-Qaeda (A respondent from Samara: “Our three young Uzbeks from Osh left for Syria, all died there.” A respondent from Krasnoyarsk: “Two years ago, a young Uzbek from Osh left for Syria”). And it was ethnic Uzbeks who acted as recruiters. In terms of their geographical origin, they come from the Uzbek neighborhoods of Osh city and Karasu district of Osh region, as well as Suzak district of Jalal-Abad region.

- At the same time, a native of Chui oblast (a respondent from Samara, 25 years old) referred to the example when not only ethnic Uzbeks but also ethnic Kyrgyz went to Syria and Iraq to join the ranks of the IS and Al-Qaeda, and they even departed from Kyrgyzstan (“they left for Syria and died there”).

- Kyrgyz citizens from among ethnic Uzbeks are clannish and reluctant to communicate even with representatives of Kyrgyz diplomatic institutions (consuls of the Kyrgyz Republic in Novosibirsk and Yekaterinburg, an activist of the Kyrgyz diaspora in St. Petersburg). They are more eager to interact with Uzbeks from Uzbekistan (a respondent from Samara).

- As participants in the focus group in Krasnoyarsk (seven people) noted, mindsets of Kyrgyz citizens in the absence of state ideology and the national idea are rapidly changing under the influence of radical preachers. In their opinion, it will soon be possible to talk about Kyrgyzstan as of “a Muslim state with backward practices of the dark ages”.

Based on the analysis of respondents' answers, main motives for recruitment both in Russia and in Kyrgyzstan are as follows: financial incentives (65% of the total number of respondents), targeted work and deception by recruiters, as well as being in a difficult situation and precarious living conditions (13.3%), religious
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motives and religious illiteracy (6.6%), propensity for adventure and violence against others (1.6% of respondents).

- Some respondents also pointed out general discrimination, although the discrimination was not necessarily connected with radicalisation, but it was mentioned as a common problem and could be considered a structural motivation. Eleven people, mostly Kyrgyz citizens of Uzbek ethnicity, mentioned discrimination. Kyrgyz respondents experienced discrimination much less likely frequently as very few such cases were reported. One of the respondents, an Uzbek from Kyrgyzstan, stressed that “… we are peaceful people and the discrimination of people also leads to radicalisation”.

- Several respondents expressed the opinion that discrimination by authorities could be a reason for radicalisation. One of the respondents, an ethnic Uzbek from St. Petersburg (STPB_10) made it clear why his brother left for Syria, reflecting on the negative role of law enforcement agencies as a factor in his brother’s radicalisation: “My brother went to Syria [from southern Kyrgyzstan]. Before he left, he was tortured for a long time (by law enforcement agencies), he was interrogated, imprisoned, blackmailed and eventually forced to leave for Syria, where he died [in battle]. If I had an opportunity I would have avenged every offender of my brother, all those people from SNB (Russian National Security Service) in any way. The main reason why my brother left is the harassment by the SNB and the police. It is the same reason that my other fellow villagers had.”

- Problems related to work. Despite the fact that many respondents from Kyrgyzstan have repeatedly stressed that since Kyrgyzstan’s accession to the Eurasian Economic Union the process of starting work in Russia has become easier, yet some problems may still arise when searching for a job and in relations with employers.

- Insufficient knowledge of the Russian language - 10 respondents mentioned that poor education and/or poor knowledge of the Russian language make the life of migrant workers more complicated. Although not a common assumption of all respondents, there was a clear logical link between a lack of education and vulnerability. One of the experts from Novosibirsk (NOVO_11) repeated this, saying: “It seems to me that educated people will not go there [to Syria], when there are so many opportunities for work and self-actualization.”
Individual incentives and vulnerabilities

Among the factors that attract a person to radical or extremist actions (individual incentives and vulnerabilities - IV), respondents often mentioned money. Twenty people and three focus groups made it clear that money is a serious motivation for migrants to go to Syria for joining extremist organizations. It should be noted that this was not an opinion of those who went to Syria but rather personal assumptions of respondents. Some think of this as a business venture (“basically, this is considered a business, and if they are well paid, then they go to war for money. If they are not paid, they do not go”) or as a way to quickly make big money. Some see it as a method of deception, when “they are lured with money, they are told that they will receive 10 thousand dollars a month and will have three to four wives ... then he goes there, crosses the border and disappears. They do not get anything of what was promised.” Another respondent (MOSC_31) was more straightforward when he said: “Probably a lot of money is promised, and they just deceive them.” The promises of money were also seen as an opportunity to repay debts quickly; as one of the respondents noted “because he is in a desperate situation: problems with documents, problems with work and problems with housing. First, he takes the money to get out of this situation. Then they tell him: there is a way to pay back this money, you can get out of debt and bring true Islam to your homeland.” Also, respondents referred to the weak economy of Kyrgyzstan “and, as a result, a lack of money.”

In general, according to the majority, economic problems play a significant role in radicalisation.

Another important factor of vulnerability was the social stratification of Kyrgyz society into different categories: the poor and the rich, a division by tribal affiliation, by ethnicity, etc. It leads to the immunity of some people and the responsibility of others for violating laws (a respondent from Khabarovsk said that “all must be equal before the law”). This factor was considered important for vulnerability to radicalisation of those who found themselves among the less privileged, more deprived and discriminated groups of people.

- Radicalisation of Kyrgyz citizens primarily from among Uzbeks, mostly from among young people, in Kyrgyzstan (A respondent who arrived in the Russian Federation from Osh region, a 24 years old ethnic Kyrgyz with higher
education: “We must divert the attention of Uzbek youth away from radical preachers, we have to attract them with something useful instead of their visits to mosques.” One of the leaders of Kyrgyz diaspora in Khabarovskyk (a native of Osh) believes that the radicalisation of views begins in Kyrgyzstan. He said that it is mostly Uzbeks from Osh who get recruited, as they feel alien both in relation to Uzbekistan and to their homeland - Kyrgyzstan (“Ethnic Uzbeks are humiliated by Kyrgyz in Osh, while Kyrgyz youth is negative about Uzbeks. This all puts pressure on them”). Their individual mindsets present everything in a qualitatively different way: they feel hated and unfairly persecuted, while they only react to the fact that they are humiliated, accused and persecuted. Such paranoid perceptions can become widespread when there is a severe mental trauma for an ethnic group, especially a historical trauma (real or perceived) inflicted by a hostile group of different ethnicity. According to scholars, this mechanism is a basis of all interethnic conflicts.1

Actually, one of the leaders of Kyrgyz community has established a direct link between religion and radicalisation, saying that “Uzbeks and Tajiks are more strict Muslims than Kyrgyz and are more likely to radicalize, perhaps because of their religiosity.”

- A larger number of respondents (20 people) and respondents from two focus groups offered an alternative explanation that one of the influencing factors can be misinterpretation or misunderstanding of religion, while some referred to poor religious teaching or a poor understanding of Islam: “Perhaps they misinterpreted Islam. The Quran says that you cannot kill people or cause violence, many people are deceived by being exposed only to some selected quotes from the Quran that presuppose violence and promise a reward for it.” Many pointed to religious illiteracy of people such as the limited knowledge of Islam or poor religious education, others believe that this is the fault of religious leaders, especially those in Kyrgyzstan.

Here it makes sense to briefly mention the current state of religious administration in Kyrgyzstan. Official representatives of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (DUMK) note that 70% of 2,000 employees do not have a special religious education. Only 2.5% received higher spiritual education in the country or abroad, 20% graduated from madrassas and 10% have trained at special short-term courses of imams. Currently, there are 112 Islamic religious schools in

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Kyrgyzstan that have been registered with the State Commission for Religious Affairs (GKDR). The issues of national security and the expansion of radical Islam are of critical importance in Kyrgyzstan. To counter extremist tendencies, priority is given to the work with imams who directly contact the population. In 2014, the Fund for the Development of Spiritual Culture “Yyman” was established in the Kyrgyz Republic to assist the state and civil society in strengthening interreligious harmony and increasing the level of education and tolerance, among other goals. There are approximately 2700 mosques and the same number of imams in the Kyrgyz Republic. The fund provides charity scholarships to those who meet the requirements: appropriate registration of the mosque, successful passing through certification as a religious figure, and completion of the special training courses. If one of these requirements is not met, the scholarship is not granted. More than 1300 imams are now receiving scholarships. Among them, those at the positions of regional, city, and district kazy receive 10,000 som, those working in a muftiate – 8,000-15,000 som, ordinary imams – 5,000 som per month2.

- The feeling of loneliness in big cities, where it is difficult for labour migrants to communicate with each other due to many objective reasons (a busy schedule, long commutes between work and home). At the same time, the majority of respondents noted that Kyrgyz people are more independent than Uzbeks and Tajiks, they do not seek to live in Russia as in a mahalla and to communicate closely with their compatriots (a respondent from Yekaterinburg: “the communication is mostly limited to fellows from the same region and relatives”).

- Four people noted that people go to Syria to have a sense of purpose and belonging, or to express solidarity for what is happening there. One of the respondents said: “Well, they have a strong conviction that there is a mass murder of Muslims in Syria and that it is necessary to stop this bloodshed and save the Muslim brothers.”

2 Shamshiev S. Imams in Kyrgyzstan. The first line of defence against extremism // http://www.24.kg/obschestvo/43071/
Enabling factors

Respondents referred to the following factors as facilitating the actualization of structural and individual factors of people’s radicalisation (enabling factors - EF):

- According to respondents, mosques and imams can contribute to radicalisation. As one of the respondents said, one case of recruitment took place in the Red Mosque in Astrakhan. As he noted, “there, Caucasians or Tajiks, or Uzbeks, approach young and inexperienced guys and offer them good money for some kind of work”, but this was the only mentioned case. According to the majority of Kyrgyz respondents, religious leaders and mosques do not play any role in radicalisation. At the same time, they believe that the religious factor is important in relation to the Uzbek environment of the southern part of the republic. Ethnic Uzbeks of Kyrgyzstan have become alien in their own country, while they have not become close to the Uzbeks from the Republic of Uzbekistan.

At the same time, another respondent noted that mosques are usually propagandizing against extremism and radicalism. Moreover, one of the mosques in Yekaterinburg, namely the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Sverdlovsk Region (Central Muftiate of the Region), jointly with the Department of Theology of the Ural State Mining University, published a collection of articles and materials: “Stop IS! The Urals is against extremism and terrorism: a collection of articles and materials” (Compiled by A.N. Starostin and edited by A. Ashirin, Yekaterinburg, 2016).

- In a Samara mosque, the rules of behavior were displayed for visitors and they strictly prohibited the formation of other jaamats on the grounds of the mosque.

- Beside the mosque, respondents mentioned several other specific places where they evidenced individual cases of propaganda of radicalisation: the gym, prison (places of detention).

- Vulnerability of groups due to their clannishness. One of the respondents living in Novosibirsk noted that: “There are questions about citizens of Kyrgyzstan of Uzbek ethnicity. They are, as a rule, secretive ... and tend to live a sequestered life. Whereas ethnic Kyrgyz can live everywhere: they are not afraid and can even live among Russians.” Another respondent interviewed by Azattyk radio after the bomb incident in St. Petersburg said that “we do not know (the terrorist) because he is Uzbek, and Uzbeks do not belong to our diaspora. It's always been like this.”
- Many Uzbek migrants have a very low level of education. They speak very poor Russian ... but they still do not study Russian. When discussing radicalisation, six people expressed the opinion that Uzbeks (in general) are more likely to go to Syria than Kyrgyz, and one of them said: “I heard that Uzbeks and Tajiks do recruitment and get recruited. I have not heard about such Kyrgyz.”

- Nine people shared their idea of who such recruiters are: they pointed to other Central Asian peoples or people from the Caucasus, such as Dagestanis or Chechens. In terms of the language of communication: “In Russia there is one common language for recruiters – it is Russian. A recruiter could be a Tatar, a Dagestani, a Chechen, a Tajik, an Uzbek, a Kyrgyz, or even a Russian. For some reason, the Russians become radicals faster.”

- Illiterate imams who do not have classical religious education (a respondent from Khabarovsk: “The local imam speaks about the right things, but he is weak, ... he’s always asking for money”) or those who received such education abroad, where they themselves fell under the influence of radical ideas.

- A lack of a stable income and being employed without a contract, as a result of which people from the beginning fall into debt bondage and then they are targeted by recruiters (respondents from Irkutsk, Yekaterinburg, Krasnodar).

- Religious illiteracy.

- A lack of education, professional skills and knowledge of the Russian language (respondents from Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Khabarovsk, Krasnodar).

- Latent discrimination based on ethnicity in Russia (respondents from Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Krasnodar) and the continuing tension between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks (respondents from Ekaterinburg, Moscow, Samara, Khabarovsk, Krasnodar).

As a respondent from Khabarovsk noted, these factors are skillfully used by recruiters. Usually they start with small things - first they give money to a person in need so that he can send it home. Then a person becomes indebted and the conditions of the debt lead to his uncomplaining submission to recruiters.

Factors of resilience

Among the factors that help people and the community to resist to and prevent radicalisation (resilience - R), the following are most often mentioned:

- Obtaining citizenship of Russia which helps to get a well-paid job and receive good social security benefits;
- The accession of Kyrgyzstan to the Eurasian Economic Union, which put citizens of Kyrgyzstan on the same level with the Russians in the labour market and the social security system;

- Arrival of labour migrants in Russia together with their families which allows preserving the same family life as it was at home and the feeling of personal and family security. Many see the family as a constraining factor, since it is the main reason for them to stay and earn money in Russia: “Why should I ever go there? I have my wife and children with me - everything is all right. You can earn here without putting your life at risk.”

- A good leader who helps a labour migrant, especially one who came to Russia for the first time, to adapt to the new living conditions, to find work and solve initial problems: “We respect our foreman at work. He treats everyone equally and fairly and organizes the work in accordance with our strengths. He always teaches new things to us and how to do something better ... If conflict situations arise mostly in relation to working matters, then our foreman immediately resolves everything” (respondents from Moscow).

- Educational background and professional skills, as well as the knowledge of the Russian language which allow finding a well-paid job. As a respondent from Moscow said, his good Russian allowed him to quickly blend into a team and feel confident at work and elsewhere.

- Coordination of the work of diaspora leaders with local authorities and law enforcement agencies. Seven respondents noted of the diasporas’ interaction with the local police and their monitoring of possible ways of assisting to migrants to keep them away from radical activities. One of the respondents, a doctor of Kyrgyz ethnicity (IRKU_14), had a rather positive attitude towards interaction with the authorities, saying: “We are invited to all meetings related to migrants and attended by law enforcement agencies and local administration. At such meetings, they immediately report on all existing problems. Sometimes we are asked to exert control or influence, and we also tell them about the problems that our migrants are facing or the kind of help that is needed by the local administration.” Another respondent did not object to the abuse of power by Russian law enforcement agencies: “Russian law enforcement agencies are harsh and decisive, they often act without due process. Their goal is to eliminate the roots of misbehavior. ... I think, to some extent I would even agree with this approach.”

- Labour migrants’ knowledge of migration laws of the Russian Federation.
- Prohibition of the activity of mosques in which violence is promoted. Eleven respondents and two focus groups mentioned the role that religion can play in building up resilience against radicalisation. Seven of them either mentioned of what they heard in mosques about the imams’ opposition to radicalisation, or they think that this is a good idea for mosques to help fight radicalisation: “Much depends on imams. An imam must be very educated. ... I went to the mosque [built by Kyrgyz in Irkutsk] where the imam was a young man, without a beard, but very educated ... He gives the right advice and recommendations, in my opinion.”

- Creation of jobs in Kyrgyzstan, so that people can live and work in their homeland (respondents from Ekaterinburg).

- Raising awareness in diasporas about the circumstances of the deaths of immigrants from the countries of Central Asia in Syria and Iraq.

- As noted by many respondents (Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Samara, Astrakhan), social and economic incentives play a major role in preventing the radicalisation of labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan, since most of them left their homeland for economic reasons.

- There are those who, having adopted citizenship of the Russian Federation and already being quite well settled, miss their homeland and would return back to Kyrgyzstan if their life improves there as in Russia. As noted by one of respondents in Astrakhan who received Russian citizenship in 2009 and is generally happy with life in Russia, “we plan to eventually move back to Kyrgyzstan. After all, it is our motherland.” There are many such people who would return home, but with one mandatory condition – they should have work in Kyrgyzstan and the same level of income as in Russia.

- Associations of fellow countrymen and local communities helped to increase people’s resilience against radicalisation or to those who are sowing discord in their communities: the Friendship House in Novosibirsk, the Congress of Uzbeks in Russia in Astrakhan and other organizations: “every two months we gather to play football and cook plov.” The diaspora community can come together as a support group, if necessary.

- The work of diaspora leaders as people who are respected, who could help in creating cohesion and a sense of belonging to the communities: “The head of our diaspora is an intelligent young man. We can be proud of him, he can build relationships with local people, he works for people and for himself. He is not snobbish, he is always available ...”
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- Eight respondents clearly pointed out that positive economic factors, namely their employment and income, had a positive impact against radicalisation.

- Moral condemnation of travel to Syria: “Decent people have nothing to do there. They can find money, but you better earn them here. We work hard and make money. We bought a house and a car. Our children are safe and sound. You can work.”

- The elders: Seven respondents and one focus group (KRSK FG01) mentioned the importance of the elders, or aksakals, as authoritative people and to whom people listen.

Conclusions and recommendations

General findings

The unstable and difficult economic situation in Kyrgyzstan forces part of the country's population to seek employment abroad. The largest number of labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan travels to the Russian Federation, while Kyrgyzstan has one of the largest ratios of remittances to GDP.

As people get recruited from all over the world into the ranks of extremist terrorist organizations such as the IS and Al-Qaeda, the communities of labour migrants from Central Asia, including from Kyrgyzstan, in Russia have also become prone to this danger of recruitment. This research project attempted to find out the level and nature of this danger, as well as the specific factors that explain the possible radicalisation of people in labour migration in Russia.

On the basis of the study, it is necessary to note one general conclusion that radicalisation among labour migrants from Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan, is not to any extent a large-scale process, and does not differ from radicalisation among populations of most countries. There are certainly some cases of radicalisation and support of extremist groups in the Middle East, which occurred as a result of recruitment from among labour migration. Understanding the peculiarities of this phenomenon and identifying measures to prevent it in the future is an important task and one of the goals of this study.

According to the majority of respondents, young people are the most vulnerable to radicalisation among labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan. Their low level of education, weak understanding of Islam or the lack of knowledge about it, the lack of family commitments, unstable life values and priorities, openness to adventurous new ideas and communication, financial problems and the willingness
to solve them quickly with minimal efforts - these and other circumstances were cited by respondents to explain young people’ vulnerability to radicalisation and recruitment to extremist groups.

Kyrgyz respondents believe that this applies primarily to Kyrgyz citizens from among Uzbeks who come from southern regions of Kyrgyzstan. Many respondents said that it was they who most often from Kyrgyzstan joined the ranks of terrorist structures in Syria supporting the ideology of Al-Qaeda. In terms of their geographical origin, they come from the Uzbek neighborhoods of Osh and Karasu district of Osh region, as well as Suzak district of Jalal-Abad region.

Unfortunately, Kyrgyz citizens from among the Uzbeks are clannish and reluctant to communicate with Kyrgyz communities and representatives of diplomatic missions of the Kyrgyz Republic. This can be explained, first of all, by the conflict in Osh in 2010, and the painful and problematic processes of the post-conflict recovery period.

Other factors include poor education and/or poor Russian of people of Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnicity from rural areas. As a rule, poor education and poor knowledge of the Russian language allow only for low-paid jobs. Therefore, recruiters promise big money as a lure for going to Syria or force people to go there for debts.

Among other individual vulnerabilities, the social stratification is considered as dividing Kyrgyz society into different categories: the poor and the rich, a division by tribal affiliation, by ethnicity, etc. Radicalisation of Kyrgyz citizens is considered primarily as the radicalisation of ethnic Uzbeks, mostly from among young people, in Kyrgyzstan. It is mostly Uzbeks from Osh who get recruited and leave, because they feel alien to their homeland and to Uzbekistan. It should be noted that a precondition for this trend has been primarily the consequences of the ethnic conflict between the Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in 2010.

At the same time, it is necessary to note the low level of preparedness of religious preachers for countering religious extremism. Illiterate imams who do not have classical religious education or who have received it abroad in certain countries, environments, and educational institutions, can themselves fall under the influence of radical ideas.

Among the factors that help people and communities to be resilient and prevent radicalisation, most often mentioned were the following:

- Obtaining Russian citizenship: a fairly large number of respondents, including activists and leaders of diaspora organizations in various cities, had Russian
Many ordinary labour migrants considered obtaining citizenship as the most optimal solution to their various problems.

- Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union: this considerably eased for labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan the procedures and costs during their registration with migration services, employment and social guarantees; in many respects, now their status is in fact equated with the status of Russian citizens.

- Arrival in Russia along with family: this contributes to the preservation of the traditional family way of life and duties, and a more responsible approach of the breadwinner of the family to different issues and decisions.

- Educational background and professional skills, good command of the Russian language: these factors make it possible to find a better paid and satisfactory job, and they also signal that a person has critical thinking ability, he is able to retrieve information from various sources and to resist negative propaganda and recruitment.

Also, the important factors of resilience at the community level were associations of compatriots and diasporas. The work and communication in the communities help to increase resilience against radicalisation. A diaspora community can come together as a support group when necessary. Diaspora community leaders were often mentioned as people who are respected, who could help in creating cohesion and a sense of belonging to the communities. Many respondents mentioned the importance of elders as people of authority whose advice people would follow.

The most vulnerable group is young people under the age of 20, without families, with a low level of general and religious education, striving to have everything at once and immediately, without giving much thought to moral norms and principles. Such people most often become targets for recruitment.

**Recommendations**

Based on observations and conclusions obtained as a result of this study, the following recommendations can be made to the government and respective authorized official bodies of Kyrgyzstan, as well as other organizations working with Kyrgyz migrant communities abroad.

- To promote even more effective and coordinated interaction of diaspora organizations in Russia with local authorities and law enforcement agencies, on the
one hand, and with representations of the relevant government bodies of Kyrgyzstan in Russian cities, on the other.

- To create effective mechanisms and tools to improve the knowledge of labour migrants about the legislation of the Russian Federation on migration, labour, and other relevant matters.

- State bodies, local authorities, and local communities should strengthen cooperation for preventing and combating manifestations of radicalisation among the population of rural areas, especially in the southern part of the country.

- Relevant government bodies and local self-government bodies should develop a common policy to prevent, identify, and neutralize local networks of extremist groups.

- To develop and strengthen the mechanisms and processes of post-conflict reconciliation and integration of ethnic communities in the south of the country; to avoid focusing on law enforcement and security measures; to give greater priority to educational and cultural aspects, and promote more constructive interaction of people in local communities.

- To strengthen the work on patriotic education of youth and the formation of a common national identity “Kyrgyz zharany” among all ethnic groups of the population of the country.

- To study and further improve the Kyrgyz government’s policy on the management and coordination of spiritual activities and religious education, to prevent the emergence and spread of religious movements disseminating the ideologies of violence, intolerance, and extremism.